



6th Annual
SPRING
for the **WATER**

Famous Silent Auction
Local Gourmet Food
Bucket Raffle
Live Music

5:00 - 8:30pm
Saturday, March 27
Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center

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Spring for the Water

In a recent BRWA events survey, 60 percent of respondents said that they are interested in eating good food and visiting with friends—well here's your chance! With winter settling down and spring on the way, it's time for BRWA's 6th Annual "Spring for the Water."

Mark your calendars for 5:00–8:30 p.m. on Saturday, March 27, at the Northern Great Lakes Visitors Center in Ashland. This year's event brings the same great things you've enjoyed in the past. The same fabulous team that fed us in the past will be catering the event. And you can bid on one-of-a-kind local auction items, including:

- **Local foods** from Hermit Creek Farm, Angel Acres, and Spirit Creek Farms
- **Treasured items** from local artists including paintings, sculpture, jewelry, and hand-crafted items
- **Local experiences** such as massage, reflexology, kayak trips, fishing trips, and meals at local restaurants

And much, much more. Check out our web site www.badriverwatershed.org to see what's up for bid. We've added a bucket raffle this year as well, so come ready to bid and ready to pick up some raffle tickets.

There will also be a new treat this year. We will be presenting the inaugural **Karen Danielsen Outstanding Stewardship Award**, in honor of Karen's wide-ranging efforts to connect the people, land and water of the Bad River watershed. Come to the event to meet this first recipient of Karen's award, in recognition of one of our volunteer's exceptional service and leadership in the advancement of the Bad River Watershed Association mission. ♦

Marengo River Watershed Project: What's Happening?

Hot off the press! To introduce the MRWP Project to citizens in the Marengo River Watershed, project partners contributed to a new publication produced by BRWA called *Marengo Riffles*. This newsletter contains information specific to the MRWP Project and lists opportunities for citizens to provide their input for the project.

The first edition of *Marengo Riffles* was mailed at the end of February to all of the landowners within the Marengo River Watershed. If you would like to receive a copy of *Marengo Riffles*, you can download one at www.badriverwatershed.org or call Valerie at 682-2669. A second edition is expected to go out in the fall of 2010.

Some of the upcoming events related to the MRWP Project:

- **March 6:** "Coffee and Conversation" at the Four Corners Store, Mason, 9:00–11:00 a.m.
- **March 9:** MRWP Project Partners meeting, Ashland town hall in Highbridge, 4:00–6:30 p.m.
- **May 8:** "Get to Know Your Watershed" Field Day, Location TBD, 8:00 am–12:00 noon.

For more information and additional events please visit www.badriverwatershed.org or call Valerie at 682-2669. ♦



FOLLOW US ONLINE

The MRWP Project is now on the web! To learn more about the MRWP Project, find meeting agendas and notes, keep up to date on project happenings, and find out when events are happening near you, please visit www.badriverwatershed.org and look for the 'Marengo River Watershed Partnership Project' tab on the sidebar.

BRWA NEWS AND UPDATES

First Person Local Brings Stories to Life

By Bill Heart

The BRWA's annual *First Person Local* oral history event was held on Saturday afternoon, January 16 at the Senior Center in Ashland. Moderator Kent Goeckermann introduced our four speakers:



Mike Wiggins (standing) talks about the importance of water. Other speakers at First Person Local this year included (from left) Ken Lindquist, Dan Vaillancourt, moderator Kent Goeckermann, and Dana Jackson.

Dan Vaillancourt of Mason, Ken Lindquist of Marengo, Mike Wiggins Sr. and Dana Jackson, both of Odanah.

The first topic of discussion was the big flood of 1946. It rained for a day and a half with 13 inches falling in the last 24 hours. Both Ken and Kent remembered how the water was over all of the bridges on the Marengo River and the gorge below Copper Falls was actually filled so that the falls were washed out and were level with the lower river.

Dan spoke about how much the Marengo River has changed in his lifetime. He said there is much less water in the river now than when he

was growing up. He and his brothers spent much of their summer days exploring the Marengo and fishing for the abundant brook trout that inhabited the river at that time.

Mike and Dana were both raised on the Bad River Indian Reservation and related many stories about the hardships of their youth, but also about how wonderful it was growing up with the wilderness as their backyard playground. They both lived a subsistence lifestyle without many material things, but while not having electricity or running water wasn't easy, they did enjoy their youth. There was always wild rice, fish, maple syrup and venison for the table and a community that worked and harvested together.

It was fascinating listening to four of our elders (actually I am older than at least two of the speakers!) talk about their lives and how our rivers, and how the land and culture has changed in the past 60 plus years. I look forward to hearing more stories at next year's *First Person Local*. ♦

The People Have Spoken!

By Jo Bailey, Events Committee Chair

Thanks to everybody who completed the survey mentioned in the last issue of Watershed Waves, where we asked you to let us know what kinds of events or presentations you'd be interested in having BRWA pursue. Our committee reviewed all the details of the 75 events survey results received. Congratulations to Sharon Anthony and Sarah Boles who won the canoe trip down the White River. Some of the events or presentations you asked for include:

- Forest management options for landowners
- Biomass harvest from forest lands
- A tour of forest types/management strategies
- Getting lost in the woods (yea!)
- Agricultural innovations

- A tour of organic farms
- Changes in the watershed over 100 years
- Tour of local stream restoration projects
- Water quality of rivers in Watershed
- Pick up trash while canoeing
- Identifying and controlling local invasives
- Trout population status in local streams

So we brainstormed as to how to bring these requests to reality. Ideas like guided canoe trips, tours, geocaching, and an annual picnic at the pow-wow grounds. Yes, we are listening, so stay tuned and check the BRWA website to see what great ideas and plans have been spurred by your answers to the survey.



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Contact BRWA!
715-682-2003 - phone
badriverwatershed.org

We need your support to keep our programs going, so please remember to send in your donation today. And a big **THANKS** to everyone who contributed to our annual appeal!

VOICES FROM THE WATERSHED

A watershed describes a landscape where all water flows to a central point and joins together, regardless of its beginnings, on its journey towards a common place. A watershed is also a powerful symbol for the energetic connection that brings together people from a wide range of backgrounds and ideals toward a common purpose within the Bad River watershed in northern Wisconsin. This connection to the water and by the water brings about a powerful sense of ownership and responsibility to care for the watershed which provides so many services to us and unites us as a community. In this issue of *Watershed Waves*, we've compiled a series of articles from people in the watershed—their experiences, interests and thoughts for the future.

Water Testing with Kids — Just Plain Fun!

By Andrea Haugo

As a water quality monitor, I enjoy my monthly outings to the Brunswailer River. Visiting the same curve of the river, the same boulders, and the same eddies connects me to this place. Month by month, I like feeling the water temperature cool and watching as ice forms, first at the edges and then covering the river. The fast currents of spring are a welcome sight after a long winter, and the lazy currents of summer are calming and enticing. It is a beautiful process to watch and be connected to.

As a complement to these outings, the scientist in me enjoys the actual water testing. Has the dissolved oxygen increased now that the temperature has dropped? Is that yellowish green or light green—7.0 or 7.5? Most of all, I like titrations—carefully adding the titrant drop by drop until the dark blue solution quickly becomes clear.

However, never have I enjoyed water testing more than when I involved the 4th grade class at Our Lady of the Lake. Their curiosity is so energizing. They had many questions: Do I live in the Bad River Watershed? Is this chemical really poison? Will my water turn blue like that?

The fourth graders felt very important to be doing scientific tests for an organization, and they took their jobs seriously. These 10-year olds re-taught me several things. Yes, my job as a water tester is important: it is important to monitor the rivers and streams where we live, and it is important to live in a community that is connected to and values our waters. They reminded me how important it is to engage and connect young people to the environment and simply, how fun 10-year olds are to be around. ♦

Volunteering is a great way to collect your own stories about the Bad River Watershed. Interested? Contact Bob Rice at 715-292-1143.



Top: How much oxygen is in that water?
Below: Water quality testers in Our Lady of the Lake 4th grade class.



Thank You!

Thanks to our Water Quality Volunteers: Tracey Ledder, Joan Elias, Kent Goeckermann, Andy Goyke, Pam Roberts, Ulli Kastens, Jack Wichita, Roland Wolff, Colleen Matula, Darienne McNamara, Andrea Haugo, Gary Garfield, Jerry Setzke, Rachel, Caleb, and Gabe Coughtry, Sharon Anthony and Dale Thomas.

Thanks to our Funders and Contributors: Ann Chartier and Jim Oakley Family, Allison Slavick and Randy Matis, Dave Kurki, Jo and Mike Bailey, Plum Creek, Allan A. & Ramona Hann, Laura Ehmann and Ronald Parkinson Family, Mike & Cheryl Trieschmann, Jacob Oblatz, Dr. Grace Heitsch, Dennis & Pat Musil Family, Bobbi Rongstad, Ken & Darlene Raspotnik, Carolyn Sneed, Mary Rehwald, Dorothy Lagerroos and Tom McNurlin, Derek and Kim Ogle, Art Techlow, Mike Mlynarek and Marsha Sorensen, Jim and Mimi Crandall, Ann T Schultz, Thomas Piikkila, Mark Leach, John Bonk, A. W. Research Labs, Mark & Pam Dryer, Darienne McNamara and Tim Ciembronowicz, Dave Dawkins, Kevin Brewster, Bill and Cindy Heart, Tom Erickson and Jan Weber, Jack & Mary Wichita, Patrick Mayotte, Dane & Paula Bonk, Harvey Carlson, Robert Jr. & Sondra Dunne, Eleanor Bussey, Marion Koski, Pete Rasmussen and Joy Shelble, Dr. Heinz and Janice Vogel, Jack and Anne Helgeson, Bob and Reba Rice, Sheree Peterson, Cathy Zimmerman, Ellie Williams, Blaise Sopiwnik and Jess Fairbanks, Kathy & David Allen, Joy and Jim Perry, Iron County Land and Water Conservation Department, Hidden Vue Farm, Charlene Herron-Jordan, Steve and Margaret Baumgardner, Ruth Lull and Robert Parsonage, and Heart Graphics & Communications.

Bridges of the Marengo

By George Einar Busséy

My father, James Alden Bussey (1916-1994) served the land and people of northern Wisconsin for his entire post-WWII career as a soil and water conservationist, and trained forester. When the family took trips we would stop at bridges where he would check the stream banks for erosion and the water for clarity. The Marengo River was one of those rivers.

We know rivers mostly by where we cross them. But as you drive from bridge to bridge you get a feeling for the land. There is a rhythm to the watershed: the woodlots, the hay fields, silos, barns, homes, fences, hills and valleys. This water which we share with all the earth falls upon the land, is filtered, used and re-filtered and returned to the endless cycle. It connects us to all of humanity and all of nature. Want to take a ride?

We start at the bridge on Government Road, east of Minersville. Those look like turkey tracks on the snow covered ice below the bridge. No sign of human footsteps, but there's a canine-like print expressing interest in the presence of the big birds.

With a bootlegger turn we're headed upstream to Marengo and its three bridges: the peaceful arc of the hiking and snowmobile bridge dedicated to Ken Todd, the old Soo Line railway bridge, and the busy State Highway 13 bridge. Then driving west through the well-kept farmland we cross and re-cross the river on Riemer Road, Marengo River Road, Mika Road and County Highway C.

At the bridge on County Highway C the river is free of ice. It is running cold and clear with a strong current. It is refreshing ... very clean and clear, so very alive. The stream bank is well protected, a reflection upon the people who live here and their love of the land. Forestry and undergrowth have been kept in place and active farming kept well back from the fragile boundary that joins the land to the flowing water.

Upstream and further west near Four Corners the river is once again covered with ice and snow. The Marengo is smaller here and the landscape mostly forested: spruce and pine; maple, birch and poplar; hazel brush and alder. The river winds its way through the quiet peacefulness of the winter woods.

Our last bridge today is the one on Indian Lake Road just downstream from Marengo Lake. We turn around and head for home: past the old cemetery at Birch Lake Church, north on Argo Road. From up here on Argo Road, just west of Sanborn, we can see clear to Highbridge. The watershed of the Marengo River valley lies before us under a blanket of snow. There is a large snowman standing by a rural mail box with lumps of coal for buttons, a wide brim hat, scarf, carrot nose, big eyes, and toothy grin. Warmed by this friendly gesture of those who live here, a person feels settled into this land.

This land will shed the snow melt and the rains that follow. It will feed the ditches, creeks and streams which define the Marengo River watershed. In summer when all is green, or autumn when the maples are burnished red, orange and yellow we'll come back. We'll head up into the hills of the Penokee Range south of Marengo Lake and explore the forest road bridges. We'll reconnect with the headwaters of this vibrant living part of the earth's circulatory system. We'll remember that we are one with the watershed. ♦



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!



Wood Turtles

Editor's Note: In a research project conducted in the 1990s, Kevin Brewster radio-tracked adult and juvenile wood turtles over an entire year on the upper Wisconsin River. Here he recounts some noteworthy facts about one of the least conspicuous but quite interesting inhabitants of our watershed—the wood turtle.

Wood turtles are so named because they are highly terrestrial during the summer and may be found in woodland habitats far from their preferred sand or gravel bottom streams and rivers. Unlike the smooth-shelled painted turtle that often shares its habitat, wood turtles have a six to nine-inch long rough and sculptured upper shell (or carapace). The carapace is composed of bony plates called scutes that display annular growth rings just like trees—another possible “wood” connection.

Wood turtles are brownish-gray above and the lower shell (plastron) is yellow with large black blotches. The front legs of Minnesota, Wisconsin, and upper Michigan turtles are yellow to yellow-orange, while further east they have salmon-red front legs.

Here in northern Wisconsin, a year in the life of a wood turtle starts with emergence from underwater hibernation in April. Breeding occurs in the water in late April to early May. Unlike painted turtles, which are commonly seen basking on logs or rocks in lakes and ponds, wood turtles are most likely seen during nesting season in mid to late June. They dig shallow holes in sandy soil and deposit an average of eight eggs. The site must be well drained and exposed to ample sunlight for the 60-day incubation period.

Turtles will travel far to find preferred nesting sites. One adult turtle I tracked traveled a mile upriver to nest. She then returned and spent the summer about a quarter mile from the river, feeding on bracken fern, blueberry leaves and fruit. Other

favorite wood turtle foods include earthworms, slugs and mushrooms. Juveniles stayed close to the river, sometimes moving a few hundred yards downstream in the channel but usually remaining hidden among alder root masses close to the channel.

By early October, wood turtles return to their home rivers. There may be a second breeding period at this time, then they enter hibernation for the winter. They burrow into mud at the edges of alder thickets or dig into the channel bottom. In cold water, their metabolism slows to the point that breathing is no longer necessary and all the oxygen they require is absorbed through their skin from the surrounding water.



In Wisconsin, wood turtles are listed as a threatened species. Excavating nests on eroded stream banks or in roadbeds at river crossings often leads to mortality from being run over by vehicles. Crossing paths with humans also carries the risk of illegal collection for sale in the pet trade or the

Asian food market. These threats, combined with habitat loss and nest predation by raccoons and skunks, have resulted in population declines.

Although more survey work is needed to identify important nesting sites, Wisconsin DNR data suggests that the Bad River watershed still hosts a fairly healthy population of wood turtles. They will benefit from currently implemented and planned watershed conservation initiatives, but the best long-term insurance will be a riparian management philosophy that preserves the species' basic needs—substantial stretches of unfragmented river corridor and nearby uplands.

Wood turtles are often described as one of the most intelligent of turtle species—early behavioral studies showed that they learned to negotiate mazes as well as rats. Pretty impressive for a “primitive” reptile! ♦

BAD RIVER WATERSHED ASSOCIATION Baseline Water Quality Monitoring Report: White River Basin - Pike River Road & Taylor Lane, 2009

The mission of the Bad River Watershed Association (BRWA) is to promote a healthy relationship between the people and natural communities of the Bad River watershed by involving citizens in assessing, maintaining and improving watershed integrity for future generations. A key piece of implementing this mission is BRWA's Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring Program, initiated in 2002. The program involves local citizens in collecting water chemistry, macroinvertebrates, and E. coli data from streams throughout the Bad River watershed. The goal of the program is to establish at least a four-year baseline of water quality data from sites in the watershed. The data will be used for determining the overall health of the watershed, to track changes over time, and to make informed decisions about protecting the health of the watershed. This report establishes baseline water quality conditions at BRWA's Pike River Road (P.R.R.) & Taylor Lane (T.L.) sites in the White River Basin using the first four years of data collected from these sites.

White River, Pike River Rd.
 Trout Stream Classification**
 Class 1 upstream of site
 Water Classification**
 Outstanding upstream of site, Exceptional downstream of site.
 Volunteer Monitors
 Karen Davidson, Dale & Sean Thomas

Long Lake Branch, Taylor Ln.
 Trout Stream Classification**
 Class 1 up & downstream of site
 Water Classification**
 Outstanding up & downstream of site
 Volunteer Monitors
 Dane Bork & Family

Bad River Watershed Association Water Quality Monitoring Sites
 White River Basin - Pike River Rd. and Taylor Ln.

Map showing monitoring sites: Pike River Rd., Taylor Ln., White River, Long Lake Branch, and Taylor Ln.

***Trout Stream Classification (State of Wisconsin)**
 Class 1: Highest quality trout waters. No stocking needed to maintain populations.
 Class 2: Some natural reproduction, but stocking is needed to maintain a desirable sport fishery.
 Class 3: The natural reproduction. Populations maintained by stocking.

****Water Classification**
 Wisconsin's highest quality surface waters are classified as Outstanding Resource Waters (ORW). Highest quality waters, typically no human point sources of pollution exist, no changes in baseline water quality allowed.
 Exceptional Resource Waters (ERW). Similar to ORW but some human point sources of pollution exist. No changes in baseline water quality allowed.

Connecting People Land and Water

First Basin Report Completed

In the last issue of *Watershed Waves*, we told you about baseline monitoring reports. These are summaries of the water quality data BRWA volunteers have collected over the years. The reports describe the current conditions of our rivers, a key piece of info for local citizens, governments, and natural resource agencies that are charged with keeping our rivers in great shape.

Working with a team of technical experts, BRWA has completed the White River basin report.

“This first report will serve as a template for the rest of the more than 10 sites that our volunteers have collected at least four years of data,” said Matt Hudson, BRWA Watershed Action Director. “With the groundwork in place, BRWA is excited to complete more of these reports over the coming months.”

Check the BRWA website at badriverwatershed.org to view this report. ♦

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Spring 2010 Watershed Waves

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**BAD RIVER**
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Are You Hearing Voices?

Look inside for “Voices from the Watershed,” featuring personal stories of unique experiences people have had in the Bad River watershed. What are your finest memories of our rivers and forests? Let us know and we may publish your story in a future issue of *Watershed Waves*.



Upcoming Events

March 11 & 16: Bacteria Sampling Training
Attend either of these two sessions as a refresher for all you *E.coli* sampling veterans or as an introductory training for new volunteers. Meet at 6:00p.m. at the Larson-Juhl Biology Lab, Northland College campus.

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Bucket Raffle
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SPRING IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER!

So is *Spring for the Water*, the Bad River Watershed Association's 6th annual celebration of the people and activities that make our watershed so excellent. Enjoy great food, music, a silent auction, raffle, and a lot more. Make plans to attend: 5:00—8:30 p.m. Saturday, March 27 at the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center.