



A crowd draws to watch the annual Fools' Flotilla parade on the Yahara River.

[River Alliance photo]

WISCONSIN'S RIVERS AWAIT YOU IN 2019...

Check out the enclosed events postcard to see River Alliance events that will make 2019 your most memorable year yet.

Did we mention the events postcard has a crossword puzzle challenge? Send us a photo of your completed puzzle and you could win a River Rat t-shirt. Submit your photo by April 1st to info@wisconsinrivers.org for your chance to win.



More event information online at: www.wisconsinrivers.org/events



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April 25th, Green Bay

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WaterWays is a publication of the River Alliance of Wisconsin. Opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of our funders. Articles are invited for consideration.



Will Water Get Its Due?

By Allison Werner

Is it safe to be cautiously optimistic about the state of water policy in Wisconsin? While one party controls the Senate and Assembly, we've had a shift in the Governor and Attorney General's offices. It is encouraging that both the legislature and the Governor have declared water quality as an important issue to address.

Governor Evers proclaimed 2019 the "year of clean drinking water." Representative Vos announced a water quality task force. The task force was requested by several legislators from southwest Wisconsin after a recent study showed that 42% of the 301 randomly selected wells tested in Iowa, Grant and Lafayette counties exceed federal standards for bacteria.

Of course, the lack of healthy drinking water and polluted waterways are not new problems. People like you and conservation organizations across the state have raised the volume on these issues, and both sides of the aisle are paying attention. Now it is time to set a bold agenda to address the root causes of Wisconsin's polluted rivers, lakes and waterways—and to find solutions. Water advocates, local groups, the Wisconsin DNR, and conservation organizations have solutions.

For example, we know that we need innovative and collaborative ways to reduce polluted runoff from agricultural lands to bring phosphorus, bacteria and nitrate levels down—and River Alliance's Clear Water Farms pilot program will use a market-based approach to work in partnership with producers who want to be leaders in water stewardship. The

first two farms in this program are poised to be the first in the world to be certified through the Alliance for Water Stewardship (AWS) Standard.

We are also optimistic about the role the Wisconsin DNR will play in water policy going forward. Frankly, it shouldn't have been necessary for the new DNR Secretary, Preston Cole, to announce he would "double down on science." We are hopeful that the DNR staff now have leadership that will support and inspire their important work. Secretary Cole has assembled a strong leadership team, including one of River Alliance's former executive directors, Todd Ambs. The team at River Alliance is looking forward to working with the new DNR leadership, including ensuring that the Public Trust Doctrine is upheld to maintain Wisconsin's waters for public use and enjoyment.

So, what's next on the horizon? One of the first ways you can get involved is by tuning in to the state budget process.

- **Attend and speak at budget listening sessions this spring.** Share your ideas about protecting Wisconsin's rivers, lakes and watersheds and the water programs that should be funded at the DNR.
- **Contact your legislators directly about the budget.** We recommend



Oconomowoc River

(Photo courtesy Aaron S., 2018 photo contest runner-up.)

attending in-district office hours. Check your legislators' websites and be sure to sign up for their newsletters.

- **Sign up for a training.** If you'd like to have some training before attending a budget listening session, we recommend the Wisconsin Leadership Development's (WiLD) Budget Workshops. Details at: facebook.com/wildprojectwi

Thank you for all you do to stay active and informed in the necessary work of protecting and restoring Wisconsin's waters.

As always, we will keep you informed through our e-newsletter, action alerts, and social media posts. If you aren't receiving our emails, sign up at: wisconsinrivers.org/newsletter-signup



Business Voices for Clean Water

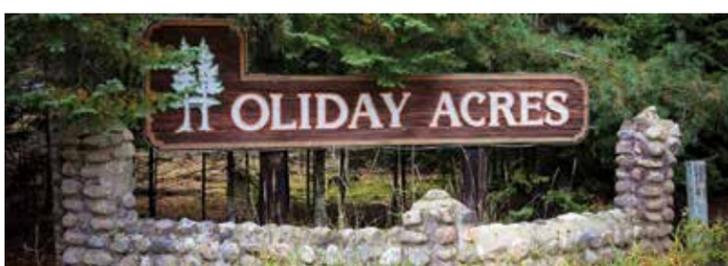
By Falon French

Business owners have a powerful voice when it comes to water policy and advocacy. River Alliance's Clear Water Business

Consortium includes leaders from over 20 businesses all over the state. From breweries, to outfitters, to resorts—these businesses have one clear message: Good Water = Good Business.

Recently, Clear Water Business Consortium member, Holiday Acres, a year-round resort located near Rhinelander, WI stepped up to protect their local waters from a potential sulfide mine at the nearby Lynne Deposit.

Holiday Acres is a family-owned business, celebrating their 70th anniversary this year. Kari Zambon and her husband Kim are the third generation to run Holiday Acres. The resort is located on Lake Thompson in Oneida County, which boasts the 5th largest concentration of freshwater lakes in the world.



(Photo courtesy Kari Zambon.)

Holiday Acres relies on a beautiful and healthy environment. The Zambon family was distressed by the possibility of pollution from sulfide mining. "Everyone should be concerned about their water," Kari shared. When learning that new rules could open up the region to mining, Kari Zambon and



Sunset at Holiday Acres.

(Photo courtesy Kari Zambon.)

her son Peter attended a local meeting and worked closely with local watershed group, Protect the Willow. The efforts of many people working together on a grassroots campaign in the region concluded with 62% voting "no" on the referendum on metallic mining of the Lynne Deposit.

Kari and her family are also active in their lake association, and work with volunteers to monitor for and remove invasive species. "We live in a particularly beautiful part of the state...and we are proud and pleased to share it," Kari explained.

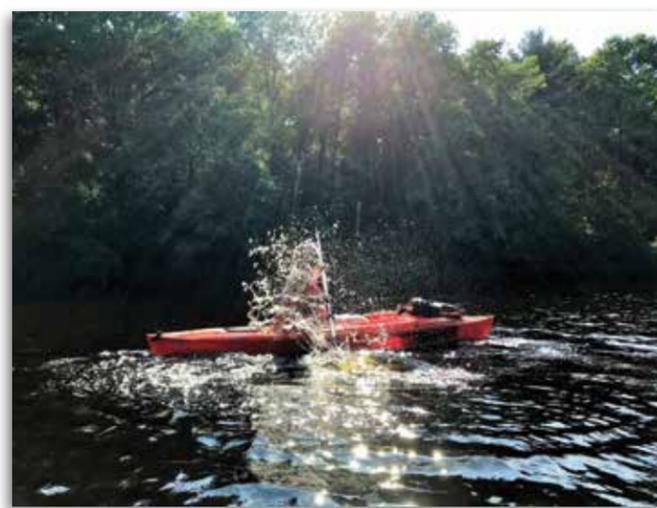
River Alliance of Wisconsin is proud to recognize the efforts of Holiday Acres and all of our Clear Water Business Consortium Members to protect and restore Wisconsin's waters.

To learn more about the Clear Water Business Consortium, please visit: wisconsinrivers.org/clear-water-business-consortium
Learn more about Holiday Acres at: www.holidayacres.com

Photo Contest Winners

When we put out a call for your favorite water snapshots, you shared incredible images from all over the state. The images emphasized the importance of Wisconsin's waters in your lives—we have so much to both appreciate, and protect!

Here are the three winning images selected by River Alliance staff based on the theme "REFLECTIONS."



“Calm After the Storm”

After raining all day the sun started to peek out. Shortly after a rainbow disappeared, the clouds became more interesting so I took this panorama shot of the Wisconsin River. The location of the photo is a place I have been to hundreds of times. From my early memories of running across the hot sand from the parking lot to the water, to having my own kids throw rocks and splash in the water, to taking pictures of the sunrise [during] a -15 degree winter morning—this has always been a great spot to enjoy the river.

I have lived along the river for my entire life and still enjoy taking a look each day... as no two days are the same.

– Jonathan C., Sauk City



“Summer Splash”

I took this photo on the Menominee River near McAllister, WI/Wallace, MI. I convinced my daughter to take the kayaks out with me and wanted to get her picture, but she was splashing me with the paddle instead. My family and I have a cabin on the river and spend most of our weekends in the summer there. I grew up on the river and now live in Green Bay. The Menominee River is imperiled by the recent permits approved by the MI DEQ for the Aquila “Back Forty” mining project. [I am] hopeful that the recent lawsuits and public backlash against the mine are successful in stopping it. [The Menominee River] is too beautiful to pollute.

– Jill M., Green Bay

“Mirror Lake Morning”

Photo taken the morning of May 16th, 2018 at Mirror Lake State Park in Baraboo, WI.

– Cliff N., Baraboo



Special Thanks

Our deepest thanks to the to the Sokaogon Chippewa Community, Mole Lake Band of Lake Superior Chippewa for their generous support for River Alliance of Wisconsin. We are proud to partner with members of the Sokaogon Chippewa Community in the fight to protect and restore Wisconsin's waters.

Photo courtesy Tina Van Zile.



HELLOS:

LYNNE DIEBEL



River Alliance is pleased to welcome Lynne Diebel to our Board of Directors. Lynne has been an avid paddler since childhood. She is the author of six books, three of which are focused on the rivers of Minnesota and Wisconsin, and numerous articles. Lynne is also the director of the Friends of Badfish Creek Watershed, a chapter of the Rock River Coalition. She and her husband Bob—her favorite paddling partner—live in Stoughton, Wisconsin.

MEG FREDERICKS



Meg Fredericks joined River Alliance in October 2018 as our Communications and Events Assistant. She recently completed a summer of environmental research with the NASA DEVELOP Program at the NASA Langley Research Center. Meg is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin–Madison with a Bachelor of Arts in Geography and Environmental Studies, and is excited to bring her experience in science communication and love of maps to River Alliance.



MEL VOLLBRECHT

We are delighted to welcome Mel Vollbrecht to our Board of Directors. Mel devoted her professional career to protecting water. She worked for over 30 years with the Wisconsin DNR, as well as doing consulting work for a variety of conservation groups. At the DNR, Mel managed implementation of the public trust doctrine and shoreland zoning as well as river grants, FERC and coordination of diverse programs affecting rivers. Since retiring from the Wisconsin DNR in 2016, Mel has spent most of her time bicycling all over the world. She resides in Madison.



And, the Survey Says?!

By Natalie Dutack

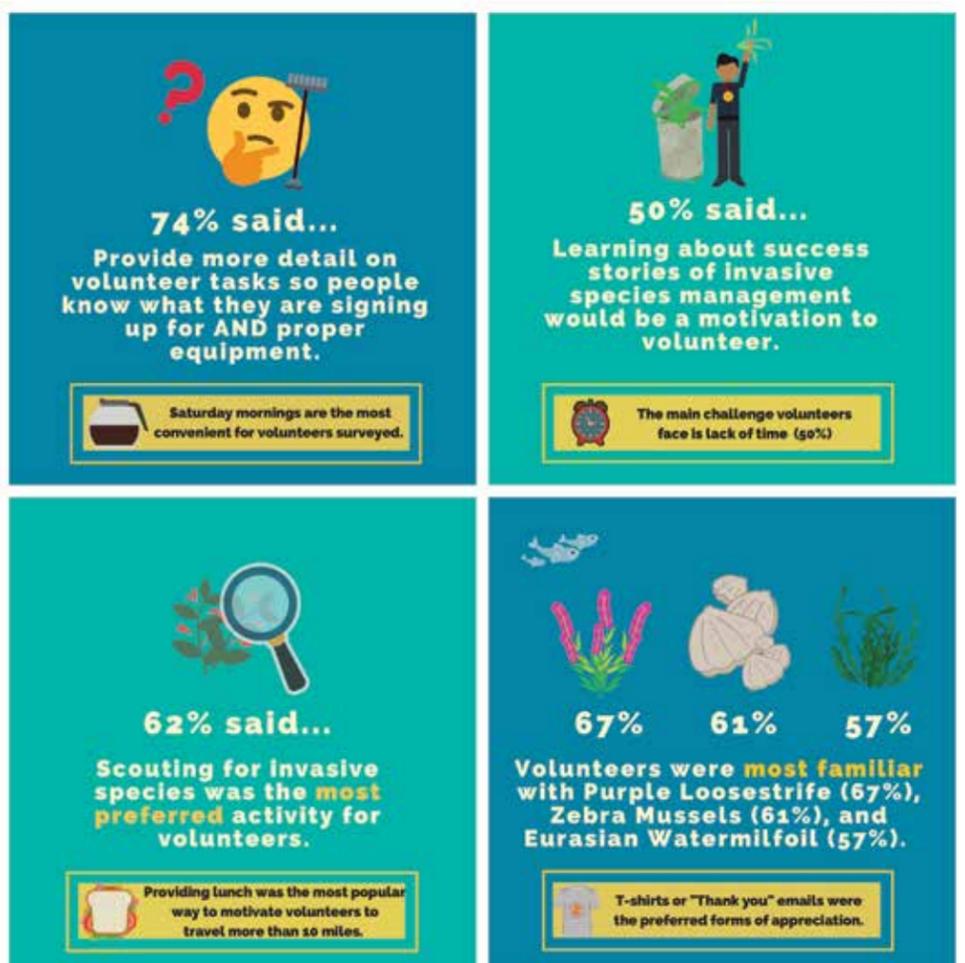
Education and early detection are both important factors in protecting our waters from the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS). Maintaining a committed pool of volunteers is crucial. River Alliance of Wisconsin recently completed an in-depth research project in an effort to improve and refine AIS volunteer programs.

From July through September 2018, local conservation groups and their volunteers participated in a series of surveys, coordinated by River Alliance in partnership with the University of Wisconsin Environmental Resources Center. Conducted under a grant from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the surveys were designed to determine volunteer motivations, learn about their experiences and identify their preferences for activities, as well as partner needs and program issues. River Alliance also initiated a statewide poll on AIS knowledge and water quality.

Overall, the results emphasized something we already know about Wisconsinites—we love our water. Over 93% of those surveyed were motivated to volunteer by a “sense of duty” and a “desire to improve conditions of waterways.” Volunteers are seeking hands-on educational experience and the opportunity to be a part of team. Most (95%) think clean, healthy rivers and lakes are important to the quality of life in Wisconsin. Overall, AIS and water quality were bipartisan issues—something that connects us all!

These surveys also revealed that low recruitment and return participation were challenges for local groups, while volunteers uniformly agreed that more engaging, informative resources and event opportunities were incentives for continued involvement. Based on these results River Alliance will be introducing a suite of improvements to strengthen our current AIS programs, provide new activities, and create a model for use by partners. Keep your eyes peeled—we may be bringing these updated programs to a river near you!

Want to volunteer with River Alliance? Sign up at: wisconsinrivers.org/volunteer



Re-Booting “Wader Wash Stations” for Clean Angling

By Natalie Dutack

River Alliance of Wisconsin is preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species by installing educational signage and wader wash stations across the state. This work is increasingly important, as Wisconsin faced the news of New Zealand mudsnails spreading to two new streams at the close of 2018.

Invasive New Zealand mudsnails were first discovered in Black Earth Creek in 2013, and have spread to five new locations, all within Dane and Columbia counties: Badger Mill Creek (2016), Rowan Creek (2017), Mount Vernon Creek (2017), and most recently the Oregon Branch of Badfish Creek (2018) and Brewery Creek (2018). Providing anglers with wader wash stations so they can more easily practice clean angling is an important step in the fight against this prolific invasive species.

As we move into 2019, we will “re-boot” the wader wash station program, adding

more options, updated signs, and station maps. To make this program a success, River Alliance needs you!

How can you help? It's easy:

- 1. Find** – Participate in a “station scavenger hunt” to help us confirm locations and conditions.
- 2. Report** - If there is a station that is not on our inventory we need to know. Help us find any missing locations so we can help partners maintain wader wash stations.
- 3. Adopt** – Some stations need stewards. We will seek to place these candidates with groups who can maintain them through our “Adopt-a-Wader Wash Station” program.
- 4. Suggest** – Your information on stream use can help us identify new locations that need wader wash stations in 2019.



If you are interested in volunteering for any of these efforts or would like more information on our clean angling programs, please contact Natalie Dutack:

ndutack@wisconsinrivers.org
or 608-257-2424 x 111



Watch email & social media for members' #LoveLettersToWater!



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