

The Rowan Reporter

The Newsletter of The Friends of Rowan Creek

Volume 1, Number 1

November, 2001



To restore, enhance, protect, and promote the unique characteristics of Rowan Creek and its watershed

Rowan Creek
fish survey
demonstration,
9/6/01



Recent activities

About 35 intrepid creek and fish enthusiasts braved threatening weather to observe a **fish shocking demonstration** on September 6. DNR Fisheries Biologist Tim Larson demonstrated how information is gathered from streams on fish populations and discussed how this data is used to make management decisions. Tim shared with us data from previous years that demonstrated a 3 fold increase in fish numbers after stream improvement work! The group was awed by the numbers of fish that magically appeared in the stream as a result of the shocking equipment. The food prepared for the assembled crowd by member Tom Flesch was inspiring as well. Thanks to Tim and Tom for making the event fun and interesting!

Our **Prairie Garden**, which was planted from seed last fall, was ablaze with black eyed Susan this summer. We seem to have gotten good germination from the planting, and it should look great next summer. We enhanced the seeded area with plants donated by Prairie Nursery of Westfield. Thanks to the planting crew and to Bob and Jill Sampson, neighbors to the planting who have kept a watchful eye on the project. We had chickadees, and then bluebirds in the nest box that Gary Sorenson provided. The prairie garden is located on Village of Poynette park land, on West Washington Street, and just south of the Poynette Medical Clinic.

We installed a **rain garden** at the home of Jenny and Mike Teeter, to provide a local demonstration of this stormwater management technique. The Teeters had been having problems with pooling of water in one corner of their yard, and decided to take advantage of this feature rather than get frustrated by it. The Teeters prepared the area, and volunteers helped with the planting. We hope to get more Village residents involved in rain gardens in the future.

Note from the Prez

The Friends of Rowan Creek have been active since June, 2000, when a small group of us gathered and decided formally to incorporate. We have accomplished a lot since then and each of us should feel proud at where our small group has gotten to in such sort order. Thanks for all your interest and hard work! I have great confidence that the work we have started will make a big difference for the long-term health of the Rowan Creek Watershed.

Non-Profit Application Update

Our application as a non-profit organization [501(c)(3)] was submitted at the end of September. While it will take a few months to get final approval from the IRS, we have every reason to believe our application will be approved. We worked with a Madison law firm specializing in non-profit organization issues to complete the application. This work was funded through our Rivers Planning Grant from the Wisconsin DNR. Once we have our federal non-profit status we will have better access to various government and private grants and other programs.

Watershed Study funded, to begin

Our cooperative project with the UW-Madison Water Resources Program was recently funded \$7,500 by the DNR River Protection Planning Grant Program. The Township of Dekorra and the Village of Poynette will provide additional funding for the project. This study will help us understand the current condition of the watershed, and where threats to its high water quality might come from. Professor Ken Potter and his students will join us at our November 8 membership meeting to discuss the project and solicit further ideas from us. Many thanks to the Columbia County Conservation Department for assisting with this grant.

Grant from Lake Wisconsin Lions Club

We received a grant in September from the Lake Wisconsin Lions Club to further our work on the control of harmful exotic species in the watershed. Thanks to the help of member Donna Balfanz, who attended a Lion's Club meeting to describe our project, we received \$400 to begin work on mapping and control of purple loosestrife, an aggressive invader of our wetlands (see sidebar).

Purple loosestrife is not yet well established in the watershed and we have a good chance of keeping this nuisance species at bay if we act quickly. Work this summer to assess the current status of the plant in the watershed was conducted by Dave Egan, Steve Mueller and Nancy Braker, with a small amount of control work initiated. Next year's work will include more focused efforts on reducing this plant in some key areas, and working with the DNR to introduce loosestrife-eating beetles which will make our job easier.

Thanks to the Lions Club for their support of this effort! Maintaining high quality wildlife habitat for all to enjoy is a key objective of the Friends of Rowan Creek, and we appreciate the Lion's Club support of our activities.

Purple loosestrife is a very hardy perennial plant introduced to eastern North America from Europe in the early 1800's. Since it was introduced, purple loosestrife has spread westward and can be found across much of Canada and the U.S. Purple loosestrife can rapidly degrade wetlands, diminishing their value for wildlife habitat.

Wetlands are the most biologically diverse, productive component of our ecosystem. Hundreds of species of plants, birds, mammals, reptiles, insects, fish, and amphibians rely on healthy wetland habitat for their survival. When purple loosestrife gets a foothold, the habitat where fish and wildlife feed, seek shelter, reproduce and rear their young, quickly becomes choked under a sea of purple flowers. Areas where wild rice grows and where fish spawn are degraded.

An estimated 190,000 hectares of wetlands, marshes, pastures, and streamside meadows are affected in North America each year, with an economic impact of millions of dollars. See the Wisconsin DNR website (<http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/er/invasive/factsheets/loose.htm>) for more information.

Invasive Plants in Wisconsin's Natural Areas

excerpted from WDNR Endangered Resources webpage (<http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/er/invasive/info/naturalareas.htm>)

Why are some plants so invasive?

As plants have evolved and moved around over the millennia, they have adapted to the community of other plants and animals that also existed in their habitat. Most plants have numerous insects or other animals that feed on them and various disease organisms that keep them from overpopulating their native homeland. Yet when these plants are moved to a new continent or region without these predators and diseases, they are given the opportunity to spread unchecked.

Fortunately not all non-native plants are weedy in natural areas, gardens or agricultural fields, wetlands and prairies. Some, such as honeysuckle and common buckthorn, have been a problem for a number of years and are now so abundant that most urban parks in the Milwaukee area have few other plants beneath their branches. These European shrubs leaf out early and cast a dense shade, virtually eliminating spring wildflowers, native shrubs, and even tree seedlings.

Other species, such as garlic mustard, are fairly recent invaders, very rapidly colonizing the forest floor in the last 10 years. Some plants have shown to be very weedy further east, south or west, yet have not yet become a problem here. Our cold winter temperatures or other environmental conditions limit the spread of some species not adapted to our area. But there are others that are very likely to become a problem here in the future.

What can you do about invasive plants?

Unlike many environmental problems, this one is close to home, often as close as your own yard or neighborhood park. There are many things that anyone can do to help contain these weeds:

- ◆ Learn to identify the most troublesome weeds in your area and start controlling them before they take over.
- ◆ Learn the most effective control methods for the plant. Experiment and find what works best for you.
- ◆ Recruit friends and neighbors to help in a local weeding effort.
- ◆ Find out what landscape plants, herbs or other plants have the potential to be invasive and either remove them from your yard or remove and carefully dispose of the older flowers and seed heads. Talk to friends and neighbors about weeds and help them identify and remove them from their yards.
- ◆ When planting, try using native trees, shrubs, vines, flowers and grasses to better harmonize with the natural landscape and to provide habitat for a diversity of butterflies, birds and other wildlife.

Invasive Plants to Watch For

The non-native plants that are most troublesome in an area will vary depending on the location, soil type, moisture level and other factors. Listed to the right are some of the most common invasive plants found in the Rowan Creek Watershed.

- ◆ Common Buckthorn, *Rhamnus cathartica*
- ◆ Bush Honeysuckle, *Lonicera bella*
- ◆ Black Locust, *Robinia pseudoacacia*
- ◆ Garlic Mustard, *Alliaria petiolata*
- ◆ Purple Loosestrife, *Lythrum salicaria*
- ◆ Wild Parsnip, *Pastinaca sativa*
- ◆ Reed Canary Grass, *Phalaris arundinacea*

Future Activities

- ◆ Board (6:30) and Member (7:00) meetings (November 8, January 10, March 14, and May 9)
- ◆ Board meetings (7:00) (December 13, February 14, April 11, and June 13)
- ◆ Native Landscaping Talk (February)
- ◆ Bluebird Talk and house building (March)
- ◆ April 20 (Earth Day) creek clean up, 8 - noon
- ◆ Annual Membership Meeting, May 9
- ◆ Rowan Creek Trail Maintenance, TBA

For up-to-date information on these and other events, please consider joining the Friends of Rowan Creek email discussion list. Just send an email <info@rowancreek.org> to be added to the list or for more information.

Interested in getting involved? We are currently actively recruiting people to be considered as new board members. If you are interested, please contact Steve Mueller.

Thanks to outgoing board members Dave Egan and Tom Flesch. Both of these folks provided great service but have moved (literally) on to different communities. We wish them good luck in their future volunteer activities.

Current board members

Nancy Braker, President	nbraker@altavista.com	635-4040
Dan Cole	colvly@merr.com	635-4399
Yvette Lokotz	Ylokotz@jvl.net.com	635-8719
Steve Mueller, Vice-President	two_b_cool@sprynet.com	635-4805
Allison Russell, Treasurer	Russell4@charter.net	635-8588

creekscape by John Wachholz



Get Involved!

Ways you can help:

The board has recently established committees and welcomes your assistance with their work. If any of the listed activities sound interesting, please contact the appropriate board member. Don't worry if you feel you have limited experience; everyone has useful skills and talents that we can put to work!

- Special Events and Projects* (Yvette Lokotz, Dan Cole)
- Fundraising* (Nancy Braker)
- Long Range Planning* (Nancy Braker and Allison Russell)
- Membership* (Allison Russell)
- Publicity/Communications* (Nancy Braker and Allison Russell)
- Board Recruitment* (Steve Mueller and Nancy Braker)

icescape
by Ira
Kastenberg



How to reach us

We want to hear from you! Get us your ideas about projects you would like to see taken up by the Friends of Rowan Creek. As a local organization, we need your help, ideas and resources to make our work successful. Contact any of our board members, send an email to us at info@rowancreek.org, or see our web page www.rowancreek.org for more information and useful links.

Member Get a Member Campaign:

Enclosed in your newsletter mailing you will find a copy of our recently published brochure. Please consider sharing this brochure with someone you feel would be interested in our group. In order to be an effective organization, we need to grow our membership. Help us do this by spreading the word about our group! Contact Nancy Braker if you could use more copies of the brochure.

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Annual Dues</div>	Junior (<18)	\$3	<input type="radio"/>	Name _____ Address _____ _____ Phone _____ E-mail _____ Interests? _____
	Individual	\$20	<input type="radio"/>	
	Family	\$30	<input type="radio"/>	
	Organization	\$50	<input type="radio"/>	
	Business	\$100	<input type="radio"/>	
	Lifetime Membership	\$250	<input type="radio"/>	
General Contribution	_____	<input type="radio"/>		
<p>Contributions will be retroactively tax deductible once our application for non-profit status is approved.</p> <p>Please make your check payable to:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Friends of Rowan Creek P. O. Box 94 Poynette, Wisconsin 53955</p> <p>For more information visit http://rowancreek.org, email <info@rowancreek.org>, or call 608-635-4040</p>				



<http://www.rowancreek.org>

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