

The Rowan Reporter

The Newsletter of
The Friends of Rowan Creek

Number 3

April, 2003



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

Earth Day, April 22

"... caring for the Earth begins at home with each of us long before it can ascend to a national and global attitude."

- Gaylord Nelson, Former U.S. Senator from Wisconsin

Earth Day was begun in 1970 by Gaylord Nelson and is celebrated in 184 countries and right here in Poynette! We hope you will participate in Earth Day this year by joining us on one of our Earth Day weekend activities, or coming up with your own way to create a more sustainable and healthy environment.



April 8, 2003...
They Call This Spring?

Spring! Renew!

➔ See Page 6 ◀

Celebrate Earth Day 2003! Get outside at the Creek Clean Up or Wildflower Walk

Saturday, April 26 Rowan Creek Clean Up

In celebration of Earth Day, the Friends will sponsor a creek clean up event. Meet other volunteers in the parking lot of Pauquette Park in downtown Poynette at 9:00. We expect to complete the project by noon. Now in it's 4th year, this annual activity has become popular with families and Friends! Everyone can enjoy a spring day and get satisfaction from helping to tidy up the winter's debris from along the stream.

While our focus is removal of litter and debris, some intrepid volunteers also take on removal of creek logjams to improve habitat. Bring gloves and enthusiasm; garbage bags will be provided. Prizes will be awarded for the most unusual litter found! Call Yvette Lokotz at 645-8719 with questions or with offers to help organize! Inclement weather date: Sunday, April 27, 9:00 a.m. to noon.

Sunday, April 27 Wildflower Walk

The Friends of Rowan Creek will host a wildflower walk along the Rowan Creek trail from 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. Spring flowers should be in full bloom, so come enjoy a spring afternoon! Meet trip leader Dave Egan at the Mill Street trailhead in Poynette (at the west end of Mill Street, just 2 blocks from Main Street). The trail is easy to moderate walking with a few gentle slopes. Call Nancy Braker at 635-4040 with questions. Families welcome!

MORE EVENTS ON PAGE 2!

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You might as well just read it all.

Upcoming Events

- ◆ April 26, Creek Clean Up, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon
- ◆ April 27, Wildflower Walk 1:00-3:00 p.m.
- ◆ May 17, Native Plant Sale 9: 00 a.m.- 'til the plants are gone!
- ◆ May 21, Annual Meeting 7:00 p.m.

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 to <info@rowancreek.org> to be added to the list or for more information.

Note: Meetings are generally held at the Poynette Village Hall. If you are not on our email list, please call Nancy Braker to confirm the specific location.



Volunteers participate in the 2002 Rowan Creek Clean Up.

Volunteers Needed

We have several upcoming projects that we could use a hand on. If you have skills that apply to the following tasks or have time to spare, please contact us!

- ◆ Staff our plant sale booth at the spring fling, May 17 (1 hour shift) - call Allison Russell 635-8588
- ◆ Plan and build brochure / notice holders for Rowan Creek trail heads (design to be approved by DNR staff) - Nancy Braker, 635-4040
- ◆ Plan a watershed bike route - Ira Kastenber 635-2128
- ◆ Represent the Friends at events with a booth/display (i.e. county fair, Pheasant Festival) - Nancy Braker 635-4040
- ◆ Work on land management projects (plantings, invasive plant removal) - Nancy Braker 635-4040
- ◆ Serve as our Volunteer Coordinator! - Yvette Lokotz 635-8719

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 at www.rowancreek.org for more information and useful links.

Native Plant Sale at Poynette "Spring Fling", May 17, 2003

Look for our booth on Main Street, Poynette where we will once again be featuring native plants for sale, along with information on our upcoming activities. This year we will stock native plants for use in rain gardens.

Native plants are a great low maintenance alternative for your landscaping, and rain gardens put the whole picture together with watershed protection! We will also have literature available about the benefits of using native plants and how to construct a rain garden in your yard. More rain garden information appears on page 4.

Annual Meeting, May 21, with author Dick Hall

We will hold our annual meeting on Wednesday, May 21, at 7:00 at the Poynette Village Hall. After a brief business meeting we will hear from outdoorsman, and writer Dick Hall.

Hall is the author of "The Buckridge Chronicles: Sketches from Oak Ridges and Glacial Valleys", which was published late last year by UWSP's Cornerstone Press. He is also the owner of "The Buckridge", a Dekorra woodlot which is the main character in the book as well as in many of his newspaper columns. Mr. Hall spent his youth enjoying fishing and hunting along Rowan Creek.

The book focuses on themes of sustainable forestry, hunting, fishing, and a myriad of ways of appreciating the world around us. Please join us for an event that is bound to be both informative and captivating.



Current board members

Nancy Braker, President	nbraker@yahoo.com	635-4040
Dan Cole	colvly@merr.com	635-4399
Ira Kastenber, Secretary	ikastenber@pol.net	635-2128
Tony Karls	myost@centurytel.net	635-7181
Yvette Lokotz	ylokotz@jvl.net	635-8719
Allison Russell, Treasurer	russell4@charter.net	635-8588

Prez Sez:

Now is the time to get out and enjoy Spring! I've enjoyed the Rowan Creek Trail all winter on my skis, snowshoes and just plain feet. But this time of year is my favorite. The migrating birds are coming through, large and small, the resident great blue herons and sandhill cranes are back, and the spring peepers are starting to call.

We have some great activities planned this spring so I hope we see you at one or two of them. Consider joining us at an event, or getting involved in one of our projects. We have lots of ideas of things we can do to inform people about the watershed, but we need your help! If you are not yet a member, please consider joining, if you are a member, introduce us to a friend or two.

But most of all, get outside and enjoy what our watershed has to offer, whether on your bike, with your fishing pole in hand, or just a leisurely stroll in the woods. This is a great time of year to enjoy the out of doors!



The Friends assisted the Poynette High School Conservation Club with planting and mulching a prairie planting at the high school last Fall.



**Renew!
Join!**



Visitors studying the Rowan Creek display at "Prairies Jubilee!" in Arlington.

Trail Maintenance Day Report

Have you noticed any changes to the trails around Rowan Creek? In October several Friend's members and others gathered to spend time working to make some much needed improvements to the trail. They first focused on adding some erosion control barriers along the big hill towards the start of the south trail. The DNR supplied the gravel and logs, and the Friends supplied the arm power to shovel the gravel and dig the trenches for the logs. The result is a stepped hill that allows water to run off the trail, not down.

The Friends also used hatchets, loppers and chainsaws to remove buckthorn (a non-desirable, invasive shrub) and low hanging tree branches from along the trail. The DNR applied herbicide to the cut stumps to make sure the plants did not resprout. The result is a much cleaner walk without the overhang and dense cover of the buckthorn. Rain stopped work at about 12:00. All workers went home to rest weary arms and happy hearts after a good morning of hard work and fun!

Renew today!

Rain Gardens

(UW Extension publication)

Rain Gardens are just what they sound like - gardens that soak up rain water, mainly from your roof, but also from your driveway and lawn. They are landscaped areas planted to wild flowers and other native vegetation to replace areas of lawn. The gardens fill with a few inches of water and allow the water to slowly filter into the ground rather than running off into storm drains. Compared to a patch of conventional lawn, a rain garden allows about 30 percent more water to soak into the ground.

Holding back the runoff helps prevent pollutants such as fertilizers from washing off your yard, into storm sewers, and eventually into nearby streams and lakes. By reducing the amount of water that enters the local storm drain systems, rain gardens can also reduce the chances for local flooding, as well as bank and shoreline damage where storm drains empty into streams and lakes.

People in many parts of the country are starting to build rain gardens in their yards and promoting their use in other locations such as neighborhood parks. You can help in your own yard by simply building one or more rain gardens to collect runoff from your roof. Rain water can sometimes be collected from your driveway or lawn by locating a rain garden in a low spot where the water naturally drains.

Web sites for more information on Rain Gardens:

<http://www.mninter.net/~stack/rain/>

www.ecoisp.com/resources16.asp

www.thegreenguide.org/gardening/rain.php



Pine Island Logging

If you have hiked the Rowan Creek Trail this late winter or spring you may have noticed a difference in the pine plantations. In mid-January, while the marsh and surrounding area was frozen, loggers were able to get access to Pine Island and other locations along the trail to conduct thinning that had been planned for the past several years. "The lack of frozen ground prevented this over-stocked stand from being thinned with modern day processors.," said DNR Forester, Jim Bennett. "After a 4- year wait, the ground froze and crossing the delicate wetland was possible"

The thinning could only be done with frozen ground conditions, as Pine Island itself is inaccessible to heavy equipment most of the year. Equipment was brought to the site over frozen ground with minimal impact to the wetland. "The objective was to thin the stand to provide growing space for the residual trees and instill new health into the stand", continued Bennett. "The northwest portion of the stand was under attack from a root fungus called shoestring root rot. The overstocked stand was suppressed allowing this disease to spread. Now with the thinning completed, tree growth will resume".

The next step in this Big Tree Silviculture approach is to conduct another thinning in about 5 years. This interval will allow the root system to reestablish before another mild thinning. This will produce a natural-looking stand and allow the bigger trees to grow even larger. This method, barring any environmental catastrophe, will allow this stand to continue it's present day name as "Pine Island".



Rowan Creek Watershed Study Available (almost)!

Over the past year graduate students from the UW - Madison Water Resource Management Program have worked on a comprehensive study of the Rowan Creek Watershed. Results of that study are currently with the publisher and will soon go to press. The report will be available at the Poynette Public Library, or viewed through any of the local municipal offices. Copies will also be provided to the Columbia County Land Conservation Department. Information about downloading a copy will be available on our website (www.rowancreek.org)

During the course of the project, the students:

- researched the historical background of the watershed and its municipalities
- gathered data on the Creek and the watershed,
- studied local land uses and the effects of those land uses on the Creek
- looked into the various laws at all levels that affect the Creek
- compiled information on practices for addressing issues in both urban and rural areas of watershed
- initiated monitoring at both Rowan and Hinkson Creeks for temperature, water quality, and flow.

The group also conducted a survey of local opinion of watershed residents, and they initiated discussions with local teachers about educational programs and water quality monitoring programs that local school children could get involved in. The graduate students presented their project to interested residents in early December .

The goal of the project was to produce information that the citizens and decision-makers in the watershed might find helpful in future decisions relating to land use, stream and watershed quality, and water quality monitoring in the Rowan Creek Watershed.

The study was funded by the Town of Dekorra, the Village of Poynette, a grant from the River Protection Grant Program of the DNR, and supported by the Columbia County Land and Water Conservation Department.

Cooperative Agreement signed with DNR

Early this year the Friends of Rowan Creek entered into an agreement with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources that formalizes Friends activities on DNR property.

With this agreement in place, DNR supplies and equipment can be utilized by the Friends for projects on the Rowan Creek Fisheries property. Additionally, the agreement facilitates the procedure for Friends to propose and carry out projects on the property such as trail maintenance, invasive plant removal, or clearing of prairie openings. Under the agreement we anticipate having our brochures and activity notices posted at the parking lots and trailheads.

Thanks to Jim Bernett, DNR Forester, for his assistance in moving this agreement through the proper channels!

New Study: Impacts of land use and groundwater flow on the temperature of Wisconsin trout streams

Researchers at the Wisconsin Geologic and Natural History Survey and the Wisconsin DNR have been working on a study of the role of groundwater and surface water interactions in controlling the summer temperatures of Wisconsin trout streams. Trout require water temperatures below about 72 degrees, and groundwater inflows are critical for cooling streams during hot weather. Stream channel shape and shade from streamside vegetation also influence stream temperature, and there is a lack of knowledge available for watershed managers to assess these complex interactions and predict the impact of land-use decisions on stream temperature.

The study approach combines monitoring of several Wisconsin trout streams and computer model simulations of stream temperature, groundwater flow and groundwater recharge. The scientists are testing a stream temperature model developed for SW Wisconsin in six additional watersheds in other parts of Wisconsin. The model is being used to evaluate potential impacts on water temperature due to changes in vegetation, land use throughout the watershed, and groundwater inflow to the stream. They will compare model simulations with data for Rowan Creek (from the UW - Madison study) as well as data from other Wisconsin streams.

For Rowan Creek, they are also linking 3 computer models that simulate the impact of land use on groundwater recharge, the flow of groundwater to the stream, and stream temperature. By simulating the flow of water from the landscape to the stream, the researchers hope to develop decision-making tools that will help decision makers and planners predict how watershed management decisions might affect the stream habitat.

Business Memberships: Thanks to Anunson Chiropractic Clinic and the Bank of Poynette for their support of our work. If you know of a business that you think would be willing to support the Friends in this manner, please contact any board member for their assistance in making this membership request.

Regular Memberships: While our membership has been steady, we need your assistance in growing our numbers. Please consider sharing our brochure or newsletter with someone you feel would be interested in our group, or contact Membership Chair Ira Kastenberg to request an information packet be sent out.

This just in: A big thanks to the **Lake Wisconsin Lions Club** for their recent generous donation in support of our watershed protection activities! We appreciate their confidence in our work.

PLEASE RENEW! Membership renewals are now due. If you haven't yet paid your dues for calendar year 2003, please do so using the form below, or simply send in a check. Remember, your donation is now fully tax deductible. **NEW FEATURE:** If your membership is current for 2003 there is a yellow dot near your name on the address panel.

Annual Dues

- Junior (<18) \$3
- Individual \$20
- Family \$30
- Organization \$50
- Business \$100
- Lifetime Membership \$250
- General Contribution _____

Your contribution is fully tax deductible.

Please make your check payable to:

**Friends of Rowan Creek
P. O. Box 94
Poynette, Wisconsin 53955**

For more information visit <http://rowancreek.org>, email <info@rowancreek.org>, or call 608-635-4040

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Interests? _____



<http://www.rowancreek.org>
P. O. Box 94
Poynette, Wisconsin 53955

Yellow dot means your membership is current!

Renew! Join!