

the riffle

FRIENDS OF THE FOX RIVER

April 2008

P.O. Box 1314, Crystal Lake, IL 60039

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www.friendsofthefoxriver.org

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Our Mission:

To preserve, restore and protect the Fox River Watershed's natural resources by connecting people with nature through education, research, restoration and advocacy.

Do You Drink Bottled Water?

What began as an icon for those who exercise is becoming an icon for affluence and waste. Bottled water is attractive for consistency of color, taste, and convenience. With more than 22 gallons of bottled water consumed per person (in 2004 according to the Earth Policy Institute), our mainstream reliance on bottled water has some unforeseen and significant impacts. When shopping we have been faced with the choice "paper or plastic?" Many of us now have chosen reusable bags because we have become aware of the impacts of paper and plastic. Here are some things to consider when making the choice "bottled water or tap?"

Safer? Tap water, regulated by the Environmental Protection Agency, is held to more stringent standards than bottled water which is regulated by the Food and Drug Administration. Surprisingly, some brands of bottled water are just tap water in disguise.

Cheaper? Here are some going rates of price/gallon for the sale of water from various vendors:

City of Elgin drinking water:	\$.003
Filling a jug at Jewel:	\$.49
Bottled water	
at entertainment venue:	\$32.00
Elite brands on shelf:	\$36.00

Be aware that the bottles used for bottled water are not intended to be refilled. Some liquids may react with the plastic.

Bacteria may build up if you just refill and don't wash first.

Environmental impact

Fossil fuel consumption. Approximately 1.5 million gallons of oil—enough to possibly run 100,000 cars for a whole year—are used annually in the United States to make plastic water bottles, while transporting these bottles burns thousands more gallons of oil.

Water consumption. The growth in bottled water production has increased water extraction in areas near bottling plants, leading to water shortages that affect nearby consumers and farmers. In addition to the millions of gallons of water used in the plastic-making process, two gallons of water are wasted in the "purification" process for every gallon that goes into the bottles.

Waste. Only about 10 percent of water bottles are recycled, leaving the rest in landfills where it takes thousands of years for the plastic to decompose.

The Simple (and Cheaper) Solution

The next time you feel thirsty, forgo the bottle and turn to the tap. You will not only lower your environmental impact but also save money—bottled water can cost up to 10,000 times more per gallon than tap water. Because the U.S. EPA standards for tap water are more stringent than the FDA's standards for bottled water, you will be drinking water that is just as safe as, or safer than, bottled.

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Message from the President

By: Tom Schrader

This is my first column as President of Friends of the Fox River. As such, I'd like to thank my predecessor, Chuck Roberts for his service as President. Chuck is staying on as a board member and his services to Friends of the Fox River are greatly appreciated.

I'm writing this a day after attending the Wild and Scenic Environmental Film Festival presented by Patagonia and hosted by Friends of the Fox River at Elgin Community College. We had a healthy turnout at the ECC (2/2/2008) screening and a surprising number of hearty souls who braved a winter storm to turn out at the McHenry County College presentation on Thursday evening (1/31/2008). Friends of the Fox River welcomed twenty new members to the organization at the two presentations. Thank you for joining us! Special kudos go to Gary Swick for hosting and emceeding the two presentations and the committee consisting of Gary Swick, Jenni Kempf, Jeremy Arendt and Karin Ley. They did a great job!

At both the film festival and the Eagle Watch Weekend at Starved Rock State Park (1/25 & 26/2008), a number of people talked with us about what was happening to the environment globally and what was happening to the Fox River watershed in particular. Global climate change, threats to global and local water supplies and the degrading condition of the Fox River were issues many people voiced as serious threats to us and the environment.

The question that naturally follows is: "What can we do about it?" The phrase "think globally, act locally" first attributed to David Brower, founder of Friends of the Earth, comes to mind as a good start. While the environmental problems facing the globe and the region today seem overwhelming, there are things we can do, both individually and collectively, to help start to resolve them.

First, on a global and local level *think* about the land around you and learn to value it, not only for its economic value, but also in terms of its aesthetic and ecological value.

Second, *act* to develop a "land ethic." Aldo Leopold, the father of the modern environmental movement, in his book *A Sand County Almanac* (Oxford Press, London, 1949, pp. 203-204) said:

"All ethics so far evolved rest upon a single premise: that the individual is a member of a community of interdependent parts. His instincts prompt him to compete for his place in the community, but his ethics prompt him also to cooperate . . . The land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively: the land. . . In short, a land ethic changes the role of Homo sapiens from conqueror of the land-community to plain member and citizen of it. It implies respect for his fellow-members, and also respect for the community as such."

Development of Leopold's land ethic requires a shift in thinking away from an exploitive "what can the land do for me" attitude, to a cooperative attitude which recognizes humans not as the master of the environment, but simply a part of it. If enough people begin thinking this way, the "land-community" Leopold spoke of can only benefit.

Third, as a member of the land-community and a steward of the environment, *act* by talking with your friends and neighbors about what you're doing to help the community. Talk to them about the projects you have worked on locally, be it a cleanup or planting with Friends of the Fox River, or something you're doing around your house to help the environment: perhaps switching to compact fluorescent bulbs, or using only phosphate free laundry detergent, or limiting the amount of fertilizers you use on your lawn. Refer them to the Friends of the Fox River website (www.friendsofthefoxriver.org) for ideas about how they can become more actively involved as stewards of the land community.

Finally, encourage your friends and neighbors to join you as a member of Friends of the Fox River. By joining our individual efforts to protect our watershed together, we can become a much stronger advocate for our local land-community: the Fox River watershed. Working together, we can make a difference.

Monitor Banquet News

By: Jenni Kempf

Frigid temperatures and wild winter wind gusts were not enough to prevent our volunteers and partners from attending our annual Monitor Appreciation Banquet held on Tuesday, January 29th. Thanks to the kind folks at Rosie O'Hare's Public House in East Dundee, 40 guests nestled in for an evening of good food, socializing, special recognitions, and a sneak preview of the Wild and Scenic Environmental Film Fest.

This year's recipient of the Fox Hero Award, in honor of the local legend The Fox, was star monitor Dr. Brenda Braaten, professor at Judson University. Dr. Braaten is considered a monitoring network pioneer as she was the first to collect data monthly. This is an enormous increase in the scope of data compared to the usual biannual monitoring. Five sites on Tyler Creek were monitored by Dr. Braaten and her JU crew for an entire year. We are grateful for her diligence and for the quality data that we receive from her and her students. Hats off to you Brenda!

Long time volunteer Bob Faber was this year's recipient of the Reese's Clean Up Cup, an award established in honor of the Friends of the Fox founder Pat Reese. Bob and his family have been instrumental with canoe and kayak safety at network events, especially at Monitor With Your Mother. Thanks for your support; we're going to miss the Fabers. Happy trails to you and your family with your move to North Carolina.

This year's state of the Monitoring Network report, delivered by Director Gary Swick, shed some light and vision for the future. Some goals include: increased partnerships watershed-wide including Wisconsin connections, the establishment of a quality assurance system to increase our data credibility, and new approaches to funding and sponsorship within our communities.

The Monitor Appreciation Banquet always gives us the chance to reflect on our own needs for growth and change, and to realize that our strength is our dedicated volunteers. Thank you all for your role as Watershed Watchdogs. Spring is coming; see you in the stream!

Bald Eagle Days

Friends of the Fox River participated in Bald Eagle Weekend at Starved Rock State Park on January 26th and 27th. We set up our informational display and answered questions from attendees concerning the river. From the balcony of the lodge, Bald Eagles were observed flying above the Illinois River and roosting on trees. Birds of prey including a European Barn Owl and a Harris Hawk were flown inches over the heads of audience members in a very informative Raptor show. The show also included a male Bald Eagle, a Kestrel, Crested Eagle, Great Horned Owl and a Hooded Raven that put dollar bills in a donation box.

Help Wanted!

Spring Fox River Rescue

Come on down to the Fox River and join us at our Spring Fox Rescue Cleanup! So far, cleanup sites have been set up in Algonquin, Oswego, Carpentersville, Montgomery, Geneva, Batavia, St. Charles and Yorkville. For more info and to sign up, check our website at www.friendsofthefoxriver.org/foxrescue.htm or call Jessi DeMartini, Fox Rescue Coordinator, at 630-871-7548.



Tyler Creek Coalition

Do you live, work or recreate in the Tyler Creek Watershed? The Tyler Creek Watershed Plan, completed in March 2008, is available at www.tylercreek.org.

The Conservation Foundation will collaborate with watershed stakeholders in 2008-2009 to assist in forming a grassroots organization to advocate for water quality protection and support efforts to implement the watershed plan. For more information, call The Conservation Foundation at 630-428-4500.



Meet the Board

Gary Swick, is an Environmental Science teacher and outdoor recreation enthusiast, he makes protecting the watershed both a professional & personal pursuit. The longest active member of the Friends, has been a Director since 1996. In 1999, he reestablished the Watershed Monitoring Network. Since then, he has raised more than \$150,000 to continue its operation. He has represented the organization at many events, including the dedication of "The Fox" memorial ceremony. Most recently, he was awarded the "Doin' it right for the Fox" Award. His favorite activity is enjoying a paddle with others on the Fox.

Tom Schrader is a Research & Planning Analyst for the College of DuPage. He earned his B.A. in Accounting and Political Science from Aurora College and an M.S. Ed. in Educational Psychology from Northern Illinois University. An avid river fisherman and outdoor enthusiast, Tom has also served the Illinois Department of Natural Resources as an Instructor in the Urban Fishing Program and has also worked with IDNR biologists from the Region II Streams Office on various basin surveys assisting in both fish collection and lab work. Tom joined the Friends of the Fox River board in December, 2004. He was elected President of Friends of the Fox River in December, 2007.

Mary Alice Masonick lives in Elgin with Joe, their two children and three cats. She works as an RN in School District U-46, where she is active with the Environmental Task Force in promoting waste reduction and natural resource conservation on a district level. As a Kane County volunteer steward, she leads volunteer restoration workdays at an Elgin forest preserve. She and Joe are trained stream, frog, and rare plant monitors. Mary Alice loves growing native perennials and creating wildlife habitat at home, throughout the neighborhood, and at their church. She enjoys hiking, biking, cross-country skiing and observing wildlife.

Jeniffer Zaleiski

Kyla Jacobsen is the Water System Superintendent for the City of Elgin, formerly the Chief Chemist in charge of water quality. The City of Elgin uses the Fox River as it's drinking water sources. She has been a member of FOFR since 1997. She is currently the treasurer of the organization.

In addition to her involvement with the FOFR, she is a member and actively involved in the AWWA (American Water Works Association), the SWE (Society of Women Engineers) and the ACS (American Chemical Society). Her activities outside the office include a position on the Board of Directors for the Elgin City Employees Credit Union and the Board of Directors for Fox Valley Lutheran Academy. She is active on the Church Leadership Council for St. John's Lutheran Church, serving as the chair.

She has been married to her wonderful and understanding husband, Tom, for 24 years. They have one married son, working in the Visual Communications (graphic design) field. In all her spare time, she enjoys reading, bicycling, working-out, scrap booking and watching football.

Her educational background: BS in Chemistry from Southern Illinois University, MS in Biochemistry from Northern Illinois University, MS in Environmental Engineering from IIT.

Brandon Zaleiski was born in St. Charles and grew up in Elgin the Fox River was some place that was strictly off limits due to the pollution and dangerous dams. Although life has moved me farther east as an adult, the Fox River is always in my mind and heart. Since the Fox River has improved after the passage of the Clean Water Act and organizations such as Friends of the Fox River. My wife and I can enjoy spending hours on the river, paddling, fishing, and bird watching. My dream is that my future children can enjoy the Fox River in a way I was never allowed to and in ways we can not even today. They deserve to have a river in their life that isn't off limits; but instead a gathering place for families to enjoy all the spender that nature has to offer. During the day I am a Sales Engineer with Innovative Voice Technologies based in Schaumburg, IL. I hold numerous technical certifications in communications, data network design, and security.

Meet the Board (cont'd)

Patrick Kirmse is a biologist earning his degree from NIU in 1982. He has most recently worked as an Environmental Scientist for the Environmental Planning Team in Lake Forest. There he conducted wetland mitigations, bird, plant and tree surveys. He is presently studying age and size distribution of the smallmouth bass in the Fox River. Pat is now working for his two daughters as an at home dad.

Rob Linke, P.E. is an environmental & civil engineer with expertise in the surface water management, hydrology, and stream dynamics. He has held the positions of Project Manager and Project Engineer for a wide variety of civil engineering projects, including watershed planning & analysis, stormwater management studies, floodplain analyses, residential & commercial development design, stream bank stabilization, lake management studies, small dam removal, and municipal review engineer. Mr. Linke co-founded Watershed Resource Consultants, Inc. in 2001 as a way to provide the truly comprehensive environmental design & management services for clients with projects in and around riparian areas and wetlands. In addition to his commitment to Friends of the Fox River, Mr. Linke is an active member of the Fox River Ecosystem Partnership, and is an avid fisherman and canoeist. His personal interest in rivers and streams is an intricate part of his professional experiences as a consultant as well as a volunteer. Mr. Linke is truly "into his work" whether working on a project, spending leisure time fishing/paddling, or helping with a volunteer stream clean-up. This constant involvement with rivers and streams gives him the unique opportunity to collect both quantitative and qualitative data in the fields of stream restoration, fluvial processes, and stream ecology; all of which must be understood to provide consulting expertise for projects in and adjacent to our rivers and streams.

Chuck Roberts is a citizen scientist in the Illinois RiverWatch network. In 1997 he was a 3rd place winner in the "Illinois Sportsman of the Year" competition. He is an avid canoeist, kayaker and flyfisher. His education includes a B.A. in Math/Economics from Denison University, Associates in Computer Science from Purdue University and an MBA/MIS from DePaul University. Chuck is also a board member on the Oak Brook Chapter of Trout Unlimited. He is currently the Director of Technology in the East Aurora School District.

Do You Drink Bottled Water?

(continued from page 1)

If you don't like the taste of your tap water or are unsure of its quality, you can install an inexpensive faucet filter to remove trace chemicals and bacteria. When you're refilling a water bottle check the bottom of the container. If it is a #1 or #7 researchers have found that the plastic may breakdown and leach chemicals into the water when reused.

Facts:

- Δ 60 Million plastic bottles a day are disposed of in America alone!
- Δ Fossil fuel emissions are produced from transporting millions of bottles everyday!

from information adapted through the Union of Concerned Scientists, June 2007

For further information:

www.epa.gov/safewater/faq/faq.html

www.earth-policy.org

www.commondreams.org

Wild and Scenic Environmental Film Festival

The Friends of the Fox River went out on a limb this year with a new membership drive and fundraising event. We hosted the Wild and Scenic Environmental Film Festival sponsored by outdoor gear company Patagonia at two watershed venues, McHenry County College and Elgin Community College.

Patagonia devotes resources to supporting environmental groups around the country through their program, 1% for the Planet. The Wild and Scenic Environmental Film Festival is just one avenue of support from Patagonia. Patagonia supplied a list of 60+ films of varying lengths of time that explored many different topics like the impacts of our food choices, wildlife protection, and developing strong community bonds.

Despite blizzard conditions on 1/31 our McHenry County College showing brought in 10 new memberships. The short films were about organic food benefits, coral reef destruction, and buffalo management in Yellowstone. The feature film of the night was "The Power of Community - How Cuba Survived Peak Oil." This film addressed the transformation Cuba made in lieu of dramatic political change that affected the livelihoods of Cubans because of a massive reduction in the availability of oil. This required tremendous national changes including a shift to locally grown organic food, new modes of mass transit, and localizing higher education to provide better access for students around the country. The success Cuba has seen in making the shift to sustainable lifestyles and the topics addressed by other films provided inspiration to our audience.

Better weather brought more folks out to the Elgin Community College showing on Ground Hog Day. The films selected for this venue were more family focused, short films including a Sierra Club film about the removal of the Hetch Hetchy Dam. The animated comedy, "The True Cost of Food" discussed the environmental and economic consequences of mass produced food. The feature, "Kilowatt Ours" offered practical ways to reduce energy consumption and impacts.

Complete with raffles and prizes for most attendees, gifts for all, popcorn, and friendly faces, the Wild and Scenic Environmental Film Fest will become a Friends of the Fox River annual event. Watch for next year's dates and volunteer to be on the film fest committee by contacting Jennifer Zaleiski. A special thanks to all our patrons and sponsors.

Smallmouth Bass in the Fox River - 2007 Data Population Size Distribution and Age Determination for



Smallmouth Bass

The purpose of this study is to document the population levels and growth rates of Smallmouth Bass in the Fox River. The study has been conducted yearly since

1995. The fish sampled were collected while angling. All fish were released. The fish were quickly measured and several scales were removed from fish in which age was to be determined. Ages were determined by counting the annuli on scales. Growth rates were determined by dividing the fish's length by its age. All fish studied were from a single pool of the Fox River.

Growth rates in 2007 dropped significantly from 2006. The growth in rate 2006 was 3.35 in. /year; in 2007 it was 2.91 in. /year. This decrease in growth rate could be due to declining water quality in the Fox River. The river also had historic high water levels in August when smallmouth bass feed heavily on forage fish. The high water levels may have dispersed schools of forage fish, mainly spotfin shiners and emerald shiners and made feeding less efficient. The average size of the bass in 2007 decreased slightly from 12.99 inches in 2006 to 12.74 in. The average size has not varied significantly in the last 8 years, with a high of 13.13 inches in 2001 and a low of 11.95 inches in 2005. The population appears to be stable the last 6 years with the number of fish caught varying from 197 to 262 and averaging 222. The size distribution in 2007 showed the highest number of fish in the 13 to 14 inch range. This is consistent with past results of the study with the highest number of fish in either the 12 to 13 inch range or the 13 to 14 inch size range. The percentage of bass over 14 inches was 34.4 in 2007; this is consistent with results over the last 8 years. This provides a good number of adult aged fish for reproduction. The age of the oldest fish found in the study has been 8 years old. The fish grow quickly until they reach 12" to 13" and 3 to 4 years of age. After that age they grow quite a bit slower. Bass 16 to 19 inches that are 6 to 8 years old are often in poor condition with frayed fins and a thin body. Smallmouth bass have been known to live to the early teens but in the Fox River, this has not been the case. The effect of poor water quality, poor over wintering areas, the lack of sufficient large prey items or a combination of these three factors is limiting the age and maximum size of the smallmouth bass.

FOFR MEMBERSHIP / RENEWAL APPLICATION**To contact us—815.356.6605****ANNUAL DUES**

- ___ \$15 Student
- ___ \$25 Individual
- ___ \$35 Family
- ___ \$100 Patron
- ___ \$250 Advocate
- ___ \$500 Sustainer
- ___ \$50 Non-Profit
- ___ \$150 Business
- ___ \$500 Corporate

Hey!! Friends of the Fox River sounds GREAT! Sign me up!!

(Name)

(Mailing Address)

(City, State, Zip Code)

(Home Phone)

(Work Phone)

To allow our organization to best serve your needs, we need to know what you want and what you can offer. Please respond to the information below.

Areas of Interest

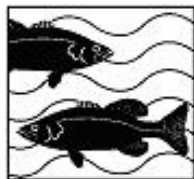
- ☐ Fox Rescue Clean-ups
- ☐ Fox River Watershed Monitoring Network
- ☐ Advocacy
- ☐ Volunteer Labor, Please call me.
- ☐ Just send me your newsletters and State of the River reports.

Make checks out to: Friends of the Fox River • PO Box 1314 • Crystal Lake, IL 60039-1314



Earth Share
OF ILLINOIS

Via *Earth Share of Illinois*, you can support **Friends of the Fox River** through your employer's workplace giving campaign. For more information, contact *Earth Share of Illinois* at www.earthshare-illinois.org, info@earthshare-illinois.org or by calling 312-795-3740.



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