

BRWA Receives Major Grant Award

Focus on Marengo River Watershed

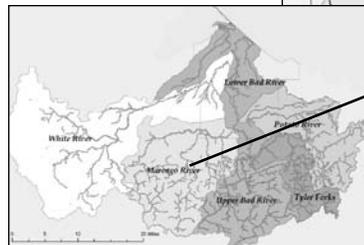
A BRWA proposal to create a Watershed Action Plan for the Marengo River watershed was recently selected as one of 26 projects to be funded as part of the Sustain Our Great Lakes program, administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Funding for the grant is provided by ArcelorMittal, the U.S. EPA, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Forest Service, and is intended help restore and enhance the environmental integrity of the Great Lakes and surrounding region.

The grant is a huge boost to BRWA and will fill an important need within our local communities. "There are a lot of groups, agencies and programs that work to maintain water quality," says BRWA Executive Director Michele Wheeler. "In this project we'll coordinate watershed improvement and land-use planning activities among local citizens, governments and natural resource agencies, so that existing resources are used more efficiently."

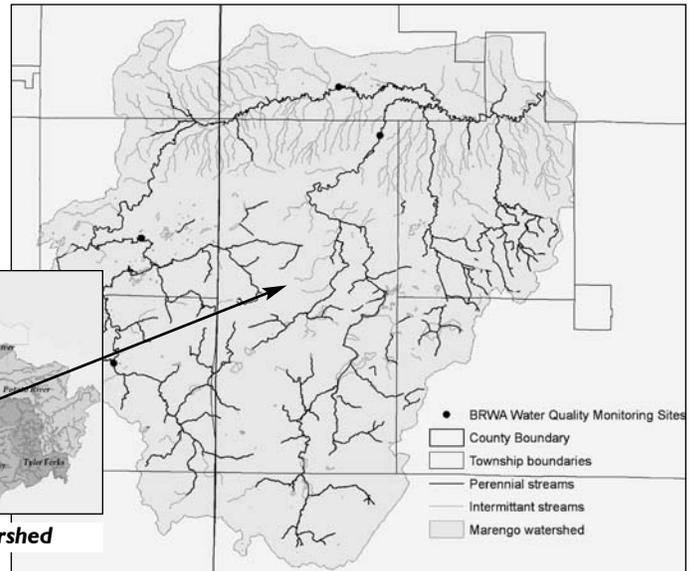
The Marengo River watershed was selected because much work has already been done to characterize issues affecting watershed health there. BRWA will build on this work by creating the Marengo River Watershed Partnership (MRWP), which will invest local decision-makers, technical experts and local citizens in creating a Watershed Action Plan. "The Action Plan produced in this project will identify what needs to be done, who's going to do it, and how it will be paid for," says Wheeler.

BRWA is excited to announce that Matt Hudson, current Technical Advisory Committee representative to the BRWA Board and BRWA Board member, will be coordinating the work of the MRWP. Matt most recently worked with the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission as an Environmental Biologist, has many years experience working on water quality issues, and has been an active community volunteer. Matt begins work with BRWA on June 18. Welcome Matt!

The MRWP offers an opportunity for citizens within the Marengo River watershed and the surrounding area to take ownership of and become involved with protecting the health of the land and water where they live. Over the next year and a half, BRWA will be looking for help and offering opportunities for local citizens as part of this project. To kick things off right, we are planning a community event set for August 29, 2009 at the Four Corner Store Bar near Sanborn. Mark your calendars now for an afternoon of friends, fun, good food, and an opportunity to learn about and become involved with the Marengo River Watershed Partnership! Look for more details and a formal announcement of the event in the coming weeks. ♦



The Bad River Watershed



The Marengo River Sub-Watershed

Spring for the Water a Success!

Thanks to all who donated, attended or purchased auction items at our "Spring for the Water" fundraiser in March.

In addition to being a great party, this year was our best ever fundraising success. We also had the pleasure to honor our two first presidents—Tom Erickson and Karen Danielsen.

People who purchased tickets and auction items are recognized in our Contributors List. People and businesses that contributed auction or food items are listed on page 5. Thanks to each and every one of you!



Honored at Spring for the Water are former presidents Tom Erickson and Karen Danielsen, flanked by Michele Wheeler, Executive Director (left) and Jack Wichita, President (right).



From the Director

By Michele Wheeler

One of the more pleasurable duties of being your Executive Director is attending the River Rally—a training workshop/three-day party hosted by River Network, the national umbrella organization for river rats.

Executive directors, board members and volunteers from watershed groups across the county learned about strategies to build a strong organization, more about how rivers work, and ways that we can invest in taking care of them.

For me, the highlight was Peter Forbes talk about conservation, and how conservation is about reconnecting people and the land. (You can find his inspiring message at www.rivernetwork.org/rally/). Forbes emphasized how important it is to tell our stories, the things that we hold as important about our past and the way we imagine the future. It's in those stories that we gently speak of our values and can better appreciate the perspective of our neighbors by listening to their own experiences.

This year, "Rally" was in Baltimore. Hearing people in an urban watershed talk about their problems made life in the Northwoods seem easy by comparison. I left feeling really good about how much we still have up here in the North Country. But I also thought about how it would be a mistake to take it for granted. Will our kids have the same (or better?) watershed in 50 years? Or will they be forced to remember what it once was? What can we grow into?

For starters, let's tell ourselves the story of how people learned that cars and fish can get along. ♦

Tribes Studying Culverts

By Pam Roberts

The Bad River Watershed Association is working with the Bad River Natural Resources Department (BRNRD) to inventory culverts in sections of the Bad River watershed that lie within the reservation.



Naomi Tillison and BRWA Board Member Pam Roberts inspect a culvert on the Bad River reservation.

While the BRWA has inspected 75 percent of the 1000+ culverts within the Bad River Watershed, the majority of the culverts on the Bad River Reservation have not been analyzed. The BRNRD will be working on the Culvert Assessment and Remediation Project this summer to determine the conditions of the Reservation's culverts and evaluate water quality and fish impacts. Data collected over the

past four years by the BRWA has shown that sedimentation problems and blockages to fish migration caused by culverts are widespread at stream crossings throughout the Bad River watershed.

Also this summer, BRNRD staff, the BRWA, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will provide training for the Town of Sanborn road crew to see how installation of a fish-friendly culvert is done. This will be in preparation for the replacement that the road crew will be doing next summer on one of the culverts causing the most environmental damage. ♦

—Pam Roberts is Water Quality Standards Specialist/Non-Point Source Coordinator for the Bad River Natural Resources Department.

Making History on the Brunsweler

Come celebrate the first new Wisconsin Wild River in over 40 years with the River Alliance of Wisconsin!

View the remote Brunsweler River in Ashland County by foot and pontoon boat. This is a rare opportunity to experience the river that inspired lifelong conservationist Martin Hanson, hosted at Martin's home by his nephew, Thom Rossberger.

We'll hike the property along the river, and view the rocky gorge of Beaverdam Lake from the deck of Martin's pontoon boat as Tia Nelson regales us with tales of Martin, her father Gaylord, and the movers and shakers of the day puttering up the lake while brainstorming groundbreaking conservation efforts such as the protection of the Apostle Islands. Visit www.wisconsinrivers.org or contact Lori Grant at (608) 257-2424 or lgrant@wisconsinrivers.org to learn more and register for the event. ♦



Northland College Students Investigate Marengo River Water Quality

The BRWA has monitored the Marengo River for many years with the help of volunteers. Each volunteer samples his or her assigned site on the first Saturday of every month and performs *E. coli* tests during or after substantial rain events. Northland College students were able to provide water chemistry data on a wider and deeper scale by sampling six times in a four week period.



Student Ian "Sparrow" Cummings checks the turbidity of the river sample.

A total of six sites on the Marengo River were sampled during this experiment, starting at Four Corners and ending down river near Highway 13 (sites chosen by the BRWA). Once at the site, the samplers would make essential notes of the current and past 48 hours of weather, water level, water color, bottom substrate, algae and algae color, bank condition and plants or animals observed during testing. Over the four-week testing period each site was sampled six times; none of the samples were taken after a substantial rain event, but some were taken after minor rain events.

In the lab Northland students were able to test the accuracy of the kits by testing the kits against each other and

against known standard samples. Using a DR 2800 Hach spectrophotometer to measure phosphate and nitrate, the students found that some nitrate and phosphate levels were at or below the detection limit of the water chemistry kits. This implies that the nitrate and phosphate concentrations in the river are well below the EPA standards and are not a health concern for humans. Testing for alkalinity was something new Northland students brought to the research project. Alkalinity measures the ability of water to neutralize acid. This is tested by a titration procedure done in a lab.

The BRWA tests the Marengo River for *E. coli* every month and after substantial rain events. Northland students tested *E. coli* during each of the six sample days which allows for a new view point on *E. coli* levels during non-rain event days.

Sean McIlrath, a student who helped analyze the *E. coli* data, was asked if there was any correlation between the *E. coli* results and the results found by the water chemistry kits, he said, "The only correlation we saw was between rain events and *E. coli*."

Levels higher than the EPA standards were found following a rain event at some sites. This is a concern that should be addressed in further studies. Another interesting correlation with rain events is the effect it had on the dissolved oxygen levels. The students found that following a rain event the levels of dissolved oxygen fell from an average of 9.38 mg/L to 8.37 mg/L.

Dissolved oxygen and water temperature are important for fish species, and since the Marengo River is known to have migratory populations of brook, brown and rainbow trout, these measurements could play a role in the management of sport fisheries in the Marengo River. Brook trout can tolerate dissolved oxygen as low as 4.5 mg/L and rainbow trout can tolerate as low as 2.9 mg/L (www.cdphe.state.co.us).

BRWA, Northland Build Partnership

An ecological chemistry class instructed by Dr. Sharon Anthony at Northland College, partnered with the Bad River Watershed Association in an attempt to better understand the water chemistry of the Marengo river and to provide students with the opportunity to acquire hands on water quality testing experience.

During May Term, students in the class learned how to properly administer water quality tests using the BRWA's Lamotte water chemistry kits, as well as how to test for alkalinity and nitrate using in lab techniques. The kits provided by the BRWA tested for air and water temperature, chloride, dissolved oxygen, turbidity, phosphate, nitrate and pH.

While looking for a project for her Ecological Chemistry class, Sharon met with Michele Wheeler from the BRWA and realized that both could benefit from a partnership. Sharon said, "I was looking for research that would make a difference in the community and provide real life experience for students."

Sharon wrote a letter of support to the National Fish & Wildlife foundation and Great Lakes Watershed Restoration Grant Program, pledging class time towards the BRWA grant. The partnership will continue for two years with Northland College contributing \$60,000 worth of student and faculty labor in matching funds towards the grant.



Northland Student James Tilley titrates the water sample to find the chloride level. Each kit is brought into the field and used on site.

Bank Stabilization and Native Plant Restoration on the Marengo River

By Bob Rice

For many years Rob Jones, who monitors bacteria levels in the Marengo River for the Bad River Watershed Association, found his garden and parts of his yard flooded after a heavy rain.

The banks of the river were sharply eroded, and when rain was heavy they often caved into the river, making the river wider and washing sediment into the stream bed. Rob noticed two large silver maples starting to lean towards the river and a sinkhole was developing.

Frustrated and concerned, in 2005 Rob Jones decided to take action. He contacted the county land conservation department, where Tom Fratt told him about a grant program that provided money for bank stabilization projects.



Rob Jones

Fratt and Jones identified two areas of river banks in need of significant stabilization, and requested funding. Rob's proposal included installing native plants, tilling and filling in areas where erosion had already taken its toll, and installing barrier fabric that would provide stabilization while the plants were getting established. Rob's neighbor agreed to loan his tractor for tilling and to donate dirt for the fill work.

After receiving funding for the project from the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, Jones purchased a collection of native plants from Supreme Selections. The plants included purple aster, choke cherries, dogwood, white pine, tamarack and hemlock.

Getting the plants established was not easy. Except for the neighbor's tractor, Jones provided all the labor. Intense drought required him to carry water to all the plants.

Then, after the first year, beavers ate most of the new choke cherry growth down to the ground. But the following year, the beaver-pruned cherries had new shoots coming up, making an even stronger network of roots.

Overall, many of the plant species are thriving and Rob has seen significant stabilization as the root systems strengthen along the river. Rob is very pleased with the outcome of the project. While there have been several years of drought since completion of the project and the banks have not been tested to the degree that they were prior to doing the work, Rob has noticed that when it rains now, the water does not come over the banks anymore. Additionally, while the river bed is still shallow and wide, some dense woody debris has stacked up on a river bend, creating a deep pool which improves fish habitat on the property. ♦

—Bob Rice is Volunteer Coordinator for BRWA

Become a Stream Doctor!

Here's a chance to strap on waders, get up close and personal with your local river, and hone your investigative skills.

Along with staff from the Center for Watershed Protection, we'll be walking sections of the Marengo River learning how to identify problems that affect stream quality. Then we'll all come together over lunch and share what we've learned.

By putting our collective heads together, we'll begin to get a picture of what areas of the river would be good candidates for efforts to improve overall stream quality. This information will help to form the basis of BRWA's new project to improve the health of the Marengo River.

Not only will volunteers leave knowing they've helped out with this project, they will also leave with new skills. Plus, what could be more fun than spending a wonderful summer day splashing around in your local stream with a bunch of friends?

When: Saturday, June 27, 8:30 am until 1:00 pm. There will be an opportunity to stay longer for those who want to go back out to the stream after lunch.

Where: The Spur gas station and café on Hwy. 13 in Marengo.

Bring: 1. Waders if you have them. If you don't, we have lots (although no guarantees they won't leak!).

2. Water and a bag lunch. We'll provide other drinks and some treats.

3. Hat, sunglasses, sunscreen

4. Clothing appropriate for weather conditions (rain gear is always a good idea).

5. A big smile and lots of energy!

Questions? Call Matt Hudson at 292-0581 ♦



Thank You!



Thanks to our Water Quality Volunteers: Tracey Ledder, Dane Bonk, Joan Elias, Mike Klump, Karen Danielsen, Leslie Kolesar, Kent Goeckermann, Andy Goyke, Ulli Kastens, Jack Wichita, Roland Wolff, Tana Turonie, Colleen Matula, Pam Roberts, Darienne McNamara, Suzy Sanders, Tracey Ledder, Thomas Wyse, Andrea Haugo, Bob Rice, Krista Bloomquist, and Charlene Herron-Jordan.

New volunteers include Jerry Setzke monitoring on Schramm Creek, Rob Jones monitoring on the Marengo River, Gregg Johnson monitoring on the White River, Kevin and Sjana Shanning monitoring macroinvertebrates on the White River, Andrea Haugo monitoring macroinvertebrates on the White River, and April BeBault monitoring on the Marengo River.

Thanks to our Donors: James A. Crandall, Rebecca McDowell, Carolyn Sneed, Darienne McNamara, Mary Ann Churchill, Jack Helgeson, William L Devries, Jay Cablik, Terri Bahe, Kent Goeckermann, Marilyn Meeker, Jo Bailey, Michael Klump, Mark & Pam Dryer, Ted Koehler, Kelsey Myrvold, Matthew Hudson, Dennis Musil, Nancy Larson, Deborah Dryer, Kelly McKnight, Colleen Matula, Valena Hofman, Virginia Hirsch, David Hollis, Karen Danielsen, Bob Rice, Henry Quinlan, Diane Daulton, Terry Peters, Michele Wheeler, Tom Fratt, Phillip Freeman, Jack Wichita, Kathy Allen, Dennis Musil, Valena Hofman, Thomas W. Erickson, Joan Elias, Tracey Ledder, Ruth Oppedahl, Phillip Freeman, Jack Wichita, Robert J Dunne, Jr, Nancy Larson, Jo Bailey, Bobbi Rongstad, Linda Rise, Mark & Pam Dryer, Jamie Dunn, Andy Noyes, Bob Rice, Ted Koehler, Shari Eggleston, Terry Peters, Leslie Lee, Leslie Kolesar, Howard Sibbald, Henry Quinlan, Virginia Hirsch, Thomas Piikkila, Karen Danielsen, Dorothy Lagerroos, Robert J Dunne, Jr, Sjana Shanning, Rolland Kiel, Anne Chartier, Shari Eggleston, Linda Rise, Anne Chartier, Jane Weber, Charlene Herron-Jordan, Tana Turonie, Dave Dawkins.

Thanks to our Funding Partners: River Alliance of Wisconsin, US EPA, Center for Watershed Protection, and US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Special Funding for this issue: from Wisconsin Community Action Program and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and thanks to Northland College

Spring for the Water Contributors: Thank you!



Ashland Baking Co.	Bonnie Berman	Lake Superior Magazine
Tetzner's Dairy	Bruce Shumway	Living Forest Coop
Sixth Street Market	Carol Seago	Margaret Jackson
Bodin's Fisheries	Chequamgon Food Coop	Mary McHugh
Halvorson's Fisheries	Penokee Mountain Inn -	Matt Hudson
Chequamgon Food	Cindy & LeRoy Laymon	Mimi Crandall
Cooperative	Diana Randolph	Pam Dryer
The Black Cat	Diane Daulton	Penokee Mountain Deli
Maple Hill Farm	Don Albright	River Rock Bait Shop
Pasture Perfect Poultry	Firelight meadows	Sara Balbin
Moccasin Trail IGA	creations—Birgit Wolff	Sara Boles
in Odanah	Glenn Miller	Sara Hudson
Ashland County Market	Greg Alexander	St. Croix
Washburn IGA	Hermit Creek Farm—	Stone's throw—Reg
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Andi Repko	Spirit Creek Farm	Valena Hofman
Woodspirit—April and	Jim & Joan Elias	White Winter Winery
Jarod Stone Dahl	Joe Zirn and Jean Hansen	Anglers All
Bayfield County Coffee Co	Maple Ridge Woodworks—	Curt Ellson
Bill Heart	Jon Wheeler	

Pedaling (not paddling) in the Bad River Watershed

By Mark Dryer

So, why a cycling article in the Bad River Watershed Association newsletter? Because I was asked to write one and admittedly have something to say about the relationship of cycling and the Bad River watershed.

I'm a road cyclist.... a roady. I like the speed of cycling on smooth pavement, the good exercise with low impact on old joints, the high when I finish (I'm told it's from endorphins) and the obligatory reward of a good meal and beverage with friends.

One of my favorite areas to ride my bike in the Bad River Watershed starts and stops in Mason, Wisconsin in the fields and forest landscape of the White River Sub-watershed. Here I find a network of smooth and winding roads connecting the communities of Mason, Benoit, Ino, Grand View, and Delta. I occasionally cross into the Fish Creek Watershed around Benoit and Ino, but before long I'm again rolling across tributaries to the White River.

My favorite roads in this area are County E and H; and Township roads with great names like Keystone, Sutherland, Moonshine Alley, Scenic Drive, and the Delta-Drummond Road. Gently undulating terrain adds variety, and there's plenty of that when you roll down and pedal up across the many small tributaries and drainages to the White River. When I ride my bike, I can easily justify rewarding myself with great food and beverage at oases like the Avalon, Ino Bar, Delta Diner, Scenic Drive Resort; and of course the Cookie Jar, White River Saloon and the Mason Hosue (it's spelled that way) in Mason at the start and completion of your ride.

And then there's the less obvious, often unconscious, yet genuine benefit of gaining knowledge and awareness about the relationship between people and rivers. Instead of being confined to the inside of my car zipping along at 55 mph (maybe 60) I have more time to observe, absorb and think about a mix of watershed issues associated with nature, public needs and public uses; like adjacent land use, quality of life, fish barriers, erosion, water quality and clarity, culverts, stream-side vegetation, fishing and hunting, just to name a few.

I say, get on your bike and start pedaling through your own area of the watershed, or in a new area that you've always wanted to explore. You'll soon discover your own favorite routes to ride. Or, if you're not the independent adventuress type, a small group of area road cyclists meet at the Cookie Jar in Mason every Saturday morning at 8:30 am for coffee, or just show up to start riding at 9:00. Join us unannounced, or call me (715-765-4131), or send an email (mnpdryer@cheqnet.net). All ages and abilities are welcome. I'm also always looking for new places to ride and people to ride with, so if you have a special cycling area you are willing to share, please contact me.

Tailwinds forever... ♦



Support the work of BRWA

If you live in the Bad River watershed, you're automatically a member of the Bad River Watershed Association. Consider enhancing your membership by making a financial donation to help support our work.

\$100 Your name _____

\$ 50 Address: _____

\$ 25 _____

\$ ____ _____

Phone and/or email: _____

Clip this form and send with your tax-deductible check to:

Bad River Watershed Association
P.O. Box 875
Ashland, Wisconsin 54806

Thank you!



Detect It, Report It, and Fight It!

Project RED (Riverine Early Detectors) is a new citizen monitoring program of the River Alliance of Wisconsin (RAW). RAW trains river enthusiasts (paddlers, fishermen, WAV monitors, etc.) to identify and report 15 invasive species within river corridors statewide.

During a free training hosted by the Bad River Watershed Association, the Friends of the White River, and Trout Unlimited Wild Rivers Chapter, the River Alliance will teach you to monitor your river by canoe, kayak, or on foot for 15 species of concern. The River Alliance will help you choose locations and a monitoring schedule that are convenient to you and your volunteers. The Alliance will also provide you with online data management tools available through www.citsci.org that help you report and map your findings.

Project RED provides you with the necessary tools to be a Riverine Early Detector. The protocols are easy and fun. Use this activity to become more familiar with your river or stream and to engage your friends and neighbors!

To learn more about how you can help in the fight against invasives, see the River Alliance's website <http://wisconsinrivers.org> and click on Invasive Species.

Project RED training is scheduled for Saturday, July 18 from 9:00 am–1:00 pm at the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center two miles east of Ashland off of Hwy 2. To reserve your space, please call Sarah Traaholt at 715-685-2672. ♦



Buckthorn control along the Ashland City Trail

Got Weeds?

Purple loosestrife, leafy spurge, reed canary grass, spotted knapweed, Eurasian water milfoil, and common buckthorn are non-native plants currently invading local natural areas and agricultural lands. The Northwoods Cooperative Weed Management Area provides a forum to share information, collaborate on planning and cooperate on management activities in northern Wisconsin. We have several events in our communities this summer to stop the spread of invasive species.

- **August 20:** Galerucella Control Sites Viewing. Come check out the beetles that help eat purple loosestrife.
- **Sept. 12:** Madeline Island Barberry and Buckthorn Blitz (Free ferry passes are available for volunteers.)
- **Sept 18-19:** Leafy Spurge Control Days

For more info send us an email at info@NorthwoodsCWMA.org or contact Matt Bushman NCWMA chair 715-373-2667 ext. 246.

“Weed” love to have you participate! ♦

Northland College Students *(continued from page 3)*

Students found that the trout in the Marengo River are well within safe dissolved oxygen levels for optimal survival.

Over the course of the four-week May term students who participated in the research felt they came out with a better knowledge of water chemistry. Student Jake Levy said, “I now have a better understanding of how chemicals in the surrounding environment play a key role in the quality of the stream.”

Students in the class thought it would be interesting to do an aquatic invertebrate survey of the site in conjunction with the water chemistry to give a better idea of what organisms live within the river. Dr. Anthony felt that the class contributed to the community in terms of *E. coli* monitoring of the Marengo River. “Most of the time *E. coli* counts are within safe levels except for a couple of sites which had high counts,” she said and suggested further study for those.

Students agreed that the research study was a great experience for the class and look forward to working with the BRWA in the future. ♦



Northland Student Margot Seiler carefully reads the buret during the alkalinity titration test.

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Summer 2009 Watershed Waves

Celebrate the White River!

The Friends of the White River are again sponsoring the **White River Celebration and Fish Boil** on **Friday, August 14** at the *Mason Village Park* on the White River. The festivities will begin at 4:30 p.m. with landowner information available from a number of DNR officials, the Bayfield Regional Conservancy, the West Wisconsin Land Trust, the Bad River Watershed Association and other county, state and federal agencies.

At 6:00 p.m. we'll dig in to our delicious fish boil. John Casperson, our cook for the past three years passed away in December, but rest assured that we still be able to produce a wonderful meal with a number of side dishes from our membership.

We will again be doing a small raffle and will have our Friends of the White River t-shirts and hats for sale. Membership forms will also be available to give you an opportunity to become a member of the Friends and help us to further protect our beautiful White River.

As in the past, the Fish Boil is free and open to the public. Everyone is welcome, so bring along your family and friends. ●

all the news from your
**BAD RIVER**
WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

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Get your *Watershed Waves* via email! Just send a message with this request to brwa_wi@yahoo.com

