

## BRWA Celebrates Volunteers and Marengo River

By Matt Hudson, Watershed Action Director

Cool, rainy weather more typical of October than late August didn't keep nearly 100 people from venturing to BRWA's Marengo River celebration and annual volunteer appreciation at Four Corners Saloon on August 29.

"Boy, I'm glad we had a plan B!" said Mark Dryer, BRWA Board member and event volunteer, referring to the fact that having the event at Four Corners "afforded us the opportunity to move the event inside when the weather didn't cooperate."

Smiling faces were the norm as friends, old and new, enjoyed a fantastic local foods meal prepared by Four Corners staff and supplemented by BRWA Board members.

Alan Craig and Jon Berthel set the mood during dinner with a mix of folk and bluegrass music, and Shotgun Betsy rocked the stage after dinner. Several lucky event-goers got to take home one of many cool door prizes graciously provided by BRWA supporters.

Event-goers were able to preview some of these opportunities in a picture tour of some of the scenic highlights and features of the Marengo River watershed in a display put together by volunteer Diane Daulton. Thanks Diane!

Every year BRWA holds a picnic to celebrate and thank its many volunteers. This year, the volunteer celebration was combined with an official "kick-off" of BRWA's Marengo River Watershed Partnership project. The project will provide many new opportunities for volunteers to get involved.

Among these opportunities is "Get to Know Your Watershed," a new program from BWRA. It's a way for citizens to get involved in maintaining and improving the watersheds they call home.

For example, earlier this summer, BRWA offered an opportunity for volunteers to walk sections of local streams, learn about things that affect watershed health, and collect information that can be useful in identifying potential stream restoration projects.

The next Get to Know Your Watershed Field Day is scheduled for Saturday, October 24. Call Michele Wheeler at 682-2003 for more info. BRWA will be continuing this work over the next year as we develop a watershed action plan for the Marengo River watershed.

Many thanks are in order to those who helped plan the event and those who donated to help offset event costs. It takes the support of many people to pull off an event like this and we appreciate everyone's help! ♦



**BRWA Director Michele Wheele (right) and BRWA board member Jo Bailey (center) greet attendees at the annual volunteer appreciation event.**



**Nearly 100 people filled the Four Corners Saloon for great companionship, excellent food, and support for the Bad River Watershed Association and its new Marengo River project.**

### **Correction!**

In the BRWA summer newsletter article about bank stabilization on the Marengo River, the funding for this project was incorrectly listed as through the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). Funding for the project was provided by Ashland County's Land and Water Resource Management (LWRM) cost-share program and also the USFWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife program.

## Hey Fish...Come Out, Come Out Wherever You Are...

By Michele Wheeler

It's really just another kind of fishing, right?

Some go bait-free and use flies only. Commercial fisherman may use a great big net. My six-year old daughters opt for worms and bobbers. This summer we used backpack electrofishing shockers to get our catch—same thing...kind of...

Well okay, it's pretty different—but similar enough in that we're thinking about where those fish might be, and how we can get them out of there.

We're sampling fish populations before and after culvert replacements to find out how the old pipes were affecting the fishery, and how the new ones could make the fish populations better. So who lives downstream of a culvert? How big are they? How many are there? Are there different fish upstream of the pipe, are there more of them, and are they bigger?

It was with these questions in mind that BRWA began our summer of electrofishing with partners the US Fish and Wildlife Service and Northland College interns.

Backpack shocking is fairly straightforward. The backpack has two key appendages to make it work: a wand with a metal hoop on the end that you carry in one hand, and a metal cable that drags behind you to complete the circuit. Both have to be in the water, or you're not fishing.

With the backpack all set up, we'd start at the bottom (downstream end) of a length of stream and work our way up against the current. You move at a slow pace, maybe a step every second or two, depending on how many branches you have to deal with. And you constantly scan the water for fish rolled to the side, drifting in the current. The electricity temporarily stuns the fish, enough that they stop swimming so that you can net them up.

The exciting part about electrofishing is the anticipation when you creep up on a "fishy" looking area (i.e. cover). Cover provides fish with a good place to hide from their water or aerial predators. Where there was cover, we'd find fish. Large logs in the stream are usually a good spot. Also overhanging branches or other vegetation. Undercut banks too. When you see those types of areas up ahead, you know to be especially focused.

But cover can be more subtle than that too. A deep spot can serve as "cover." We'd often walk through these long, shallow sandy areas. No place to hide there, and rarely any fish there either. As soon as we'd get to a deep pocket in the stream, the fish would pop right up. For smaller fish, softball sized rocks provide good cover as well. And as we all know, you don't get the big fish without having lots of little fish.

### Sand matters

So cover is good. Fish (in particular trout) do well when there's more of it around. In the streams of the Bad River watershed, this valuable cover is vulnerable though.

Large amounts of sand in our streams can significantly change stream conditions. Sand packs in around large wood and buries it. It fills in those deep spots and buries the rocks on the stream bottom.

So where does all this sand come from? A little from here, a little from there—called non-point source pollution. Large eroding banks provide much of it. Streamside areas without plants to keep them stable provide some more. Fast moving water over recently tilled ground can carry topsoil with it to streams. Some erosion happens in the stream itself, as big floods pick up material from one area, and drop it off somewhere else.

Some erosion in and alongside streams has always been there. But accelerated erosion makes it so there is more sand today than there used to be. What these



*Fishing with electricity.*



*Steep banks bare of vegetation contribute significant erosion to our rivers and streams.*

*Continued on page 3*

## My Summer of Splashin' in Streams

By Heather Lima

This summer, I interned with the BRWA's Culvert Monitoring Program, and I feel very lucky to have had opportunity to survey streams in the watershed. We worked on five main problem sites this summer, and each one of them had something unique about it. The Hager Road tributaries to the Marengo were surrounded by springs. Trout Brook with its clear water and rocky bottom. The Long Lake Branch tributaries at Taylor Lane were in a word - brushy!

At each site, we took measurements about the stream's habitat—what kind of places the stream is to live in. We measured water depth and stream width. We also measured what kind of stream bed there is: sand, gravel or larger rocks. We measured what kind of streamside vegetation there is, and if the stream banks are eroding.

All of these things can change after a culvert is replaced. I think the BRWA is doing something that's really important by monitoring these streams to see how culvert replacements affect streams and the fish that live in them. By replacing bad culverts with better, fish and stream-friendly culverts, the BRWA (along with its partners) helps to preserve the integrity of streams and the regions they meander through, which many of us know and enjoy.

I'm glad that I was able to be a part of the BRWA team and learn hands-on even more surrounding a subject that I'm passionate about. ♦



## Here Fishie Fishie! (Continued from page 2)

erosion sources have in common is that they happen at high flows. It takes lots of fast moving water to move all that sand, and how big a flood event is depends on the landscape everywhere in a basin, not just right along streams.

So what can we do about that?

Slow the flow! Plant trees and grasses along our rivers. Leave forested buffers around streams when harvesting timber. Open lands can

increase runoff, so consider spreading out timber harvest over time, or selectively log instead of clear cutting. Keep or create more wetlands to hold water during rain events. Limit cropland erosion by using cover crops when possible. Consider a holding tank that captures rain runoff from your roof tops.

With a little help here, and a little there, we can keep our streams in good shape. ♦



*Is there a fish hiding under this log?*



### Board of Directors

Bill Heart  
*President*

Darienne McNamara  
*Vice President*

Jim Crandall  
*Treasurer*

Pam Roberts  
*Secretary, Bad River rep*

Shawn Miller  
*Bayfield County Rep*

Steve Smith  
*Iron County rep*

#### **At- large board members:**

Jo Bailey

Dane Bonk

Mark Dryer

Dorothy Lagerroos

Jedd Ungrodt

*Note: One of BRWA's new board members, Matt O'Claire, recently passed away. His untimely passing is a loss to us all. BRWA would like to extend our sincere condolences to Matt's family and friends.*

### BRWA Team

Michele Wheeler  
*Executive Director/  
Culvert Program Manager*

Matt Hudson  
*Watershed Action Director*

Bob Rice  
*Volunteer Coordinator*



PO Box 875

Ashland, WI 54806

715-682-2003 - phone

[badriverwatershed.org](http://badriverwatershed.org)

## Board Comings and Goings

### Farewell to Jack Wichita

Jack Wichita is leaving the BRWA board after seven years. (BRWA bylaws limit board members to two three year terms—and Jack threw in an extra year when we were starting up for good measure). Jack served as a representative from the League of Women Voters, and as president of the board for two years. He continues to support the work of BRWA as a volunteer for water chemistry, macroinvertebrates and E. coli. Following are some of Jack's thoughts and memories of his time with BRWA:

Over the past seven years, I've really enjoyed working with people who have a similar vision about the environment to mine—that is, we all have a clear stake in clean water, clean air and a healthy ecosystem and we all have a responsibility to do something about it. And I greatly enjoyed the challenges and problem-solving aspects of keeping a committed, vital organization like BRWA afloat, moving forward and growing.

Early on, there were a number of times when we were not sure how we could find the cash to buy new chemicals for our water quality monitoring or how we could get a quarterly newsletter out. But folks always found a way, stepping up to the plate to make things that needed doing happen.

The changes in the BRWA have been amazing over the past several years. We've grown from a small band of committed volunteers working with only our time and spirit to meet our mission, into a larger band of committed volunteers supported by a great staff of three wonderful folks (going on four soon) to support our work and our vision. Our staff has greatly extended our ability to meet our goals and mission. We've greatly sharpened our focus through strategic planning—clarifying our

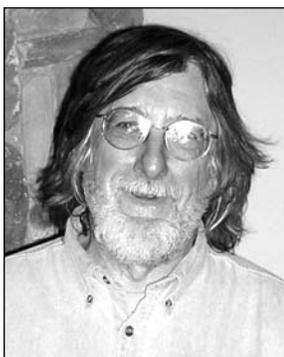
role as providers of quality watershed information and facilitating public involvement in improving watershed health overall. We are also becoming a "go to" organization for regional governmental and other organizations for planning data and coordination of planning activities. All big steps we didn't anticipate seven years ago when I began work on the board.

I think BRWA's future is bright. We have a core of committed, experienced volunteers who continue to do much of the day to day work of WQ monitoring and culvert assessment and we have a reputation in the community for doing quality science. This combination of energy and credibility will serve the organization well in the future. I have the greatest confidence in the new board and our new officers. In particular I've known Bill Heart for several years and it's hard to imagine a better qualified person to lead the BRWA into the future.

I'll miss working closely with great folks like Dorothy, Michele, Matt, Karen and many others on a regular basis. And at a purely selfish level, I'll miss our executive committee dinner meetings at Dorothy's—great food and wine and excellent camaraderie. ♦



Jack Wichita



Bill Heart

### Welcome (Back) Bill Heart

Bill Heart is our new President, and served on the very first board.

#### What do you look to do as a board member?

Continue supporting the good name of the BRWA and help protect the waters of all of the rivers in the watershed. I am committed to making the BRWA the best watershed association in the state. I hope to help make the BRWA financially stable that will ensure that we are able to continue

working towards our mission with other local resource professionals. We can make a difference in our wonderful northern waters.

#### What do you do to protect the water resource?

I am currently the Chair of both the Friends of the White River and the Wisconsin State Council of Trout Unlimited, and am also a board member of the Wild Rivers chapter of TU. All of these groups are similar in their efforts to keep our rivers in good shape for future generations.

#### What is your favorite spot in the watershed?

Without a doubt, my favorite spot in the watershed is the Bibon Marsh Natural Area on the White River in Bayfield. I try to spend as much time in the swamp as possible. ♦

### Welcome Jo Bailey

#### What first got you interested in the BRWA?

I have always attended the amazing dinner at NGLVC and have enjoyed the auction items/trips we won.

#### How did you hear about the BRWA?

When the League of Women Voters asked for a person to replace Jack W., I readily agreed, as I am leaving their Board after three years as President. I am a lifelong learner and sincerely look forward to learning more about the Bad River Watershed.

I totally love hiking, kayaking, reading, spending time in my chorten (Buddha hut) in our meadow, and being with friends, family (14 grandkids), and neighbors. ♦



Jo Bailey



Darienne in action

## Welcome Darienne McNamara

Darienne McNamara is BRWA's new Vice-President.

### What first got you interested in the BRWA?

I first started volunteering with BRWA 5 years ago sampling bugs on the Brunsweller River at County C. It's a great excuse to be outside, and also it's gratifying to see the direct connection between our time volunteering, and the data that helps protect the streams.

### What do you look to do as a board member?

In general, I hope to help the BRWA be sustainable and hopefully grow. Specifically, I'm going to help develop a fundraising plan. I will also be working with the Board and staff to make sure our programs are fun and informative for volunteers, and valuable for natural resource professionals.

### What do you do to protect the water resource?

Through my work, I serve as the coordinator for a dedicated group of people who deal with invasive species; the group is called the Northwoods Cooperative Weed Management Area. Outside my work, I try to learn as much as I can about water resources, be observant when I'm on the water or in the woods, and be environmentally conscious. ♦

## 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, Mike Stobbe, Gary Garfield, April Bebault, Rob Jones and Charlene Herron-Jordan.

**Thanks to our Donors:** National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Laura Jane Musser Fund, ESRI, Norcross Wildlife Foundation, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Wisconsin River Planning Grant Program, Wisconsin Coastal Management Program, River Alliance of Wisconsin, Center for Watershed Protection, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Jeff Ehrhardt, Ann and Timothy White, Keith and Laura Carlson, Johnson Family Foundation.

### Special Thanks to Our Long Time Reliables

A special thanks to Leslie Kolesar and Tana Turonie, who have given long years of dedication to water quality monitoring. Leslie has completed seven years of water quality monitoring at her site on Vaughn Creek. Tana has gathered water quality data for her site on the Potato River for 4 years. Thanks to both of you for taking time to help all of us better understand water quality conditions. You have been such reliable volunteers who have taken great pride in what you do each month. Your persistence and consistent monitoring adds valuable quality to the data collected.

If anyone is interested in doing bacteria and water chemistry monitoring, we have a few open spots and kits available. Two locations on the eastern side of the watershed are available immediately. Please contact Bob Rice or Michele Wheeler at 715 682-2003. BRWA will provide complete onsite training for you before you begin monitoring. ♦

## 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!



*Address Service Requested*



## Fall 2009 Watershed Waves



### *What's in a Name?*

Ever wonder why the Bad River is called the *Bad*? Do you call that other river in our watershed the *Brunswailler*—or the *Brown's Willow*? What names do you use for the other creek(s) by your home?

We're interested in gathering information about how different rivers and tributaries in the watershed got their names. If you have an interesting story or piece of history about the watershed please call Bob Rice at 715-682-2003 or email: [bobrice723@gmail.com](mailto:bobrice723@gmail.com).



*What's the best way to go fishing without a pole, bait, or lure?  
Check out page 2 for the answer.*

### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

- **October 6:** BRWA board meeting, location and time to be announced.
- **October 24:** Get to Know Your Watershed Field Day  
*Call Michele Wheeler at 682-2003 for more info.*

### **NOTES FOR READERS**

- Reduce the paper in your life! Get your *Watershed Waves* via email! Just send a message with this request to [brwa\\_wi@yahoo.com](mailto:brwa_wi@yahoo.com)
- BRWA is in the process of moving all of your addresses into a new database. If we need to make changes to how your name or address appears, please contact Bob Rice at 682-2003, or [bobrice723@gmail.com](mailto:bobrice723@gmail.com)