

The Watershed Gets by with a Little Help from its Friends

By Valerie Damstra, Citizen Involvement Coordinator

A watershed can be described as the land that surrounds a body of water, and drains to a common point. There are the scientific terms that describe this which you may have heard, like the catchment area or drainage basin, among many more. Other than in the more literal scientific way, how would you describe a watershed?

For me, I prefer to think of how we as people are linked together by the land and the water of our watershed. I like the description given by the scientist John Wesley Powell that blends these two ideas: "that area of land bounded by a hydrologic system, within which all living things are inextricably linked by their common water course, and where, as humans settled, *simple logic demanded that they become part of a community.*"

Community and connection to each other and to our resources is so crucial to the work that we do as members and participants in the Bad River Watershed Association. One of the things I love about this organization is that provides opportunities for people to participate in nurturing that connection in an active way.

As the days get longer and the snow piles get smaller, we're gearing up for some spring volunteer and learning opportunities to get citizens like you out in the watershed to get your hands wet and dirty for the good of the community. As friends of the watershed, we can all do our part to help it not only get by, but we hope it can become just a little bit better.

If you'd like to participate in these events, please contact us at info@badriverwatershed.org or (715) 682-2003. Or, if you have another idea for how you'd like to get involved please let us know! ♦

Adopt-A-Highway Cleanup

- **Saturday, April 20**
9:30 am–12:00 pm

Help us clean up the BRWA stretch of US Hwy 2 in the town of Gurney.

We'll meet at the Frontier Bar located at the intersection of US 2 and Hwy 169. Our 'stretch' of the highway is two miles but you can do as much or as little as is comfortable for you. Be prepared to walk, and dress in layers

because it might even be warm out by then (we hope!) Bags and gloves will be provided. Join us for sandwiches or pizza for lunch at the Frontier Bar once we've finished garbage detail!



Macroinvertebrate Training and Monitoring



- **Volunteer Training: Saturday, May 4,**
8:30am-12:30pm, Mellen School
- **Macroinvertebrate Sampling Window:**
May 4-May 19 (weather dependent)
- **Indoor Identification Sessions:**
May 28 and June 4, 5:30-8:00pm,
Northland College

We're signing people up to join our team of quality volunteers to help with our spring macroinvertebrate monitoring season (yep, we're collecting bugs!) Please contact Mariana at mariana@badriverwatershed.org or (715) 682-2003 if you'd like to attend this season!

Want to help but DON'T want to get your feet wet? We have got the solution for that!



We are looking for people to join our committees to help with the inner workings of BRWA. The Finance Committee works on budgeting and fundraising, as well as financial reporting and auditing. If you love working with numbers, or have experience with non-profit finances, we would love to have you sign up for the Finance Committee!

The Program Committee guides the program work that the BRWA does, such as culvert inventories and water quality monitoring. It also investigates grants and other funding opportunities to pay for the programs.

The Community Outreach Committee is responsible for writing articles and press releases, event planning, recruiting new members, and attending public events to tell people about BRWA.

If you are interested in joining one of these committees, please e-mail info@badriverwatershed.org with your contact information and what committee you might be interested in. We would love to see you!

Organizational Updates

By Sjana Schanning, Board President

I think perhaps I need to re-wax my skis. I am hoping it will help me maintain my enthusiasm for a winter that looks like it plans to hang on for a while longer. Even as the snow continues to pile up, promises of spring can be found here and there. Today, as I sat on the frozen lake, jig pole in hand, caddisfly larvae found their way into my ice fishing hole and basked in the new found light.



BRWA is experiencing similar hints of renewal and growth as we move forward into the months ahead. BRWA has a growing team that is working together to accom-

plish the mission of connecting citizens with their watershed. Valerie Damstra has served as our Citizen Involvement and Volunteer Coordinator for the last three and a half years, and has helped the organization grow in her time here. She has recently announced that she will be moving on to a new career challenge, but will remain with BRWA through the end of May to help train new staff and welcome a new Executive Director. We will be sad to see her go and are so thankful for her years of work for BRWA and for the way she has helped the board maintain the organization during the absence of an Executive Director. We wish her the very best in her new career.

Additional folks helping to keep things running smoothly are Mary Runkel and Mariana Brewster. Mary has been volunteering her time to help with our finances and keep up on the book-keeping. Mariana has been helping with office tasks since November, and will soon be transitioning into a new role as the Volunteer Coordinator.

Very recently we added another member to our team, Erika Lang. Erika will be reaching out to landowners in the Marengo

River watershed to help assess effective ways to implement improvement projects that will protect the health of the Marengo and therefore the Bad River Watershed. She brings many years of watershed organization experience to BRWA and we're excited that she has joined our team (you can read more about Mariana and Erika in this newsletter). We will soon be adding a few more members to the team to help complete water quality monitoring and work on fish friendly culvert replacements. Last but not least, we soon hope to be wrapping up what has turned into an extended search for a new Executive Director. I will back in touch with you all soon to make that introduction.

A critical part of the team includes the members of BRWA, and membership continues to grow as more people discover the work that we do. If you have not yet joined as an official member, we sincerely hope you'll consider doing so. We're looking forward to a busy season of monitoring and improvement projects that would not be possible without the support of the members like you.

After continued efforts to point out the problems with the new iron mining legislation for Wisconsin, we were as frustrated as anyone to see it pass and get signed into law on March 11, 2013. This however has renewed our dedication to collecting data to better understand the impacts that an iron mine in the Penokee Range would have on our water. We continue to fight for land use practices and planning that protect our precious resources for generations to come.

Although it's been a tough road for a while, I am confident that the BRWA remains on solid footing and is poised for a good long spring season of growth, development and continued work that will involve citizens in monitoring, maintaining and improving watershed integrity for future generations. Thanks for being a part of it all! ♦

A New Community Forest in the Bad River Watershed

Through funds from the Wisconsin DNR Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund and the US Forest Service, the Bayfield Regional Conservancy recently purchased 397 acres of land from the Plum Creek Timber Company, and has established the acreage as a community forest.

Two miles of Marengo River frontage classified as Class I, II and III Trout water and Outstanding and Exceptional Resource Water run through this scenic and wild property. This beautiful mixed hardwood and conifer forest is host to diverse bird and mammal populations, and has a 10 acre wetland and lake complex within its boundary, and has three and a half miles of logging trails.

A new citizen group has formed to support the property's use as a town forest, which is open to the public for non-motorized recreation purposes including hiking, skiing, wildlife viewing, hunting and fishing. The Friends of the Lincoln Community Forest is guided by the mission "to facilitate the conservation and enjoyment of the Lincoln Community Forest."

The friends group will be initiating an annual membership campaign in the coming month. For more information about the friends group or the Lincoln Community Forest, please contact Mark Dryer at mnpdryer@cheqnet.net or (715) 765-4131. ♦



Mark Dryer, Friends of the Lincoln Community Forest president, hangs the sign to designate this new community resource.

Meet our New Staff: Erika and Mariana

Hi Everyone,

My name is Erika Lang and I recently joined BRWA's team to help with landowner outreach and project planning in the Marengo Watershed. Last fall, I re-located to northern Wisconsin after spending over seven years in Oregon's Willamette Valley working for three local watershed councils. There, I had an opportunity to work with private landowners concerned about watershed health.



Erika Lang
Landowner
Outreach Coordinator

Although they were looking to the Councils to help them identify resource concerns and come up with solutions, I think I learned just as much, if not more, from them. I felt privileged to learn about the history of the area, land use management, and livelihoods from each landowner. I strived to be a good listener and work collaboratively with landowners to find solutions that not only addressed the resource concern, but fit their property management goals. Given the right opportunity, I found most landowners to be interested in doing their part to improve the environment around them.

Upon moving to this area, I was happy to find a local, non-government, non-regulatory group that is working with watershed residents to make good decisions for the landscape as a whole. I'm looking forward to meeting all of you to learn what you value about living in this beautiful area, and to help you pursue various restoration and/or conservation actions. I'm also excited to get outside to enjoy the North Woods, whether it be in a kayak, bike, on a hiking trail, or in my own garden. And, it's nice to be back in the greater mid-west area, as my husband and I are now closer to family in Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Ohio. I look forward to working with BRWA and meeting many of you in the near future!

Hello, readers!

I am Mariana Brewster, and I have been helping out at Bad River Watershed Association as Office Assistant since November 2012. I recently started training for the position of Volunteer Coordinator. I moved to Ashland this past summer as a transfer student to Northland College, with an intended major in Natural Resources. Having grown up in Eagle River, another town in gorgeous Northern Wisconsin, I've developed a passion for environmental conservation as well as outdoor recreation. Some of my favorite activities are hiking, Nordic skiing, snowshoeing, and canoeing. Since moving here, I've greatly enjoyed getting to know the area and the Bad River Watershed. I feel that I have just barely scratched the surface of the many special, beautiful places to visit. So far, my favorite spots are Morgan Falls (I'm sure many of you feel this way), and Bayview Beach near Washburn.

The best part of being on the BRWA team so far has been meeting some of our many amazing members and volunteers. I am continuously inspired and blown away by the commitment of this community to preserving the health of its watershed. I look forward to getting to know more of you at future BRWA events.



Mariana Brewster
Office Assistant and
Volunteer Coordinator



Members of the Sparta Earth Club share information about BRWA at a community event the group hosted at their school.

Member Highlight

The following is an excerpt from a letter we received last fall with a membership contribution from new member the Earth Club of Sparta High School. We loved the letter, and they gave us permission to share it with you.

Hello Sjana,

I hope this finds you doing well! First off, let me say "well done" in regards to the article in Lake Superior Magazine. I purchased a copy a few weeks back and enjoyed reading about your accomplishments and efforts to preserve our Northwoods watershed!

The donation you hold in your hand was voted on by our high school Earth Club, for which I am privileged to be the advisor. We are a very active environmental club in our high school and community. Through our recycling efforts, we are able to support green efforts in our school, our community and other points of the compass. We have been fortunate to build partnerships with civic organizations, the Wisconsin DNR, Polar

Bears International, the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, and others. In fact our club shirt this year has the medicine wheel on it and the acronym FOBR—Friends of the Bad River. If you would be interested in ordering one let me know!

We hope that your efforts continue to be successful and that you and your organization are able to accomplish your goals. Please know that our club stands with you in your endeavors! It is good to know that Wisconsin's Bad River is in capable and able hands!

Thank you on behalf of the Earth Club of Sparta High School. Keep up your good work!

Sincerely,
Joe Cook, Advisor

Local coalition releases natural resource management plan for region

Recently the Chequamegon Bay Area Partnership (CBAP) released a plan detailing strategic priorities for natural resource management in the Chequamegon Bay region of the Lake Superior watershed.

The partnership hopes the plan will focus and expand upon its work to improve the ecological, economic and social fabric of the Chequamegon Bay area. The group has identified several priorities, including runoff management, sediment reduction, habitat protection and restoration. BRWA is one of 15 active partners in the coalition which formed in 2009. Other partners include tribes, educational institutions, non-profit organizations, and local, state and federal agencies.

"Every agency or group part of CBAP has their own charge and priorities, but all of us are working toward the same goal of having healthy natural resources around the Chequamegon Bay area," said Randy Lehr, Bro Professor of Sustainable Regional Development at Northland College.

Since 2010, CBAP has been able to bring about \$1 million of Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) funding for three different projects to the area. Northland College secured the money from GLRI and other funding agencies to provide financial support to CBAP projects. In turn, CBAP project partners have shared the funding so the conservation coalition may achieve more in the way of natural resource management.

"It makes sense to work together, and this document is the first attempt to tell the story of what CBAP is, what it has accomplished so far and what the partners feel are its collective priorities," Lehr said.

In addition, the plan calls for CBAP to promote more engagement with the general public to address water issues and climate change.

"The large storm events and resulting sediment plumes in Chequamegon Bay last summer were a reminder to us that there's still a lot of work we have to do to improve our natural resources and prepare our communities for the effects of our changing climate," Lehr said.

The partnership outlined the plan to improve the scope and effectiveness of natural resource management efforts in the Chequamegon Bay area.

"But we've only scratched the surface," adds Matt Hudson, watershed program coordinator at the Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute at Northland College. "It's a great starting point, but we recognize there's lots of work needed to refine these priorities as CBAP continues to grow and evolve."

To learn more about CBAP and to download a copy of the plan visit: www.northland.edu/cbap. ♦

Landowner Field Day Set for April 24



Craig and Anne Wickman are landowners in the neighboring Fish Creek watershed that are taking care of their backyard by restoring wetlands for waterfowl habitat, and to slow the flow of rain and snow melt to the creek.

CBAP and the Wickman's are partnering to host a Landowner Field Day on Wednesday, April 24 from 4-7 pm, 60985 Sadjak Rd, Ashland, to tour their wetland project and to learn more about how landowners like you can do a project on your property.

For more information about the Field Day please contact Julie Buckles at (715) 682-1878 or jbuckles@northland.edu.

BRWA Presents at Mining Meeting

Tracey Ledder, Technical Advisor and Board Member, presents baseline macroinvertebrate and temperature data collected by BRWA in the Penokee area at a meeting of regional



Photo: Julie Buckles, Northland College

scientists on February 21, 2013. More than 30 resource managers, researchers and experts gathered at the meeting co-hosted by BRWA and the Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute at Northland College. Experts shared work conducted in 2012 and discussed a monitoring strategy for 2013 around the potential iron mine site.

BRWA at Canoecopia

BRWA attended its first Canoecopia event in early March in Madison. Canoecopia is the largest consumer paddlesports event in the world, and attracts thousands of visitors that are interested in all things paddling and who love our water resources. We're so grateful for the opportunity to be there and look forward to attending next year!



Thank You!

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Our Volunteers: Tracey Ledder, Sharon Anthony, Joan Elias, Jack Wichita, Ulli Kastens, Henry Gradillas, MaryJo Gingras, Heather Palmquist, Jim Crandall, Ron Nemeo, Eric Nelson, Jerry Setzke, and Laure McCloskey and her students at the Mellen School.

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Special Thank You to: Mary Runkel, who continues to wow and amaze us as our volunteer bookkeeper; Dave Olson for helping us secure our booth space at Canoecopia and for all your time spent talking BRWA at the booth; The Lakes Community Health Center for the use of your meeting space and phones for Executive Director interviews; Patagonia for the donation of field gear for our staff and volunteers.



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Spring 2013 Watershed Waves

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all the news from your
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Freezin' for a Reason! BRWA participated in this year's Bayfield Polar Plunge to raise funds for BRWA and the Bayfield Recreation Center. The BRWA team was able to raise nearly \$2,000 to benefit both organizations! Way to go Team BRRRRWA!

SAVE THE DATE!

Solstice Celebration and
Membership Gathering

SATURDAY, JUNE 22, 2013

Prentice Park, Ashland

Stay tuned for more info in the summer newsletter and on our Facebook page!