



Friends of the Mukwonago River Newsletter 2010-2011

President's Letter:

Hello, Friends. Can you believe it's 2011? It's hard to believe we're over a decade into the new millennium. Thanks to you, the Friends of the Mukwonago River is coming up on its 12th birthday!

As we reported a year ago, we're working to put this organization on a sustainable path where it can continue to do the good work it has always done. We secured a grant in 2008 from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' River Protection Grants program and another grant in 2009 from the River Alliance of Wisconsin, a statewide nonprofit river protection organization serving local river groups like ours. We have spent the bulk of our time this past year working to implement what we promised we would do with those grants.

Both grants were aimed at enhancing the ability of the organization to do its work. Among other things (see the list below), the money we received through those grants has helped us to create our terrific website (www.mukwonagoriver.org), to buy a new database program to help us reach out to members and others who may be interested in what we do, and to hire a part-time watershed coordinator. Cynthia Holt started with us last fall and has been a great asset to the board these last months. You can read more about her on page 2.

The following list highlights just some of the things that kept us (and many of you) busy in 2010:

- The Friends had a booth at the March 20, 2010 Eagle Community Showcase to raise local awareness of the Mukwonago River and its watershed.
- The Friends replaced a missing turtle crossing sign on Hwy LO, and Friends Board member Jean Weedman had educational information on threats to turtles published in local newspapers. 2011 is the Year of the Turtle!
- The Friends held an event featuring a canoe paddle, a watershed restoration tour, and a nice, local lunch at The Nature Conservancy's preserve on Lake Lulu, a first of its kind event for us (It won't be the last, as all attendees reported having a great time!)

Our Mission

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.

March 19

Join us for our

Annual Meeting

See page 8 for details

- *Volunteers (including some Friends members) and Town of Mukwonago staff and officials planted 1000 native shoreland plants at Phantom Woods on Upper Phantom Lake as part of a Fox River Commission/Town of Mukwonago project.*
- *Friends Board members and members attended several meetings on Waukesha County's process to update its 1984 Farmland Preservation Plan and related meetings on the statewide Working Lands Initiative, adopted in 2009 to allow farmers and local communities to work together to permanently protect farmland.*
- *The Friends showed our video, "A Glacial Refuge", at Alice Baker Library in Eagle.*
- *Friends Board President Ezra Meyer spoke to the Mukwonago Rotary about the river, the watershed, and our work as an organization.*
- *SEWRPC finalized the Mukwonago River Watershed Protection Plan, which we and others will work to implement in the coming years.*
- *Rainbow Springs' golf course closed for good in late October. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the property's owner since 2008, began to remove the old buildings on the property and to restore the areas along the river that were damaged by the construction and operation of the golf course.*

We expect 2011 to be full of accomplishments. Watch for announcements on events and volunteer opportunities on the website and on our Facebook page, as well as in postcard mailings if that is still your preferred way of receiving information.

Thank you for your support in our work to protect the Mukwonago River. We appreciate it very much. If you are due for a renewal, please use the enclosed form and donate what you can. Thank you, and let's have a great 2011!

Ezra Meyer, President

Watershed Coordinator hired in December as part of organizational work

The Friends of the Mukwonago River has contracted with Cynthia Holt as the first ever Friends' Watershed Coordinator for six months. She will assist the Friends' board in community outreach, organizational infrastructure, strategic planning, and financial development.



Cynthia Holt by the Arkansas River in Colorado

Cynthia has plenty of experience in these areas with nearly 20 years of working in non-profit management. Cynthia began her non-profit career in New Hampshire working as an outdoor educator with Boston University Sargent Center.

Later she headed back to Wisconsin to work as Associate Director/Camp Director for Phantom Lake YMCA between 1999 and 2005. Recently, she's worked throughout southeastern Wisconsin supporting conservation, and youth and arts groups with her own consulting business, Holt Community Consulting.

"I hold the Mukwonago River Watershed near and dear as it is the first place I learned about aquatic habitats while a camper at Phantom in the 70's," says Holt. "I'm thrilled to support the wonderful work of the Friends of the Mukwonago River." She is an avid hiker, paddler, swimmer, cross country skier, and outdoor enthusiast.

The Nature Conservancy Awards: Gold Star Award goes to Friends

As part of The Nature Conservancy's celebration of its 50 years in Wisconsin, Friends of the Mukwonago River and several Friends members received awards for their work within the Mukwonago River watershed. Lulu Lake Preserve was the setting for the celebration on Saturday, August 21 at 9 a.m.

The TNC in Wisconsin's 50th Anniversary Gold Star Award for Conservation Partner Award went to our organization, Tom Day, Barbara Holtz, Eric Howe, and others to "recognize some of the many people who have supported our work at Lulu Lake and throughout the watershed," according to The Nature Conservancy.

Following the program, which included author Laurie Lawlor reading an excerpt from her book **A Wetland Year**, guests could join Conservancy staff on a hike through the Lulu Lake Preserve, which was designated a "Wetland Gem" by the Wisconsin Wetlands Association.



Photos by
Barbara Holtz
and
Jean Weedman

Friends board members (top photo, left) Jean Weedman, Pamela Meyer, and Ezra Meyer happily received The Nature Conservancy's award from Director of the Mukwonago River Watershed Project Pat Morton (right).

Other awards given for major contributions to the health of the watershed included, (first row, right) Barb Holtz, Tom Day (second row, left) and Eric Howe (right).

A Watershed Moment

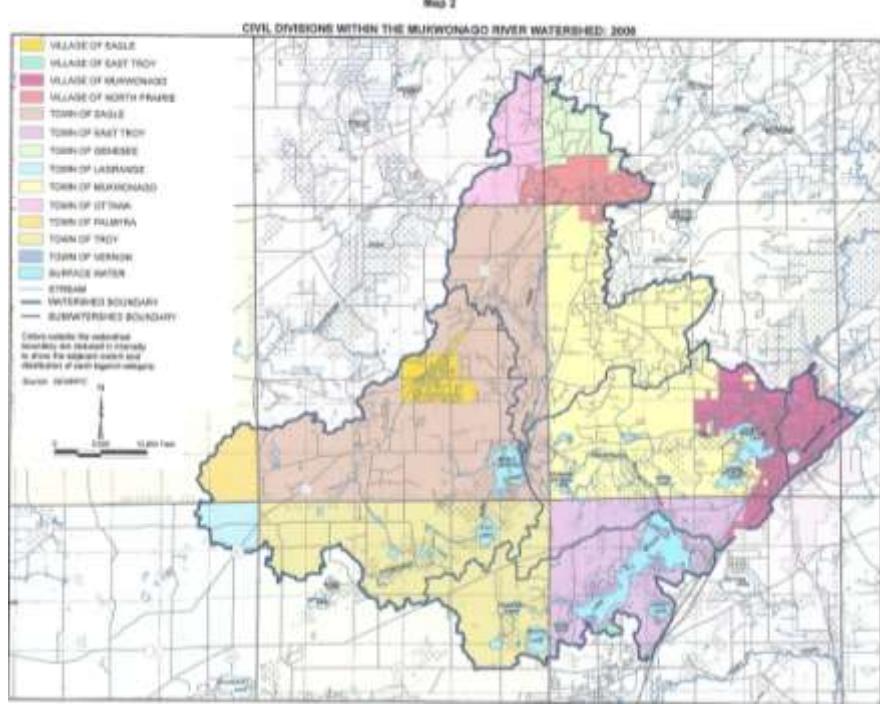
We talk a lot about the Mukwonago River watershed, but what is that? Watershed is the term used to describe the geographic area of land that drains water to a shared destination. Every waterway lies within a watershed, and smaller watersheds join together to become larger watersheds.

Watershed boundaries always follow the highest ridgeline around the stream channels and meet at the lowest point of the land where water flows out of the watershed. The boundary between watersheds is the topographic dividing line from which water flows in two different directions.

Since 1999 the Mukwonago River watershed has been a focal point for community-based environmental conservation. Collaborative efforts of watershed groups, government, and individuals have accomplished improvements in water quality, fisheries, wildlife habitat, and overall quality of life. This watershed provides water for drinking, recreation, and agriculture, and is a rich source of biological diversity that includes habitat for many threatened and endangered species.

Activities that change soil permeability, vegetation type or cover, water quality, quantity, or rate of flow can change the characteristics of a stream or the watershed at downstream locations. Land use practices such as clearing land for agriculture or housing developments, creating and maintaining roads, and water diversions may have environmental consequences that greatly affect stream conditions even when the land use is not directly associated with a stream. Proper land use planning and best management practices in project implementation can ensure that activities within a watershed do not detrimentally impact the downstream environment.

The Mukwonago River watershed includes two river systems, Jericho Creek and the Mukwonago River and many lakes including Army Lake, Lake Beulah, Booth



The Mukwonago River Watershed *

Lake, Brown's Lake, Eagle Spring Lake, Hogan Lake, Lulu Lake, Phantom Lakes, Pickerel Lake, Rainbow Springs Lake, Swan Lake, Wood Lake and smaller natural and manmade water bodies.

Recreational activities abound in the waters of your watershed! With that activity comes the responsibility to care for, nurture, and sustain the underlying resources. Love your water; it is what sustains you!

Watershed Facts from the SEWRPC Report:

- The Mukwonago system is sustained by groundwater recharge, seepage from wetlands and moraines, and precipitation runoff from about a 74-square-mile watershed.
- The Mukwonago River discharges into the Fox River in the Village of Mukwonago.
- The Mukwonago River watershed has been divided into five subwatersheds.
- There are approximately 19 miles of stream.
- Jericho Creek and Beulah outlet are two major tributaries that flow into the Mukwonago River.
- Jericho Creek flows from north to south and discharges into the Mukwonago River just downstream of Eagle Spring Lake.

*This map is from the SEWRPC Mukwonago River Protection Plan document, available online. For a link, go to www.mukwonagoriver.org. It may take a while to download this 383 page document!

SEWRPC work helps Mukwonago River Area

Mukwonago River Watershed Protection Plan released in 2010

In June, after several years of fieldwork and in-stream data collection, the Southeast Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission released a definitive plan with very specific recommendations to manage and protect the Mukwonago River.

The Friends are working actively with their watershed partners to prioritize these recommendations for education, land use planning, groundwater protection, stormwater and agricultural pollution, aquatic and land based invasive species control, recreational activities and several other possibilities. The plan includes extensive maps and graphs pertinent to the recommendations

and desired outcomes for the watershed.

This plan offers specific projects which will require several years of work to implement. These small and large scale activities will enable all of us to better preserve the waters we love so much.

This report inventories a wealth of information about the lands, waters, and creatures in the watershed. You can find a copy of the 400 plus page report at local libraries, Phantom and Eagle Springs Lake Management districts and on line at
<http://mukwonagoriver.org/resources/science/>

SEWRPC Natural Areas And Critical Species Protection and Management Plan Addendum

The Southeast Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission has recently added 176 sites to its 1997 inventory of Natural Areas, defined as little modified by development since European settlement, or sufficiently recovered to support native plant and animal communities and Critical Species habitat defined as land or wetland nurturing plants or animals that are considered rare or threatened with extinction.

This plan has been used by land trusts and local and state government to prioritize lands most needing protection from development since the late 1990's. It has worked very well to protect these areas by either land use planning or purchase by entities that can preserve the lands in perpetuity.

Sites in the Mukwonago River watershed were identified in the original plan and several properties were added in the updated addendum. These sites are important because they represent areas that, if destroyed, cannot be recreated. Examples are oak woodlands and savannas, calcareous fens, sedge meadows, and various wetlands. There are many of these treasures in private hands or under public ownership. These lands help buffer the waters from runoff pollutants and provide habitat for the species which need both water, wetlands, and upland to survive.

You can view this very large plan here:

<http://www.sewrpc.org/SEWRPC/NaturalResources/RegionalNaturalAreasPlan.htm>

It will take a while to download this 549 page document.

Find more great scientific information about our watershed on our website. Visit us at www.mukwonagoriver.org.

Fun with Friends



Lulu Lake Preserve, view from Crooked Creek

Photo by Julie Bender

By Julie Bender

On Saturday, June 26, I attended an outing sponsored by the Friends of Mukwonago River at Lulu Lake. It was my first outing with the friends, and it was not only enjoyable but informational.

We started with a hike led by the Nature Conservancy and learned about the history of the area as well as what problems we face today. I learned about the watershed and was surprised how little I knew about something so important to me and to this community.

We then went canoeing/kayaking on Lulu Lake; something I have done in the past, but it was fun to go with a group of people who appreciated and enjoyed being on the water. It was a very enjoyable

day especially meeting new people who believe in the importance of protecting the Mukwonago watershed. The watershed is a precious resource to the Mukwonago area as well as the state of Wisconsin.

I am looking forward to being an active member and helping educate our community and participate in further protecting this resource.

Julie Bender is a new FOMR member and long-time Mukwonago resident and community volunteer. She is the parent of two kids and an RN at Childrens Hospital in Milwaukee. She is also an avid paddler, swimmer, and cross country skier.

Join us on Facebook!

***Post your own photos of
Fun in the Watershed***

Our thanks to all who participated in our members and friends canoe and hike event in June at Lulu Lake!

We welcome suggestions for future events and will begin planning soon.

We'll keep you posted!

Water Issue: Who owns Wisconsin's waters? Lake Beulah and the Public Trust Doctrine

The Wisconsin Supreme Court recently granted Wisconsin Lakes and several other organizations an opportunity to file "friends of the court" briefs in a lawsuit involving the Lake Beulah Management District, the Lake Beulah Protective and Improvement Association, the Department of Natural Resources and the Village of East Troy.

The case asks some complicated statutory questions, but at its root involves a permit granted to the Village to sink a municipal well that the District and Association contend will have a major impact on Lake Beulah, given the well's proximity to the lake and the demonstrated connection between the lake and the surrounding groundwater. The case may very well be an important ruling on the role of DNR in relation to the **Public Trust Doctrine, Wisconsin's cherished constitutional provision that protects the waters of the state for all**, and may even influence how all state agencies are able interpret their powers.

At question is whether the ability of DNR to implement the Public Trust Doctrine is limited to the specific direction of the Legislature, as argued by the Village, or whether it is a broad power

contained in the statutes that created the agency, occasionally directed but not otherwise limited by subsequent specific legislation, as argued by the District, the Association and by the DNR itself. The question is of sufficient importance that a range of groups are filing briefs, from environmental organizations to a nationwide property-rights group.

Lake Beulah will undoubtedly have a lasting impact on lakes [and rivers] in Wisconsin, regardless of its ultimate disposition by the Court.

Note: *The Friends have long tracked this case and will be watching closely to see what ultimately happens. We hope our friends on Lake Beulah (one of the Mukwonago River watershed's major lakes) will prevail, along with the Public Trust Doctrine in Wisconsin. Stay tuned for more information on this case here and on our website.*

(This article is excerpted from the January 19, 2011 E-Lake Letter published by Wisconsin Lakes, a statewide nonprofit lake protection organization serving local watershed groups like ours -- <http://wisconsinlakes.org>.)

Mukwonago River Unit Southern Kettle Moraine Update

As of October 31, 2010, Rainbow Springs Golf course closed its doors, sadly for many golfers who have used the course for 40 years. The Waukesha County land is not open to the public while the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources works to remove buildings, culverts, and other materials from the site. The Walworth County lands have been open to the public for hunting and other activities for several years.

The master planning process for the Mukwonago River Unit will be done over the next few years in conjunction with that process for the entire Southern Kettle Moraine. The public will be able to weigh in on the plan over that period. The Friends will keep you informed of the meetings that will allow for public input. There is a large area of pristine wildlife habitat and possible critical species habitat and natural areas that we hope will be preserved in the process. The Friends hope that the river corridor will be restored to its more natural, pre-golf course state by the WDNR.

There will be many inquiries for access to this large piece of land in SE Wisconsin, and we hope that while recreation takes a major role, the natural areas and habitat corridors will be retained and restored. This is a key piece in the long term continued preservation of the pristine Mukwonago River. We will continue to support the recommendation of the SEWRPC Protection Plan as it relates to this property and hope to have your support as we do so.

Join us

Members and friends welcome!

Friends of the Mukwonago River Annual Meeting

**Saturday, March 19
9:30 a.m.**

Note new location:

**Eagle Municipal Building
Hwy NN (next to the library)
Eagle, WI 53119**

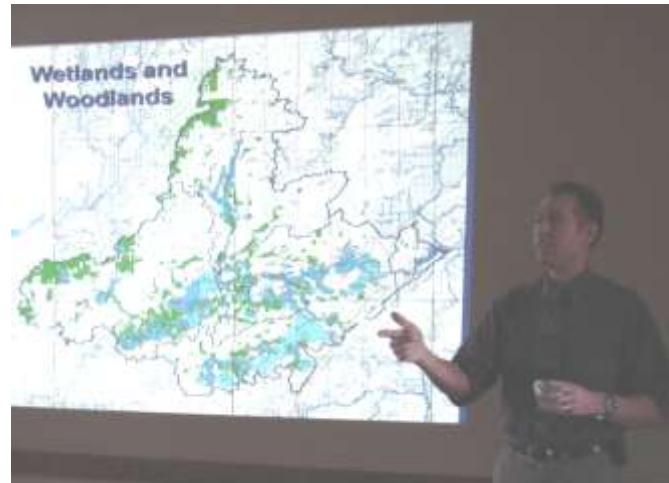
Standard Process Plant Manager Scott Anderson will speak on Standard Process' philosophy and about being good stewards of the land and water. They own land within the Mukwonago River watershed.

Standard Process, headquartered in Palmyra, WI, has provided health care professionals with high-quality, nutritional whole food supplements since 1929.

Last year's Annual Meeting...

At last year's annual meeting, SEWRPC representative Tom Slawski (right) previewed information from the Mukwonago River Protection Plan for our members prior to the June release date.

Below, President Ezra Meyer presides over the meeting during which Jean Weedman presented a power point on our turtle program (showing in background.).



2011 Year of the Turtle

Turtle conservation groups are designating 2011 as the Year of the Turtle! Go to <http://www.parcplace.org/yearoftheturtle.htm> to learn more and get monthly calendars.

Join us in our efforts as we continue to protect our local turtle populations! Drive watchfully on area roads from April-July.

Project protects Phantom Lakes, Mukwonago, and Fox River systems



July 2010

It had rained most the night and in the July morning, no sun shone. The rain continued as a band of hardy planters descended on Phantom Woods Rd. in the Town of Mukwonago to plant 1000 native shoreland plants to serve as a vegetative buffer zone, protecting Phantom Lakes, the high quality lower portion of the Mukwonago River and ultimately the Fox River.

The rain stopped and a monarch butterfly landed on a newly-planted butterfly weed as if to signify its approval. Faces brightened and the job was completed by noon. Time and nature will take care of the rest.



Before photo—top—shows how road debris like gravel, oils, and road salt could easily drain into the channel linking Upper Phantom and Lower Phantom Lakes.

After photo—bottom—shows the project area after planting.

Full article on this project was originally published in our 2009-2010 newsletter, available at www.mukwonagoriver.com

Also in the watershed...

Restoration work continues on several Nature Conservancy properties in our watershed. Some 38 acres of pines were logged from three properties this fall: Lulu Lake, Crooked Creek and the Meyer Property. Removing the non-native pines which had been planted in the 1960's is part of the plan to reopen lands that once were oak savanna and prairie with periodic woodlands. The pines also blocked views of the wetlands and prevented the growth of native trees and shrubs.

Twenty five of those acres of logging occurred at Crook Creek, which contains the source waters for the Mukwonago River system. Those 25 acres and 55 acres at the Meyer Property will be planted in native prairie by spring. A prairie typically matures in three-ten years.

Beulah Bog State Natural Area Tour held in August

By Eric Tarman-Ramcheck

Did you know that the pH of the bog pond at Beulah Bog State Natural Area, has been recorded as low as 2.1? That is a higher acidity than vinegar! This was one of the many great facts that visitors enjoyed during a recent tour of the Beulah Bog State Natural Area (SNA), led by Dr. Renae Prell-Mitchell and KMLT Board Member Eric Tarman-Ramcheck.

This tour was sponsored by the Kettle Moraine Land Trust to highlight the hard work donated by many volunteers over the last years. There are future work days scheduled, so check out the KMLT website or the Friends of Mukwonago River website for dates

Dr. Renae Prell-Mitchell, wrote her 200+ page master thesis on the "Environmental History and Analysis of Human Activity at the Beulah Bog SNA" at UW-Milwaukee. It can be viewed on the KMLT website. Her experience as an environmental educator and

professor showed as over 30 people enjoyed the tour and a demonstration of a glacial kettle hole formation she made using sand and ice.

It was a perfect, autumn day for the tour which also featured a nearby property presently being targeted for preservation by the Kettle Moraine Land Trust (KMLT). This property, owned by Bill & Kathy Tarman-Ramcheck, is located between the SNA and Lake Beulah along Beulah Heights Road. The parcel contains many high-quality remnant prairies, oak savannas, and open oak woodlands that have been restored with prescribed fire and many hours of invasive brush removal.

A tour of Beulah Bog SNA will be lead by DNR Wildlife Supervisor Tim Lizotte, Dr. Renae Prell-Mitchell and Eric Tarman-Ramcheck on Saturday, June 4 at 9 a.m. This tour is sponsored by the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin.

Coming soon...

Walk with Marlin Johnson on March 5 The Alice Baker Library will be offering a program geared to all ages on Saturday, March 5 -- "A Winter Walk with Marlin Johnson" from 11 a.m. – noon. He'll identify trees and shrubs along the newly-established Eagle Nature Trail and talk about ecology. Marlin Johnson is a retired biology teacher from UW-Waukesha.

Kathy Tober will be doing a wildlife education program for all age, sponsored by the Alice Baker Library, at the Eagle Municipal Building from 10 - 11 a.m. on Saturday, April 9.



Jackie Lewis (shown above) and Jean Weedman answered questions at last year's showcase.

Visit Friends of the Mukwonago River at the Eagle Community Showcase

on Saturday, March 26 from 8 a.m. to noon at the Eagle Elementary School gymnasium.

We will have our watershed map and display items, along with t-shirts and our "A Glacial Refuge" CD for sale.

It's a great way to learn about area businesses and organizations.

Youth Camps...making a difference in the watershed this summer

Camp Edwards YMCA, Camp Alice Chester, and Phantom Lake YMCA Camp have committed to partnering with Friends of the Mukwonago River on various watershed projects through their teen leadership and environmental education programs.

Camp Edwards YMCA

Water Education Days at Camp Edwards May 16 and 20: For several years **Edwards YMCA Camp** has been serving area schools through our Water Education Days teaching the importance of the health of our local watersheds. Through the dedication and full financial assistance of our local Lake Beulah Protective and Improvement Association, we serve about 200 elementary students. Each group of students travels through five different stations, tying together different aspects of the watersheds: pond study of macro invertebrates, reptiles and amphibians, fish ecology, the water cycle, and marsh study. All of our study stations are interactive and keep the kids busy on those spring days. Our hope is that, not only will each student enjoy themselves at Camp Edwards in the outdoors, but most importantly, be able to relate how human behaviors and understanding can benefit not only the local watersheds, but our earth as a whole. **Tiffany Praeger, Environmental Education Director**



Phantom Lake YMCA Camp



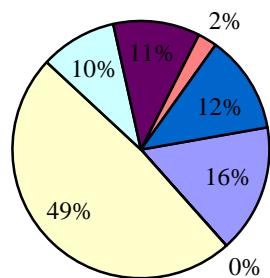
For over 100 years, **Phantom Lake YMCA Camp** has provided thousands of youth from Wisconsin, Illinois, and across the United States a chance to enjoy water activities and learn about the natural world. In recent years, day camp and resident summer programs have included: Outdoor Adventure, Nature Trekkers, Swimming, Kayaking, Canoeing and Sailing. In 2003, PLYC received a grant from WE Energies to support their Phantom Corps conservation program for teens and in 2010, summer staffer Emily Hammer added a Limnology Specialty--using hands-on methods to teach campers about the biology of inland waterways. The water of Upper Phantom Lake has been a touchstone for over a century. Phantom Lake YMCA Camp staff and campers hope to be good stewards of the watershed for those who will enjoy it in the next century. **Christina Rye, Phantom Lake YMCA Day Camp Director**

Camp Alice Chester

Girl Scout participants at **Alice Chester** enjoy swimming, canoeing, and sailing on Booth Lake at the southwestern tip of the Mukwonago watershed. There have been times when a turtle will lay eggs in our sandy beach. We block off the area where her eggs have been buried to keep them safe from sand castles and other playful sand sports. It's a great opportunity to teach girls about turtles and our role in making sure they stay safe. Our summer Nature Specialist also does nature studies with the girls. They take water samples and use magnifying glasses to compare each other's buckets. Swimming in a lake for many of our campers is an important, first-time experience. Camp Alice Chester also uses Swan Lake for nature appreciation. Girls with their camp counselors or troop leaders watch the sunset, hike hoping for glimpses of a beaver or fox, and take in all its beauty by camping near the shore. Swan Lake is also at the southern part of the watershed and directly feeds into Lake Beulah. **Andrea "Velma" Yanacheck, MED. Outdoor Program Manager**

Friends of the Mukwonago River financials...

**Friends of the Mukwonago River Income
2010**

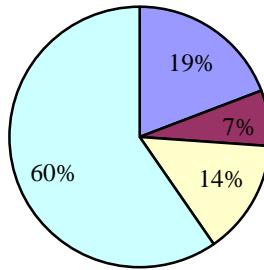


Here is our financial statement for 2010.

We are recognized by the IRS as a 501c3 tax-exempt charitable organization.

Contact us at P.O. Box 21,
Eagle, WI 53119 or at
www.mukwonagoriver.org

**Friends of the Mukwonago River Expenses
2010**



Watch area camp participants make a difference in the Mukwonago River Watershed this summer! See page 11.

Photo from Phantom Lake YMCA Camp

Please join the Friends of the Mukwonago River

Benefits of membership:

- Receive our newsletter and periodic updates on volunteer and educational activities.
- Know that yours isn't a lone voice in support of protecting the phenomenal Mukwonago River.
- Be armed with the information you need to advocate for the river in community planning and decision-making processes.



New member —or— renewing member? Please circle one.

Membership type: Senior/student \$10 Friend \$25 Organization/Club \$40 Corporate \$50

Donation: Defender \$35 Guardian \$50 Protector \$100 Steward \$500 Other: _____

Does your employer provide matching funds? Please check with them to determine what may be required.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____

Phone Number: _____ **Email:** _____

- *Please indicate here if you prefer to receive our newsletter and other periodic notifications by email rather than by mail. This helps us save energy, postage, and trees and reduces our carbon footprint!*

Special Gifts

Gift in memory of: _____

Gift in honor of: _____ **Occasion:** _____

Personal message to be included:

Acknowledgement of gift should be sent to:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____

Please mail this completed form with a check to:

**Friends of the Mukwonago River
P.O. Box 21
Eagle, WI 53119
Thank You!**