

The Sheboygan River Explorer

Winter/Spring 2014-15 Volume 4, Issue 1

Help watch and listen for signs of healing

Dear friends,

This edition is devoted to helping you find a way to enjoy the river, help with restoration, and watch for signs that the river is healing. The WI Dept. of Natural Resources and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency are looking for evidence that the river is healing. Your help is needed! Read on for ways that you can get involved!

Local partners—Sheboygan River Basin Partnership, Camp Y-Koda, and Glacial Lakes Conservancy, and I have been working closely with each other to apply for grants and build the future for Sheboygan River programming and citizen engagement. Funding priorities are changing and UW-Extension involvement in Sheboygan River AOC work will wrap up in June. As part of your local ecosystem, the future of the river really lies in your hands. Help it return to health. Volunteer to improve and maintain habitat, or help fund-raise for projects. Always continue to learn, and let your values be known to public officials — local, state, and federal.

Encouraging you to explore and restore your river,



Deb Beyer
Natural Resources Educator



Volunteers searching for mussels. You can do this too!

Sheboygan River—Part of the largest fresh surface water resource in the world!



Frog & Toad Survey Training

Join local naturalist, Dave Kuckuk, for a training on Wisconsin frog and toad biology, call identification, and techniques for participating in Wisconsin's Annual Frog and Toad Survey. This training is encouraged if you plan to join the Frog'n Fridays Crew, which will complete 3 nights of surveys, April-July. **Please register. Attendance at just one training required.**

Saturday, March 14, 10:00-11:30 am
Maywood Environmental Park

Saturday,
March 28,
10-11:30 am
UW-Extension,
Room 5024

Frog Habitat! Photo
 contest winner by
 Ruth Harker



Canoe and Collect Shells!

What fun to collect shells—but it is more than fun, it is also helpful! Shells are data. They can tell us what species of freshwater mussels (and fish!) call Sheboygan River home now and in the past. This is important information as we determine the health of the river. Enjoy a canoe trip, learn how to collect shells and how to identify a few. Bring sunscreen, snacks, and water, and wear shoes that can get wet. **Registration required.**



Friday, July 17, 10:00 am - 1:00 pm

Sunday, August 2, 10:00 am - 1:00 pm

Friday, September 11, 10:00 am - 1:00 pm

Warbler Wednesdays

Join a leader from the Sheboygan County Audubon Society, for a morning walk to identify birds along the Sheboygan River. **Meet at 8:00 AM at Esslingen Park** and drive to other project sites and eBird hotspots as time allows. Drop in for just a short time, or make a morning of it. Every day is different! Our observations will be submitted to eBird. Bring your binoculars and field guide. Boots recommended.

March 11 & 25

April 8 & 22

May 6, 13, 27

June 3 & 17

July 8

August 12

Sept. 9 & 30

Photo by Amy Kretlow



Birding by Canoe!



Breakfast on the River: Photo
 contest winner by Janna Soerens

Grab your binoculars and field guide and get ready to paddle a canoe fully outfitted by Camp Y-Koda to spy the river's birdlife from the water! Stop along the way to get a good look at birds and explore Wildwood Island. Our data will be submitted to eBird. **Registration required.**

Friday, May 1 & 8, 8:00 am

Friday, June 5, 8:00 am

Contact Camp Y-Koda at 920-467-6882 and
yeducation@sheboygancountyymca.org
to register for programs

Canoe the River by Night!

The river is so peaceful at night! We are offering night-time canoe trips so that you can experience the river in a new way and also learn how to monitor for bats. Bats are good indicators of habitat health and important critters for our ecosystem. Watch bats as they fly, and learn to use a bat detector, a gadget that records bat vocalizations we cannot hear. This prepares you for borrowing the bat detector so that if you are interested, you can survey for bats on your own along the river or elsewhere in Wisconsin. **Registration required.**



8:00 pm:

June 24 July 8 August 12



**Contact Camp Y-Koda
920-467-6882**

**yeducation@sheboygancountymmca.org
to register for programs.**

Join the Bluebird Nest Box Crew!

Learn the steps proven to help baby birds survive and fledge from bluebird boxes. Help track box use and nesting success from April—August. Watch baby birds grow! Bluebird boxes have been installed along the Sheboygan River and other places to enhance natural habitat and are used by our native bluebirds, chickadees, tree swallows, and wrens. This is great project for family and friends!

**Reservations required for
March 28, 1:30-3:30 training.**



9th Annual Sheboygan River Litter Clean-up!

Saturday, May 23, 10:00 am -2:00 pm

Bring your family, friends, or youth group to search for litter and enjoy a walk or canoe trip down the river! Bring your own canoe, use a Camp canoe for free, or walk in a park. All ages welcome, but youth under 18 must be with an adult. Free lunch at Camp Y-Koda! **Contact Camp Y-Koda for more information and to register by May 8, 2015.**



Photo by Amy Kretlow

Invasive Plant Pull & Ice Cream Socials

Help protect riverside habitat by cutting and pulling invasive plants. Then take a break to enjoy ice cream and socialize with your fellow volunteers. Long sleeves, insect repellent, gloves and sturdy shoes encouraged. Meet on University Drive along the Sheboygan River. For weather-related cancellations, call Amy Kretlow at 414-840-2975 up to 2 hours in advance.



April 16, 5:30-7:30 pm

April 30, 5:30-7:30 pm

May 14, 6:00-8:00 pm

May 28, 6:00-8:00 pm



Photo by Amy Kretlow

Fish, wildlife and habitat updates

While the Sheboygan River continues to be in the “healing phase”, work will proceed toward evaluating clean-up efforts and the impacts to fish and wildlife populations. Here are the latest updates on projects in the AOC:

Dredging: A proposal is being submitted to the EPA to remove the first of nine impairments to the AOC. Maps that depict post dredging river depths and residual contamination levels are available for review at the DNR Office in Plymouth.

Superfund review: While contamination levels have dropped considerably in the sediment following dredging efforts, they are currently above the threshold considered “clean” by Superfund standards and fish are still considered unsafe to consume at this time. These levels are expected to

continue to drop naturally over time and should eventually fall below the Superfund threshold.

Fish and Wildlife: 2014 was our first year of examining and monitoring fish, macro-invertebrates, and small mammals and will continue through 2016.

Habitat: Successful plantings of native trees and shrubs have connected habitat throughout the AOC . Treatment of invasive species continues.

Eutrophication: The next impairment targeted for removal from the AOC is likely to be the “Eutrophication or undesirable algae” impairment. Information and details on the removal will be compiled by the WDNR and should be released in spring. Stay tuned!

By April Marcangelli, WDNR

Sheboygan River Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) Update

Throughout the 20th century, industries along the Sheboygan River released hazardous chemicals including PCBs, PAHs, metals, and other chemicals into the river and adjacent floodplains. These chemicals have been measured in soils and in fish at concentrations high enough to harm natural resources. The contamination has also limited the

public’s ability to use and enjoy the Sheboygan River.

Through the Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) process, the trustees are continuing their assessment and restoration planning work for the Sheboygan River. More information about the Sheboygan NRDA along with documents the trustees have developed can be found at the trustees’ website: <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/es/ec/nrda/sheboyganharbor/>

For more information:

Wisconsin AOCs info for citizens:

<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://sheboygancountymmca.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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