

# Friends of Rowan Creek



**Strategic Plan**  
**February 15, 2004**  
**2004 - 2006**

**Final Version**

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## Mission Statement

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*...to restore, enhance, protect, and promote  
the unique characteristics of Rowan Creek  
and its watershed.*

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## Focus Areas

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### ***Connect with the Watershed Community***

Provide educational programs and activities for the Rowan Creek watershed community that will help to ensure the long-term health of the watershed and that will receive widespread support from the community.

### ***Engage with Key Stakeholders\****

Identify and engage with key stakeholders who are most instrumental in shaping the future of the Rowan Creek watershed.

### ***Identify and Communicate Priority Messages***

Design outreach approaches and materials to effectively communicate the Friends of Rowan Creek's current priorities to general and targeted audiences.

### ***Enhance Organizational Health and Development***

Continue to take steps to increase the Friends of Rowan Creek's organizational effectiveness, vitality, and longevity.

\* Everyone is a key stakeholder, but at times we will identify key individuals or groups to focus our work on.

### ***Introduction***

The Friends of Rowan Creek was established by a concerned group of individuals in early 2000. Initially brought together by local officials from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) and the Village of Poynette, the group soon became citizen led. Development of bylaws and incorporation as a membership organization quickly followed. In 2001 the group was the recipient of a River Protection Planning Grant from the WDNR, which provided the resources to acquire non-profit status as a 501(c)3 organization, making the group officially tax exempt in the eyes of the IRS.

Other projects conducted under the auspices of the grant include the development of this strategic plan, general operational costs such as postage and printing, outreach and educational events, and training for board members.

The Board members of the Friends of Rowan Creek embarked upon strategic planning in order to provide direction and focus to the work of the group. We want to be efficient and focused in our work, and use our members' resources and our time in the most effective way possible. We hope that our strategic plan will guide our board members, and members, over the next three years, and assist the community of the Rowan Creek Watershed to work together to protect this valuable resource.

Input for this strategic plan was provided by Kurt Caulkins (Columbia County Conservationist), Meagan Yost (Town of Lowville Supervisor), Ken Erdahl (Town of Dekorra Supervisor), Dennis Linn (Village of Poynette Administrator), Gordon Stevenson (Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources), Kevin Searock (Trout Unlimited), Ken Potter (University of Wisconsin - Madison) and several Friends members.

Anne Forbes of Partners in Place, and Dianna Toledo of the River Alliance of Wisconsin enthusiastically guided our work. Elizabeth Ivers provided writing services and thoughtful insight.

Board members, February 2004

Nancy Braker (President), Poynette  
Tony Karls, Town of Lowville  
Ira Kastenber (Secretary), Poynette  
Yvette Lokotz, Poynette  
Allison Russell (Treasurer), Poynette  
Robert Shaw, Poynette

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## *Connect with the Watershed Community*

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**Goal 1:** Facilitate outreach activities to increase the community's appreciation of the Rowan Creek watershed, to share information with community members on the importance of stormwater management, and to increase the visibility of the Friends of Rowan Creek.

### ***Actions:***

#### Year 1

- a. Continue yearly Earth Day creek clean-up along Rowan Creek. Strive to include additional facets of the community (e.g., Boy Scouts, 4-H clubs, service organizations, and businesses).
- b. Continue to host a minimum of one public lecture per year on priority issues (e.g., stormwater management, groundwater quality, invasive species, and native plant communities).
- c. Continue to maintain the prairie plantings at the Poynette High School and the park. Recruit volunteers to be involved.
- d. Continue removal of wild parsnip in public use areas (Village of Poynette park and WDNR land access points).
- e. Identify and plan a rain garden demonstration project.

#### Year 2

- a. Continue Earth Day creek clean-up from year 1.
- b. Continue wild parsnip removal from year 1.
- c. Continue to host public lectures from year 1.
- d. Continue the maintenance of prairie plantings from year 1.
- e. Incorporate one new outreach activity to involve the Rowan Creek watershed community.
- f. Maintain a regular presence at a minimum of two local events per year.
- g. Install the rain garden demonstration project identified in year 1.
- h. Promote the rain garden concept; host one tour or workshop.

#### Year 3+

- a. Continue Earth Day creek clean-up.
- b. Continue wild parsnip removal from year 2.
- c. Continue to host public lectures from year 2.
- d. Continue the maintenance of prairie plantings from year 2.
- e. Research two additional stormwater reduction techniques that would be feasible for a homeowner or a public/commercial property owner to install and demonstrate.
- f. Find locations to install above techniques.
- g. Complete installations of above techniques (may require funding via a grant).

**Goal 2:** Facilitate activities that engage students and support learning about Rowan Creek ecology and watershed issues.

***Actions:***

Year 1

- a. Work with the Middle School service club to implement appropriate projects such as creek clean-up near the school.

Year 2

- a. Respond to invitations from the Poynette High School; work with the Conservation Club and the science instructors to incorporate studies of Rowan Creek in their classroom curriculum in appropriate ways.

Year 3

- a. Work to involve high school class or conservation club in creek-monitoring program.
- b. Host meeting of public school teachers to identify their needs from the Friends of Rowan Creek.
- c. Explore using the Cooperative Education Service Agency (CESA) and University of Wisconsin distance learning with schools to expose students to environmental and conservation topics of interest.
- d. Finish developing creek-monitoring curriculum with high school science and conservation staff.

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## *Engage with Key Stakeholders*

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**Goal 1:** Share stormwater management information with watershed residents and Village, Township, and County public officials, and participate in the planning process to ensure the long-term water quality of the Rowan Creek watershed.

**Actions:**

Year 1

- a. Provide information to participants of the joint comprehensive planning process currently being carried out by the Towns of Lowville and Dekorra and the Village of Poynette.
- b. Develop a plan and set a schedule to present the Water Resources Management study to Columbia County, the Village of Poynette, the Village of Arlington, and the Towns of Arlington, Dekorra, Leeds, Lodi and Lowville. Use the University staff and students where possible to assist with the presentations. (Time and format of presentations will depend on the interest and schedules of the municipalities.)
- c. Find out the “Smart Growth” planning schedules for the Towns of Lodi, Arlington, and Leeds; the Village of Arlington; and Columbia County in order to ensure timely provision of information on the natural resources of the creek and conservation methods.

Year 2+

- a. Participate in the planning process when it begins in the Towns of Lodi, Arlington, and Leeds; the Village of Arlington; and Columbia County.

**Goal 2:** Support and promote programs that improve urban stormwater management and protect the water quality of the entire watershed.

**Actions:**

Year 1

- a. Determine the timing for the creation of a stormwater management ordinance for Columbia County.
- b. Research the benefits of and determine the timing for a stormwater utility for the Village of Poynette.

Year 2

- a. Support and promote the creation of a stormwater management ordinance for Columbia County.
- b. Support and promote a stormwater utility for the Village of Poynette, if approach is determined to be appropriate.

- c. Facilitate the development of a creek-monitoring program and ensure implementation.

Year 3+

- a. Use information acquired from the United States Geological Survey groundwater study (when it is completed) to assess whether any local governments outside of the watershed should be informed about how local practices may be affecting groundwater which eventually drains into Rowan Creek.

**Goal 3:** Help improve collaboration and coordination between Rowan Creek watershed stakeholders.

*Actions:*

Year 1

- a. Host the first annual stakeholders' meeting to improve communication and coordination between elected officials, governmental agencies, and nongovernmental organizations. Propose that the meeting be organized on a rotating basis.
- b. Complete the grant-funded survey of invasive plants that impact the watershed. Share the survey results with local government officials, private landowners, and WDNR, County and Department of Transportation personnel to help them better target clean-up efforts.\*\*
- c. Collaborate with WDNR on such activities as trail work, removal of invasive plants, etc. Plan two activities each year that support mutual goals.

Year 2+

- a. Continue to collaborate with WDNR on two property management activities each year.

Year 3+

- a. Continue to host the annual stakeholders meeting on a rotating basis (every 3-5 years).

Year 3

- a. Research and publicize current knowledge of the impacts of groundwater extraction. Provide information to appropriate parties.

**Goal 4:** Determine appropriate and beneficial ways to engage the agricultural community in watershed protection efforts.

***Actions:***

Year 2

- a. Investigate what other watershed groups do to engage agricultural interests. Consult with the River Alliance and Gathering Waters for input and help in selecting other groups to consult with.
- b. Use the expertise of the University of Wisconsin- Madison's Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems for engaging the agricultural community. Find out what programs already exist that Friends of Rowan Creek could promote or participate in.

Year 3+

- a. Set up meetings with key farmers and other rural landowners to explore how they can work with the Friends of Rowan Creek, and to welcome them into the Friends of Rowan Creek.
- b. Promote success stories of agricultural best management practices via tours, newspaper articles, etc.
- c. Work with the County Conservation Department and the Natural Resource Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture to promote the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program and other agricultural programs that reduce runoff and soil erosion.

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## ***Identify and Communicate Priority Messages***

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**Goal 1:** Identify and routinely update key messages that communicate the Friends of Rowan Creek’s current priorities in outreach materials and presentations.

***Actions:***

Year 1

- a. As part of the annual action planning process, identify key messages to focus on in the given year and plan all outreach activities to incorporate these messages.

**Goal 2:** Continue to develop educational and informational materials to reach the general public.

***Actions:***

Year 1

- b. Continue to publish the Friends of Rowan Creek newsletter twice a year.
- c. Update the web page on an ongoing basis.
- d. Prepare a newspaper article (s) relating information from the University of Wisconsin-Madison Water Resource Management study.
- e. Complete watershed bike route (map and supporting materials).\*\*

Year 2

- a. Explore the possibility of contributing articles and regular features to local newspaper(s).
- b. Upgrade display materials used at events.
- c. Continue to publish the newsletter twice a year.
- d. Continue to update the web page on an ongoing basis.

Year 3+

- a. Consider publishing the newsletter on a quarterly basis.
- b. Continue to update the web page on an ongoing basis.

**Goal 3:** Develop public presentation materials to use with representatives of local government (to support implementation of “Engage Key Stakeholders,” Goals 1 and 2).

***Actions:***

Year 1

- a. Use the Executive Summary of the University of Wisconsin-Madison’s Water Resource Management report with local government officials and others. Develop or use existing written materials and visual aids (slide show, etc.) to discuss and illustrate stormwater best management practices before town boards and planning commissions.

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## ***Enhance Organizational Health and Development***

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**Goal 1:** Improve the Friends of Rowan Creek's board and strengthen its leadership.

***Actions:***

Year 1

- a. Recruit three new board members over the next three years; recruit board members with diverse backgrounds/strengths (e.g., developer, farmer).
- b. Increase the number of board members/volunteers taking on leadership roles. Strive to have each board member accept the organizational responsibility of one large project a year, and to have at least two regular members assist in those projects.

Year 2+

- a. Continue to recruit new board members, with a goal of nine active board members. Include geographical diversity (i.e., board member(s) from the lower watershed, or from outside the watershed).
- b. Collect information from new and old members on areas they would be willing to assist with. Develop a system for following up with potential volunteers to use their talents.

**Goal 2:** Improve the Friends of Rowan Creek's planning process and organizational structure.

***Actions:***

Year 1

- a. Complete the strategic planning process.\*\*
- b. Complete an annual action plan and budget for 2004 by the end of February 2004.

Year 2

- a. Complete an annual action plan and budget for 2005 by the end of January 2005.
- b. Complete an annual action plan and budget for 2006 by December 2005.

Year 3

- a. Complete an annual action plan and budget for 2007 by December 2006.
- b. Review the strategic plan and update where needed. Evaluate the need for revamping the plan by the end of the year and make appropriate plans to do so.

**Goal 3:** Increase the Friends of Rowan Creek’s capacity to achieve its goals.

***Actions:***

Year 1

- a. Develop and begin implementation of a membership campaign following the concept of a support “Pyramid.” Strive to recruit ten new regular members and two new business members.

Year 2

- a. Continue implementation of a membership campaign, with the goal of fifteen new members and two new business members.
- b. Develop ideas for fundraising events; choose one idea and begin planning.
- c. Research and identify two possible sources of grant dollars. Submit one grant proposal.

Year 3

- a. Continue implementation of a membership campaign, with the goal of fifteen new members and two new business members.
- b. Hold a fundraiser with the goal of raising \$500 or more (depending on specific project needs).
- c. Submit one grant proposal.

**Goal 4:** Continue to increase board member’s organizational skills and knowledge of watershed ecology/stormwater management techniques so that they may better fulfill the mission of the Friends of Rowan Creek.

***Actions:***

Year 1

- a. Review the stormwater management techniques discussed in the Water Resources Management study.
- b. Share information gathered from journals, conferences, etc. Develop a Friend’s “library” for use by board members, members and others.

Year 2

- a. Plan field trips (self-guided or as a group) for board members and others to observe innovative stormwater management techniques in use elsewhere. Strive to take two trips per year.

\*\* Items required under current DNR River Protection Planning Grant (due date of December, 2004)