

# The Sheboygan River Explorer

Summer 2013

Volume 2, Issue 3



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*The goal for the Sheboygan River is to reduce the contamination and improve habitat enough so as to raise its "grade" as a Great Lakes river from an "F" to a "C".*

## A Healing River and Lake!

Healing takes time and often, effort. Operations to remove the PCBs and PAHs and improve habitat areas are done, but work is on-going to combat invasive plants and make sure the new plants grow.



Project partners visit a habitat project

Each year the habitat areas will look different as the new plants become more established and mature. Each year hopefully, too, the contaminant loads in the food chain will subside. As time goes on, monitoring will show us how quickly the river is healing and how quickly we can again safely harvest and eat the fish and waterfowl from the Sheboygan River.

### Take time to view the habitat projects now and then to see what's changed.

Consider taking a closer look and helping to monitor the change through one of our volunteer programs. As you enjoy the Sheboygan River or Lake Michigan, know that we, as a community, are helping the river and our local Great Lake heal.

Inviting you to help heal your river and your lake,

*Deb*

## Paddle the ever changing Sheboygan River

Fall Canoe and Kayak Expeditions  
 Kayak- September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2013 9:30-Noon  
 Kayak- September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2013 9:30-Noon  
 Canoe- October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2013 9:30-Noon  
 Canoe- October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2013 1:00-3:30pm

To register, contact Camp Y-Koda at 920-467-6882.

Registrants will be contacted by Camp Y-Koda a few days in advance of the trip with final details. River section featured on each trip determined by water conditions.



# Field Notes and Upcoming Programs



## Group Bat Survey Walk

Come join Amy Kretlow and Debbie Beyer to walk one of the Sheboygan River bat survey routes and practice using the Ana-Bat Detector. We'll walk a survey route and collect data to accompany additional data being collected by volunteers (some of you!).

Wear good walking shoes and bring insect repellent!

- Thur. Aug. 29<sup>th</sup> 8:30pm Parking lot across from Sheboygan YMCA
- Thur. Sept. 5<sup>th</sup> 8:00pm Maywood Environmental Park
- Thur. Sept. 19<sup>th</sup> 8:00pm Circle parking lot near South Pier

## Native Plant Walk

- Mon. Sept. 16<sup>th</sup> 5:30pm to 6:30pm Indiana Ave./Taylor Dr. Wayside
- Mon. Oct. 7<sup>th</sup> 5:00pm to 6:00pm Taylor Dr./University Dr. Wetland

Join local ecologist and Sheboygan River contractor, Scott Horzen, to see and identify some of the native trees, shrubs, grasses, sedges and wildflowers planted to restore habitat. Discuss their ecological importance and get ideas for **"going native" with your own backyard habitat. Added bonus, bring along specimens for Scott to identify for you.**



## Invasive Plant Pull & Ice Cream Social

- Thur. Sept. 5<sup>th</sup> 5:30pm to 7:30pm
- Thur. Sept. 19<sup>th</sup> 5:30pm to 7:30pm
- Sat. Oct. 12<sup>th</sup> 9:00am to 11:00am
- Sat. Oct 26<sup>th</sup> 9:00am to 11:00am
- Sat. Nov. 9<sup>th</sup> 9:00am to 11:00am

Help cut or mark (for later treatment) invasive plants (buckthorn and/or teasel) in natural habitat between University Drive and the river. Take a refreshing ice cream break and admire what you and your team have accomplished! Wear long pants, sturdy shoes, long sleeves, gloves and bring insect repellent and a pruning shears, if possible.



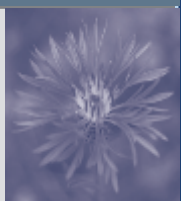
## Invasive Plant Pull Notes

This summer a crew of volunteers were busy pulling and cutting invasive plants along the Sheboygan River. All together they collected 15 large garbage bags full of garlic mustard with leafy spurge mixed in, 12 large bags of **Dame's rocket**, and cleared four main areas along University Drive of teasel. Thank you to the volunteers that helped week after week, even during hot and humid conditions! Invasive plant pulls do not end with the summer, so please join this great group of volunteers and help defeat the invasion.



By Amy Kretlow

Advanced notice of your participation is appreciated, but not required. Please contact Debbie Beyer at 920-459-6644 or [deb.beyer@ces.uwex.edu](mailto:deb.beyer@ces.uwex.edu) or Amy Kretlow at 920-459-5918 or [akretlow@uwm.edu](mailto:akretlow@uwm.edu) if you are able to sign-up in advance.





# Field Notes and Upcoming Programs

## Bird Notes

Wednesday morning bird walks have been wonderful ways to connect with the river. Although the data is still to be compiled, **it is safe to say that we've documented more than 50 species of birds.** Some were common species you probably see every day, like Canada geese and American robins, and some were just passing through and are more difficult to find. Some of the highlights include:

- Red-breasted merganser
- Common merganser
- Spotted sandpiper
- Green heron
- Palm warbler
- Bay-breasted warbler
- Warbling vireo
- Common yellowthroat
- Yellow-rumped warbler
- Rose-breasted grosbeak
- Eastern towhee
- Blue-gray gnatcatcher
- Northern rough-winged swallow
- Cliff swallow
- Eastern bluebird
- Great crested flycatcher



Rose-breasted grosbeak

**Take some time for a bird walk! We'll meet at Esslingen Park and move to other locations throughout the morning.**

By Debbie Beyer

## Upcoming Bird Walks

- Thur. Sept. 19th 8:00am Esslingen Park
- Thur. Oct. 10th 8:00am Esslingen Park
- Thur. Nov. 14th 8:00am Esslingen Park



Kohler Andrae State Park Survey Route (above), little brown bat (top right), hoary bat (bottom right).

## Bat Notes

This summer had a rocky start to bat monitoring, but once the kinks were worked out bats were located on five routes. Thanks to all of the volunteers who made the effort to use the Ana-bat Detector. Four species of bats were located. They include the little brown bat, Eastern red bat, hoary bat, and big brown bat. Bat surveying will conclude at the end of September and resume again in Spring 2014. Let Debbie or Amy know if you are interested in volunteering next year!

By Amy Kretlow



## Frog and Toad Team Notes

This spring we trained 12 volunteers for conducting frog and toad surveys at select areas along the river and area wetlands. We also ran a route that included listening points

within the Area of Concern and up-river. The strategy is to select three evenings from mid-April to mid-July that are warm and calm. Easy, right? Not so! It was difficult this year with the very cool spring and rather breezy July. Nonetheless, within the AOC, we documented Eastern gray treefrogs, American toads, green frogs and pickerel frogs. Up-river we heard wood frogs too. Let Debbie or Amy know if you are interested in being on the Frog and Toad Team next year!

By Debbie Beyer



# Sheboygan River AOC – Restoration Status Update

Summer 2013

More than \$80 million was invested in cleaning up contaminated sediments and restoring fish and wildlife habitat in 2011 and 2012 in the Sheboygan AOC. Since all actions deemed necessary for achieving AOC goals have now been completed, monitoring will be conducted in the next 3 to 5 years (timelines depend on individual BUIs) to verify that AOC goals are being met. It may take time for the natural system to recover following cleanup actions and habitat restoration.



Northern leopard frog.

Once all AOC goals have been met, then the AOC can be taken off the list of AOCs (“delisted”). If one or more of the goals are not being met after 3 to 5 years, the AOC will continue to be monitored while further investigation occurs to understand the reasons for not meeting the goals.

This update shows the current status (Summer 2013) of the removal phases for nine impairments of the Sheboygan River AOC – *complete, underway, not started, or not required* – and the next steps.



Arrowhead, Kingfisher and great blue heron  
Illustrations by  
Candy Bruner



Dredging and pumping river sediment.



Shoreline habitat restoration.

## BUI Removal Phases:

- MA MONITOR & ASSESS:** define the problem, establish baseline, gather data.
- DR DATA UNDER REVIEW:** literature searches, lab results not yet analyzed/summarized, understanding the data by consulting with experts, etc.
- DP DEVELOP AOC PROJECTS:** engage stakeholders to develop the set of projects that are necessary for reaching AOC goals.
- IP IMPLEMENT PROJECTS:** take action to improve conditions within the AOC if monitoring data shows goals are not being met.
- VR VERIFY RESULTS:** this phase includes the step of monitoring to check conditions after action has been taken. Once targets are reached, prepare a proposal to remove the BUI with input from stakeholders.

## Status of Each Phase:

not required	not started	underway	complete
X	○	↻	★

**Populations of sediment-dwelling organisms are degraded**

### NEXT STEPS:

- Populations of sediment dwelling organisms are degraded.
- Monitor dredging sites according to cleanup plans.
- Analyze data from 2012 study.
- Repeat 2012 study in 2014 to strengthen the data and inform work that is occurring in other AOCs.

★	★	★	★	↻
MA	DR	DP	IP	VR

Monitor and Assess (MA)

Data Under Review (DR)

Develop AOC Projects (DP)



### There are health concerns with eating fish & wildlife



#### NEXT STEPS:

- Sample on the current 5-year rotation to assess the consumption advisory.
- Monitor and assess Superfund remediated floodplains and sediments to evaluate species recovery from contamination.
- Repeat wildlife tissue data collection in 2015 or 2016 concurrently with next fish tissue collection.



### Fish & wildlife populations are degraded



#### NEXT STEPS:

- Monitor dredging sites according to cleanup plans.
- Maintain projects that were completed in 2013 through 2015.
- Pursue funding to conduct verification monitoring; complete a Fish and Wildlife Plan.
- Monitor and assess Superfund remediated floodplains and sediments to evaluate species recovery from contamination.



### There is increased potential for fish tumors & deformities



#### NEXT STEPS:

- Monitor dredging sites according to cleanup plans.
- Conduct reference study to determine if 2012 tumor sampling results are comparable to non-AOC site rates.
- Analyze data from Spring 2013 tumor sampling at a non-AOC site.



### There is increased potential for bird & animal deformities & reproduction problems



#### NEXT STEPS:

- Monitor and assess Superfund remediated floodplains and sediments to evaluate species recovery from contamination.
- Develop a monitoring plan.
- Pursue funding to conduct monitoring.



### Dredging activities for commerce or navigation are restricted



#### NEXT STEPS:

- Dredging complete; verify that dredging sites are completed according to cleanup plans.
- Complete a Dredging Alternatives Plan.
- Develop a proposal to remove the BUI and seek public input on the decision.



### Excessive nutrients cause undesirable algae



#### NEXT STEPS:

- Target met; develop a proposal to remove the BUI and seek public input on the decision.



### Small organisms living in the water are degraded



#### NEXT STEPS:

- Analyze data from 2012 study.
- Repeat the 2012 study in 2014 to strengthen the data and inform work that is occurring in other AOCs.
- If 2012 data show an impairment, conduct further tests to better understand the cause(s).



### Fish & wildlife habitat is poor



#### NEXT STEPS:

- Maintain projects that were completed in 2013 through 2015.
- Complete a Fish and Wildlife Plan to describe the fish and wildlife projects and the goals they helped meet.
- Pursue funding to conduct verification monitoring.



Implement Projects (IP)

Verify Results (VR)

← RETURN TO PROCESS STEPS IF TARGETS NOT REACHED



TARGETS REACHED



SUBMIT FORMAL BUI REMOVAL APPLICATION

## Sheboygan River Basin Partnership News

Sheboygan River Basin Partnership and UW-Extension held a Willow Creek neighborhood meeting on Monday, August 5, to review proposed habitat restoration, land acquisition, and trail improvement projects. Landowners adjacent to Greendale Drive were invited to the meeting and 10 landowners participated in the meeting. The attendees supported habitat restoration initiatives along the corridor and



Steelhead trout (pictured), chinook and coho salmon spawn and reproduce naturally in Willow Creek, making it a unique stream along Lake Michigan's western shore.

many offered to volunteer for future river improvement initiatives. The Willow Creek corridor was identified by the Sheboygan River AOC Technical Advisory Committee as a priority area for project implementation. A number of projects are being proposed for the Willow Creek corridor using state and federal funds that are anticipated to become available in the next several years. Planning for these projects will be ongoing over the next six months. For more information please contact Jon Guntow, SRPB, at 920-980-2800.

By Jon Guntow

## Shout Out to May 18th Cleanup Participants!

The 7th Annual Sheboygan River Cleanup Event took place on May 18th. The weather finally cooperated for a great sunny and warm morning on the river, yielding 740 pounds of garbage! In 2012 the event collected approximately 540 pounds of garbage.

**So hats off to this year's participants who worked hard collecting all that trash!**



## Help Stop the Invasion!!!

Progress is being made along the Sheboygan River with invasive plant control and restoration projects. What we need are *watchful eyes* looking along the shorelines for invasive plants such as purple loosestrife, teasel, and Japanese knotweed. We also need people checking the shores looking for tiny snails such as the faucet snail or the extra-large snails called the Chinese mystery snails.

If you would like to join our local invasive species fighting team, let me know, and as work days become organized I will contact you so that you, too, can become involved with *stopping the invasion*.

Steve Klock  
[steve.klock@sheboygancounty.com](mailto:steve.klock@sheboygancounty.com) or 920-946-5921  
 Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator  
 Glacierland Resource Conservation and Development, Inc.



# Habitat Notes

As the summer progresses, so do the new habitat plantings! As spring waters recede, wetland and shoreland plants emerge. As the upland plants grow, the landscape takes on a different look! Wild critters, like bluebirds, are beginning to take notice and are using habitat structures, like nest boxes.

Project plantings will take several years to mature and over time and with varying weather conditions, they will continue to change. This year, in some areas the main plants visible are the cover crops, which look like grasses, protecting the soil and native seeds as they begin to sprout.

Applied Ecological Services Inc., is hired to maintain the plantings through 2015 to control weeds and invasive plants by pulling or cutting them, with mowing, and also spot herbicide treatments. The company is also responsible for ensuring the survival of new plantings, replacing plants that die.

If you are interested in helping to care for or monitor some aspect of the projects, please contact Debbie Beyer at 920-459-6644 or [deb.beyer@ces.uwex.edu](mailto:deb.beyer@ces.uwex.edu). Watch the healing process happen!

By Stacy Hron - WDNR & Debbie Beyer - UWEX

## Save the Date!



LAKE MICHIGAN: STATE OF THE LAKE  
GREAT LAKES BEACH ASSOCIATION  
CONFERENCE OCTOBER 15-17, 2013

2013 Joint Conference  
October 15-17, 2013  
Blue Harbor  
Sheboygan, Wisconsin  
<http://www.aqua.wisc.edu/solm/Home.aspx>



## Web Resources



Wisconsin Bat Monitoring Program  
<http://wiatri.net/inventory/bats/>



Wisconsin Frog & Toad Monitoring Program  
<http://wiatri.net/inventory/frogtoadsurvey/secure/welcome.cfm>



IPAW: Invasive Plants Association of Wisconsin  
<http://ipaw.org/>

"The mission of the Invasive Plant Association of Wisconsin is to promote better stewardship of the natural resources of Wisconsin by advancing the understanding of invasive plants and encouraging the control of their spread."



Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, eBird  
<http://ebird.org/content/ebird/>  
Global tools for birders and critical data for science.



Outdoor Wisconsin Program #2920  
[http://www.mptv.org/localshows/outdoor\\_wisconsin/latest\\_episode/?v=5EWAQwg8UCE](http://www.mptv.org/localshows/outdoor_wisconsin/latest_episode/?v=5EWAQwg8UCE)  
Deb Wolniak meets Stacy Hron-Wisconsin DNR and Debbie Beyer-UW-Extension to find out about cleaning up the Sheboygan River.



Revitalizing Local Waterfront Economies: The Great Lakes Legacy Act  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=puAOG1\\_TJBO](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=puAOG1_TJBO)  
This 10 minute video outlines the Great Lakes Legacy Act and highlights benefits it brings to communities.

For programs, volunteering,  
or materials requests contact:

Debbie Beyer, Natural Resource Educator  
UW-Extension  
One University Drive  
Sheboygan, WI 53081  
Phone: (920)459-6644  
Email: [deb.beyer@ces.uwex.edu](mailto:deb.beyer@ces.uwex.edu)

For habitat project questions contact:

Stacy Hron  
Office of the Great Lakes  
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources  
Phone: (920) 892-8756 extension 3051  
Email: [stacy.hron@wisconsin.gov](mailto:stacy.hron@wisconsin.gov)

Explore the Sheboygan River at your leisure:

Wisconsin AOCs info & resources for citizens,  
Including narrated slide presentations and Sheboygan River photos:  
<http://fyi.uwex.edu/aocs>

Wisconsin AOCs official maps, records and reports:  
<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/water/greatlakes>

Sheboygan River canoe and kayak trips:  
<http://sheboygancountymca.org/camp-y-koda>

Sheboygan River Basin Partnership:  
<http://www.sheboyganrivers.org>

All Great Lakes AOCs information:  
<http://www.epa.gov/es/aoc>



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