

Friends of the Mukwonago River



Longear Sunfish
(*Lepomis megalotis*)

The Mukwonago River watershed is home to over 50 species of fish including the threatened Longear Sunfish (*Lepomis megalotis*), several species of rare freshwater mussels, an incredible diversity of wetlands, and some of the highest water quality in Southeastern Wisconsin. The mission of the Friends of the Mukwonago River is to protect the Mukwonago River and its associated watershed ecosystems by way of education, advocacy, and promotion of sound land use throughout the watershed.

SPRING 2004 NEWSLETTER

Friends of the Mukwonago River = Missing Persons? Not a chance!

We've been keeping busy doing "on-the-ground" projects to help preserve the water quality of the river and to promote sensible land use throughout the watershed. Also, Co-Director Ezra Meyer finished his two Master's degrees at UW-Madison in December (yeah, Ezra!). Now, at long last, we're getting a chance to update you, our valued members, on what we've been up to over the last year or so.

*Not convinced that we've been earning our keep? Well, here is a partial list of the projects that **YOU** helped us tackle over the last year. If you want further information on any of these issues, please don't hesitate to contact us. Doubtless, we're forgetting a few of the things we've worked on, but we hope you'll get the idea that we've been working hard this past year for the wonderful Mukwonago River.*

We thank you for your patience and for your support. We also hope you'll support us again this year so we can keep up the good work (see page 11 for details).

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Village of Mukwonago

Gateway project / Home Depot stormwater systems designs (south of I-43 and east of Highway 83) In the spring of 2003, the village unveiled plans for the phased commercial and multi-family residential development of approximately 300 acres of recently annexed farmland near the southeast corner of the I-43 / Highway 83 interchange. This area, which the village refers to as its Gateway District, is drained by a tributary stream that eventually runs under I-43 and into the Mukwonago River about three quarters of a mile above the Mukwonago's confluence with the Fox River.

It seems that the unnamed tributary stream is groundwater-fed – it flows at a relatively low but consistent rate year-round. As UW-Milwaukee Biology Professor Tim Ehlinger stated at one of the meetings on this project, the tributary supplies cool water to the Mukwonago River during the hottest and driest part of the summer. Ehlinger also stated that he has seen fish and other important aquatic organisms congregating around the "Gateway" tributary's confluence with the Mukwonago for relief from thermal and low-flow stress conditions in late summer.

Development in the Gateway District and the impervious surfaces (roofs, roads, parking lots) that come with it not only create the potential for degraded water quality in the Mukwonago River downstream, but they can also (unless designed properly) prohibit rainwater from infiltrating into the ground and recharging the groundwater. This could lead to reduced flows in springs along the tributary and the Mukwonago River itself, thus reducing the benefits of the cool water and consistent flow they supply to the lower river's numerous species.

There is also a human impact in relation to reduced groundwater recharge. Much of the rainwater that permeates the ground surface eventually works its way through the soil and ends up in the aquifer that all watershed residents use and drink every day. Waukesha County, especially the area to the east of the watershed, is in a serious groundwater shortage. All of this adds to the rationale for focusing our efforts on managing stormwater runoff in our developed areas in a way that attempts to maintain the hydrology that has existed for centuries prior to development.

To the credit of the village's leaders (and their planning and engineering consultants), the Friends were invited to comment on the design of the Gateway District's stormwater management system early in the process. We were hoping to see a cutting-edge, river-friendly approach to the planning and engineering of the Gateway, and we had some questions, both on the specific steps the village would take to minimize impacts on the river and on the situation surrounding this tributary which has been historically, heavily altered by agricultural activities. Our involvement continued, but as the village's planning process and the associated DNR permitting process began to wind down, we were left with more questions than answers, so we went looking for a "cutting edge, low impact stormwater management" consulting firm that would be

willing to review the plans for us from an expert's perspective (the village had their experts, who were doing an excellent job, but who were not necessarily looking at the problem from the standpoint of maximizing the outcome for the river.) We were able to find such a firm and one that we could hire at a price our budget could handle. That firm was Applied Ecological Services (AES) out of Brodhead, a firm renowned for its work in innovative stormwater management and ecological restoration. Unfortunately, by the time we found AES, the DNR permits were already public noticed (meaning there were less than thirty days for interested parties to provide the DNR with comments and concerns). In order to allow our engineer more time for review, we were forced to hire an attorney and file formal letters of objection to the Village Gateway and Home Depot permits.

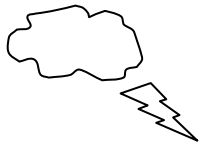
By "forcing the issue" a little bit, we succeeded in getting the DNR and the village to pursue answers to some of the previously unanswered questions and to come to a fuller understanding of what we were looking at in the Gateway tributary area. Our engineer, our attorney, and Dr. Ehlinger from UW-M suggested several improvements to the proposed designs, some of which were added to the plans. Fortunately, the improvements were not too major. In summary, we feel that the designs for the village's and Home Depot's stormwater treatment systems are as good as they can be given the challenging constraints that surrounded this project.

We give the village and their engineering firm a lot of credit for getting us "most of the way" to where we needed to be in this project. Also, The Home Depot paid Applied Ecological Services for their time spent reviewing the store's stormwater design. Thank you, Home Depot! The village did not agree to such a partnership at the time. Finally, we would like to extend our deep gratitude to Tim Ehlinger, Attorney Dennis Grzezinski, AES engineer Doug Eppich, the Village of Mukwonago's engineers Kurt Peot and Steve Worster and

DNR Water Quality Specialist Pam Schense for their help and support on this project.

*Between attorney's fees, engineering fees, and costs for copies of plans, this project set the Friends back almost \$1,000--a budget buster. We would not have had that \$1000 to spend, though, had it not been for those of you who supported us last year with a membership donation. It was **your** support that allowed us to grab these projects by the horns and prevent major harm to the river. For that, we are very grateful. Please consider renewing your membership (see page 11) so that we can continue to take on these challenges, especially as new tenants move into the Gateway (such as Wal-Mart with its new superstore) and begin designing their stormwater systems.*

It is important to remember that the last stretch of the river below the Phantom Lakes dam and running through the Village of Mukwonago harbors an incredible diversity of fish, mussels, and other species that aren't found in too many other places in the region. Because of the kinds of development that tend to occur in urban areas like the Village of Mukwonago, the threats to this area are arguably the highest faced by any part of the watershed. This combination of factors makes for a very dicey situation in the village. It will call for creative efforts on the part of all involved, as well as vigilance on our part. The fact is that the short-term economic forces at work make it difficult for decision-makers to pay needed attention to the potential for long-term degradation of the incredibly special natural resource that is the Mukwonago River.



Waukesha Memorial Hospital stormwater system design (another Gateway District project) While the above issues were transpiring, Waukesha Memorial was working on the design of their new Mukwonago facility, which is a part of the Village of Mukwonago's Gateway District Phase One. We initially contacted Administrator Ed Olson and Vice

President Matt Wade with the intent to inform them about the importance of the river. Our "Glacial Refuge" video came in handy. We asked if they'd be willing to have Applied Ecological Services review their stormwater management plans. They agreed and picked up the tab for AES' services. Our engineer, again Doug Eppich, made several important recommendations for modifications to their plan. Working closely with the hospital's engineers, we were able to convince the hospital to incorporate virtually all of those suggestions into their final plans. Three cheers for the good folks at Waukesha Memorial Hospital and their concern for the health of the Mukwonago area's environment as well as its citizens!

Pinehurst Village/Minor's Homestead Phase II (northeast corner of Hwy LO and I) If you include Minor's Homestead Phase I, these three connected residential developments will add over 200 new residential units to over 200 acres of land that was only recently annexed to the village (including several acres of wetlands unsuitable for building).

Similar to the Gateway, much of this parcel slopes to a drainageway which runs under Hwy LO and into the river just above Phantom Lake. Many of the stormwater runoff and groundwater concerns cited above apply here as well. When we contacted the developer's representative last fall and asked him to inquire about the possibility of their paying for an AES analysis of the plans, he came back with an answer in the affirmative. The developer agreed to have Applied Ecological review the stormwater plans for the Pinehurst development and the second phase of Minor's Homestead. Then, the developer, apparently without much difficulty or disagreement, agreed to incorporate virtually all of our engineer's recommendations into his stormwater plan. These changes were relatively minimal, but we thank Bill Wondrachek from M.P. Land, Inc and his boss Mike Schutte for their cooperation on this project.

Highway ES widening / resurfacing project

Storm events can cause soil erosion from improperly managed road (and other) construction projects to run into nearby streams. For the fish and mussels of the Mukwonago River, this would be a particularly damaging occurrence. Thankfully, we now have the tools and the know-how to avoid these problems. With this in mind we contacted the Waukesha County Dept. of Transportation (DOT) last year and tried to impress on them the importance of the Mukwonago River. We insisted that good erosion control practices be a high priority on this project. The DOT responded to our requests and made it known to their contractor that erosion control was to be carefully tended to. In late June of 2003 we had back-to-back “gully washer” rain events in the area. Some soil was lost through a silt fence to Phantom Lake, but we do not believe that this event will have any long term effect on the lake or the river downstream. Thanks are in order to Dan Schneider of STS Consultants, Maureen Millman of DNR, and Rick Harley of the DOT for their special attention to this project.



Town of Mukwonago

Award given to outgoing Town Chairman

In April 2003, the Friends gave its first Water Quality Award to outgoing Town Board Chairman Tom Stuart. During Tom’s tenure the town adopted several growth control measures such as the proposed development point system (which ranks proposed developments according to how well they fit into the community, protect natural resources, etc.) and an allotment system which would essentially limit the number of building permits granted each year to 50. Tom also got the town started on the path to several positive initiatives such as the encouragement of conservation subdivisions, the initiation of a study committee to pursue a purchase of development

rights program for the town, and the retraction of the conditional use permit for a potential major resort on the Rainbow Springs property. When Tom took the helm, the town was essentially allowing unbridled development and it had lost nearly half of its historic farmland. Through Tom’s leadership the town is now charting a path to controlled, measured growth and (hopefully) long term preservation of open space, all of which bodes well for the Mukwonago River and its associated watershed ecosystems. We salute Tom for his leadership and wish him well in his retirement.

Park and Open Space plan Last summer the town took the important step of adopting as a part of its master plan the Park and Open Space Element of the County’s Master Plan. This step ensures a level of consistency in the ways each unit of government works to implement the plan’s provisions. It will also help to minimize inefficient duplication of services.

Conservation subdivision ordinance This is another important growth management tool that the town is working to add to its tool box. Our hope is that the ordinance will be set up in such a way that incentives for developers will lead them to choose the conservation subdivision approach which is environmentally (and often financially) a better route the vast majority of the time. Ezra continues to serve as a community resource on this committee.

Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) The town has been working hard and putting together information on the costs and benefits of a program of this type. A PDR program would give local farmers and other owners of large parcels of land an additional option (besides development) when they decide to get out of farming, retire, move out of town, etc. It would also provide the public benefit of perpetually preserved open space and ag lands. This initiative will go a long way toward helping the town to balance landowner’s rights and expectations with the quality of life of the community as a whole and the protection of the environment (both for its own sake and for the

benefit of future generations). We hope town residents will stay in tune with this process and lend support when called upon to provide input on the idea. Ezra continues to serve on this committee as a community resource.

Rainbow Springs - northern half (Town of Mukwonago, Waukesha County) Early in 2003, the Town of Mukwonago (and Waukesha County) revoked Rainbow Springs owners' conditional use permit to build and operate a large multi-use resort on the property. This large, complicated, and outdated permit dated back 25 or more years and allowed for uses that could no longer occur without the hotel and convention building that had burned in 2002. The owners apparently had no desire to put the property to such uses, but nonetheless they promptly sued the town and the county for revoking the conditional use permit. Just recently, the court considering that suit, decided in favor of the town. At the time of press we were not certain whether that decision included the suit against the county or whether the county case was still open.

Although the Friends did not make it a part of the Town's discussions surrounding the revocation of the conditional use permit, the fact is that the Rainbow Springs golf courses, being located as they are right on the river and several tributary streams, are likely to significantly impact the Mukwonago River in this section. Some Town of Mukwonago officials alluded to this fact during their deliberations. Also, as anyone who has tried to canoe or wade through this section of the river knows, the golf courses' numerous cart paths, greens, and fairways (constructed in wetlands, floodplains, and even the river itself before rules existed to prevent such activities) make it very difficult for the public to navigate this **public** body of water.

This approximately 1,000-acre parcel (about half lies in Mukwonago on the Waukesha County side of the county line and the rest lies south of the line in Walworth County's Town of East Troy) is located right on the

Mukwonago River and contains significant natural resource features that must be protected from the negative impacts of development. These resources include the river itself, adjacent wetlands, groundwater recharge zones, intact upland woods, and prairie remnants. The Friends believe that large-scale development of the parcel just doesn't make sense from a big-picture, long term land use and community planning perspective. The ideal future for this property is in public and/or private conservation ownership where the ecological, scientific, and educational benefits of an intact (or, in some cases, restored) parcel of land can be fully realized. To that end, last summer and fall Ezra brought the Rainbow Springs owners and their attorneys together with The Nature Conservancy and the Wisconsin DNR to pursue the possibility of a joint public/private acquisition of the property. Those dealings are ongoing today. The hope is that a deal can be struck sealing the fate of Rainbow Springs as a place whose rocky path over the years will end on a positive note, lasting forever to benefit all who are yet to come.

Allotment system Over the last 10 years, the town has issued an average of 50 or fewer building permits per year. In an effort to manage growth, the town instituted an allotment system that allows no more than 50 permits per year. Subsequently, a law suit was filed by the Metropolitan Builders' Association of Greater Milwaukee and the Waukesha County Farm Bureau. Last November, Judge Mark Gempler dismissed the suit. Gempler agreed with the town's attorney that the suit is "premature" as "...we simply do not know if the demand for building permits is going to exceed the supply."



Town of Eagle

McAdams residential development (off of Markham Road between the Village of Eagle and Hwy. LO) At the request of neighbors, Ezra jumped into the controversy surrounding the development of this approximately 70-acre parcel, which contains several important natural features including two kettle wetlands, Blanding's Turtle habitat, kittentails (a state threatened plant), and high potential for groundwater recharge given the landscape and soil types.

Local developer Tom McAdams suggests that he initially brought in a conservation-style plan for the property. By the time we got involved, the plan had morphed into a "cookie-cutter" subdivision where the parcel would be carved up into mostly 3-acre lots and a couple of larger ones in the hilly area where suitable building locations would be hard to come by. The town's planning commission and board seemed to be pushing for a move in this direction.

Ezra spoke at the public hearing on the proposed rezoning of the land and brought up the idea of doing a conservation subdivision here with clustered smaller lots in the area suitable for development and common open space for the parts of the land that would be better left undeveloped. The Town of Eagle also heard negative feedback from nearly every neighbor adjacent to this property (15 or 20 people). They cited concerns over traffic impact, destruction of their views, concerns about runoff, and other environmental issues. The town slowly warmed to the conservation subdivision idea, and the developer opened up to it quite readily. Ezra worked with the developer and his engineers to re-design the development as a conservation subdivision.

Through this process, the developer became more aware of the importance of the Mukwonago River watershed and the concerns of the neighbors. The neighbors became more

aware of what level of development was right for the site (beyond what may have spoiled the views they had come to enjoy). The town even made a change to its policies so that conservation-designed subdivisions can be created elsewhere when they are the logical alternative given site conditions. The redesign was, more or less, acceptable to all concerned and a protracted battle was avoided.

Developments like these (from the Gateway in Village of Mukwonago to Rainbow Springs in the Town of Mukwonago to the Village of Eagle's new water supply well in the Town of Eagle) raise the important point that each of the municipalities located within the Mukwonago River watershed is in need of a comprehensive plan (either created from scratch if one does not exist or updated if there is an existing master land use plan).

Wisconsin's Smart Growth comprehensive planning law (passed in 2000) gives all Wisconsin communities until January 1, 2010 to have in place a comprehensive plan that guides land use and related decision-making. Some of our local communities have been dragging their feet and making excuses as to why they won't begin the planning process. It is up to citizens to hold their feet to the fire and see that they pursue this important exercise. Planning done right will include all citizens in the decision-making process so that the outcome reflects the desires of all those who have a stake in the future development of the area. Let's work together to put the pressure on our elected officials to do the right thing and plan for the future now rather than in a rushed, last-minute approach just before the 2010 deadline.

Highway LO / Jericho Creek bridge project

This was another County DOT project which had the potential to do severe damage to Jericho Creek, the largest tributary to the Mukwonago River. [Note: Much of Jericho Creek is classified as a coldwater trout stream as it supports several coldwater species including creek chub, longnose gar, and native

brook trout (in contrast to the non-native brown trout stocked by the DNR on the Mukwonago – an issue for the Friends)]. Given the importance of Jericho Creek to the river, we once again petitioned the Waukesha County DOT to bring the environmental aspects of this project to the top of their priority list. This project was more dicey than the Hwy ES work as the stream needed to be re-routed during the rebuilding of the bridge. While the environmental protections on this project were not perfect, they were, we believe, adequate. The Highway LO bridge project was subject to the same “gully-washer” storms last June as the Hwy ES project. Some erosion occurred and sediments entered into the stream, but to the best of our knowledge, no long term damage was done to the stream.

It should be noted, however, that as a cost saving measure, the DOT installed a “box culvert bridge (a big hollow concrete box) rather than a more river-friendly clear-span bridge (which would have kept all man-made structures out of the river). A clear-span bridge would have allowed Jericho Creek much more freedom of movement than a big concrete box (rivers need to be allowed to move around some, as do fish). We wish we had known more about these things before the project began and had raised these concerns during the planning stages. At any rate, there continues to be a problem with the sizing of the box culvert, one that we hope can be easily corrected. The culvert is so wide (and water levels are thus so low) that we’re not certain that fish can swim upstream beneath the new bridge. We are hopeful that the DOT will address this issue (perhaps by partitioning the stream so it only flows through half of the box culvert during normal flow, where the other half would be used during high flows). If the DOT doesn’t resolve this issue, we may need to apply some pressure on them. We’ll be asking for your help on this if and when the time comes.

Thanks to “Friends” Barb Holtz, Pam Meyer and Tom Day and to the DNR’s Maureen Millman for their vigilant monitoring of this

project! Also, we appreciate the efforts of Kevin Yanny of the County DOT, although he still needs to address the fish passage issue.

The next highway project we will have to deal with will probably be the Highway 59 reconstruction project (in the immediate vicinity of the headwaters of Jericho Creek just west of downtown North Prairie).

Eagleville School donation Once again we’d like to extend our heartfelt appreciation to Eagleville Elementary’s 5th grade teacher Bruce Sturm and the wonderful children of Eagleville School for their cash donation to our water quality preservation efforts last June! Anyone who doubts what a committed group of hard-working individuals can accomplish need only look at the example set by these kids and their tireless leader to be reminded that the sky is the limit.



Town of East Troy

Rainbow Springs - southern half (Town of East Troy, Walworth County) Ezra and Nancy worked with the Town of East Troy on the proposed rezoning of some parts of the southern half of this parcel last summer. The owners wanted to change the remaining “agricultural” zoning to “residential,” with the aim of making a 150+ home development possible. Due to several factors, including soil limitations for suitable septic systems and the potential for significant environmental and community impacts, the town unanimously turned down this rezoning proposal. We feel the town used a good combination of scientific considerations and common sense in their rationale to turn down this proposal. Keep up the good work, town officials!

Miscellaneous

Village of Eagle/East Troy wells At the request of the Nature Conservancy, University of Wisconsin Researcher Jean Bahr and her

graduate students have begun a research project aimed at enhancing our understanding of the complex groundwater system found in this part of the state and specifically increasing our understanding of the impacts likely to result from new municipal water supply wells like the controversial ones proposed this past year by the Village of Eagle and the Village of East Troy. The study will yield useful information on the Eagle well's impact on the Mukwonago River, Lulu Lake and the high quality wetlands found in that part of the watershed. Professor Bahr has also agreed to look into the environmental effects of the proposed Village of East Troy high capacity well on Lake Beulah, its associated wetlands, and the Mukwonago River tributary downstream. The Friends were overjoyed to learn of Professor Bahr's research.

These large-scale groundwater withdrawal issues have been very contentious and emotional for all involved, and the bottom line is that we need a better scientific understanding of the situation in order to be able to make the best decisions. Professor Bahr's research findings will help everyone involved to separate fact from fiction in these proposals so that we can move ahead with better-informed, comprehensive decision-making.

Outdoor Wisconsin on PBS features Mukwonago River Twice each in late February and early March, Dan Small's "Outdoor Wisconsin" program on PBS ran programs featuring ten-minute segments on the Mukwonago River. We asked for and helped arrange these episodes, and in our opinion they turned out excellent! Several segments of the programs were taken directly out of the Friend's 2002 video "Glacial Refuge: The Phenomenally Diverse Mukwonago River." Outdoor Wisconsin's interest in the river and their use of parts of our video is a testament to the river's importance.

We are hoping that these programs will be re-run in fall so that we have more time to get the

word out to people in the area who may be interested in watching.

In the meantime, if you'd like to borrow one of the VHS tapes that we copied from the broadcasts, let Nancy know. Call her at (262) 782-8876. If interest dictates we could have more made. And, if you haven't already seen the original "Glacial Refuge..." video, check it out from your local library (in Eagle, Mukwonago or East Troy) or contact Nancy to purchase a copy.

Mukwonago River Watershed Initiative

Ezra continues to be involved with the Mukwonago River Watershed Initiative, attending the group's monthly meetings and playing an active role in its ongoing activities. The Initiative's current big project is helping the UW-Extension and some professors from UW-Madison to organize a groundwater symposium aimed at watershed area municipal officials and staff. That event is to be held in the area sometime this summer. Citizens will, of course, be invited to join as well. Watch for more on this in the near future from us and possibly even in your local papers.

Act 118 (The Regulatory Reform Act) A controversial bill passed the legislature this past fall and was signed into law by the Governor in the early part of the year. The bill aimed to streamline the process by which property owners' and developers' waterway permits are considered by DNR. To put it that way is being overly nice. The truth is that special interest lobbyists and a handful of influential anti-environment legislators wanted to gut DNR authority over these kinds of activities that take place in or adjacent to public rivers and lakes across the state.

Thankfully, statewide and local conservation groups worked with the Governor and the legislature to fix up some of the worst parts of the initial bill. The end result is that the requirements have changed for many activities in or along lakes and streams, such as grading, dredging, filling, the placement of rip-rap for

shore protection, etc. Some activities that formerly required individual permits from the DNR are now exempt from that requirement, while other activities are now subject to what's known as a general permit. Thankfully, the final bill included language indicating that designated high quality water bodies would not be subject to the streamlined procedures in all cases – i.e., they would continue to receive a high level of DNR scrutiny to ensure no degradation will occur.

The Mukwonago, with its Exceptional Resource Water and Outstanding Resource Water designations as well as its Class II Trout Stream designation, will thus continue to be protected by a higher level of DNR attention. As we have learned, though, these processes are only as good as we concerned citizens make them, so the Friends will continue to monitor all potentially harmful projects in the watershed as closely as we can. This new law affects those of you who own waterfront property, and it affects the developers we often find ourselves working with.

Our hope is that the net result isn't a reduction in protections for our waters. We will probably report back on this major legislative change again. Meanwhile, we ask that all of you help us by serving as eyes and ears on the ground, watching what happens along the river and the area lakes. Let us know and let the DNR know if you see anything that does not seem kosher. If you're curious about whether a permit is required for an activity you'd like to pursue or that you see someone else doing, refer to the DNR web-page <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/fhp/waterway/index.shtml> or call a DNR Water Management Specialist. For our area, that is Pam Schense at 262-574-2136. Bob Wakeman at 262-574-2149 may also be able to help.

State groundwater quantity legislation

In February 2004 the Friends Co-Directors attended a Madison legislative hearing on a bill which would place restrictions on high capacity wells that pump significant amounts of

groundwater across the state (Ezra was there in his capacity at the Wisconsin Association of Lakes (WAL), his day job, and Nancy was there to represent the Friends). Two drivers behind this bill were the proposed Perrier bottled water plant in central Wisconsin a couple years back and the over-pumping of the aquifers in Southeastern Wisconsin and the Green Bay / Fox River Valley metropolitan area. One of the bill's co-sponsors was area legislator Neal Kedzie, the 11th District Senator from Elkhorn whose district covers parts of the watershed and who serves as Chair of the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee. The bill made it through the legislative session alive and was signed into law by the Governor on Earth Day in April.

Conservation groups call the bill an excellent start, though they're quick to point out that it is not yet the comprehensive groundwater quantity legislation Wisconsin will need to prevent major groundwater-related problems from occurring. An example of the bill's shortcomings is the fact that the East Troy Village well proposed to be built on the shores of Lake Beulah (on the south side of the watershed) is not a well that would be regulated by the new law. Only certain wells that are placed in close proximity to a limited number of the highest quality surface water resources in the state will be covered. Ezra pointed this problem out at the legislative hearing as he had worked in his capacity at WAL with their member groups--the Lake Beulah Protective and Improvement Association and the Lake Beulah Management District--to try and get the issue addressed. Unfortunately, it was too late for any significant changes to be made to the law. We will continue to watch this law and report to you on what's happening. We will also continue to be involved in any high capacity well proposals that come along in the watershed, since these clearly have significant potential to impact the river and watershed residents negatively if done incorrectly.

Speakers bureau Over the last year we've done presentations on the Mukwonago River to

our friends at the Mukwonago Lions, Mukwonago Rotary, United Nations of Waukesha and the Board of Directors of the Waukesha County Land Conservancy. The “Glacial Refuge” video usually plays a major role in these informational presentations. Overall, the information that we’ve conveyed has been very well received. If you would like a speaker for your group or forum, please let us know. Call Nancy at (262) 782-8876 or Ezra at (608) 843-3972.

Mussel expert lost? In February of this year we became aware of the fact that our good friend and trusty mussel adviser, Lisie Kitchel from the DNR’s Bureau of Endangered Resources, was in danger of being laid off due to the state’s budgetary shortfalls. The loss of Lisie would be a huge blow to our efforts to preserve the aquatic life (especially the mussels) of the Mukwonago River. She has always gone beyond the call of duty in her work to protect these under-respected little critters. Last year, for example, she spent several nights in the Mukwonago area and days out in the stream monitoring the village’s project to run sewer and power lines under the channel of the river in the vicinity of the 83 bypass bridge. She was ready to spring into emergency evacuation plan action if anything had gone awry with the boring under the river! We wrote a letter to the Bureau of Endangered Resources pleading for the retention of Lisie and her position. Please join us in keeping our collective fingers crossed.

Eagleville Elementary School’s new charter school status Over the past year, parents, teachers, and administrators from the Mukwonago Area School District have sought charter school status from the state for the Eagleville School, located on the bank of Jericho Creek and the shore of Eagle Spring Lake in the Town of Eagle. In the fall, they were granted that status. A major focus of the new charter school’s curriculum and related activities is to be environmental science and stewardship. What better place for them to be than the Mukwonago River watershed! And,

how lucky are all of us in the watershed to have this great group of kids, parents, and teachers working with us as partners in our work! Congratulations, Eagleville!

Friends’ incorporation This spring the Friends found a pro-bono attorney willing to help us incorporate under state law. We are nearly through this process. After we incorporate, we will likely pursue tax-exempt nonprofit status with the IRS.



Wish list

- To get the owners of the existing Wal-Mart store in the Village of Mukwonago to retrofit better stormwater control / treatment structures to replace the failing retention pond they’ve got now.
- We also understand that the car wash on Hwy 83 is allowing a slow steady stream of detergent to get into the river, especially during busy times. Does anyone know who we could contact from these two facilities who might be sympathetic to our concerns? If so, please call Nancy at (262) 782-8876.

Concluding thoughts

*There you have it – we did not fall off the face of the earth. We just lost contact with you for a while because we were too darn busy to produce another newsletter. We expect to continue working toward the preservation of this outstanding stream, but we can’t do it without your support. Please take a moment to renew your membership to the Friends or to make a special donation. We could not possibly have taken on several of the year’s projects-- especially those attorney’s and engineer’ fees-- without **YOUR** help.*

Thank you, and we’ll see you out in the watershed or on the river! -- Nancy and Ezra

PLEASE JOIN THE FRIENDS OF THE MUKWONAGO RIVER

Now is the time to join the Friends of the Mukwonago River or renew your membership! The river continues to face many threats from proposed and pending developments throughout the watershed.

As we work to provide a voice for the river in the planning and decision-making processes surrounding these projects, we need to hire experts to help us make the case for win-win solutions that will allow sensible development to occur while protecting the Mukwonago River.

We also plan to pursue federal, tax-exempt non-profit status so that we may be eligible in the future for certain federal and state grants as well as charitable donations.

Your membership fee for the coming year will help us to have the financial wherewithal to be able to do these important things.

Please join now at the level that's appropriate for you. Just fill out the form below and mail it and a check to:

Friends of the Mukwonago River, P.O. Box 145, Mukwonago, WI 53149-0145

Please sign me up as an annual member of the Friends of the Mukwonago River:

I would like to join the Friends of the Mukwonago River at the level indicated below:

__ Friend (\$25) __ Defender (\$35) __ Guardian (\$50) __ Steward (\$100) __ Sustainer (>\$100)

Note: Memberships of \$25 or more receive a copy of our "Glacial Refuge" video

Memberships of \$35 or more receive a Friends t-shirt (indicate S, M, L, XL)

Memberships of \$50 or more receive a video and t-shirt (indicate S, M, L, XL)

I do not need a gift at this time.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____

Phone # (optional): _____ E-mail: _____

Please indicate here if you'd prefer an email newsletter in the future.

Thank you!

Friends of the Mukwonago River
P.O. Box 145
Mukwonago, WI 53149-0145