

The Sheboygan River Explorer

Spring 2013

Volume 2, Issue 2



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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".

Explore and help restore your river!

Opportunities abound for you to explore the river this summer either on your own, or with a guided program, on land, or in the water. See the listings on the next page for special offerings to get back in touch with your river, experience it in a different way, learn, or help others do something new.



Red-breasted mergansers spotted at Esslingen Park.

Take advantage of trainings and hikes and contribute to our knowledge of Wisconsin bats, freshwater mussels or birds. Join in work events to help combat invasive plants. These are just a few of the ways you can get out to explore and help restore the Sheboygan River!

Inviting you to explore,

Debbie Beyer, UW-Extension Natural Resources Educator

Explore the Sheboygan River at your leisure:

Wisconsin AOC river info & resources for citizens, including narrated slide presentations:

<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 Areas of Concern information:

<http://www.epa.gov/es/aoc>

"Like" Sheboygan River Citizen Scientists on Facebook to keep up with all the Sheboygan River events and programs.



"Like" Wisconsin's Great Lakes Areas of Concern on Facebook to see what is happening in Sheboygan and at other AOCs around the state.

Programs and Trainings

Contact Deb Beyer at 920-459-6644 or deb.beyer@ces.uwex.edu or Amy Kretlow at akretlow@uwm.edu to register for any of the following programs or trainings. All are FREE unless noted.

Bat Monitoring Training

May 22, 7:30-9:30pm, UW-Extension Office

Join WDNR biologist, Paul White, to learn about the biology of Wisconsin bats and how to detect them as they hunt for insects in the night sky. Learn to use a fun gadget called the “Ana-Bat” detector. If desired, sign up to be a bat-volunteer and use the Ana-Bat detector on three evenings throughout the summer to help build our knowledge of Sheboygan River bats. Expect a 1-hour indoor program followed by 1-hour outdoor practice. Good walking shoes a must! Great family activity.

Invasive Plant Weed-out & Ice Cream Social

Thursday evenings 6:00-8:00 pm,

May 16th, 23rd, 30th

June 6th & 20th

July 18th and August 15th

Bottom of hill on University Drive

Enjoy fresh air and exercise along the river cutting or pulling garlic mustard, buckthorn and other invaders. Then take a break to enjoy ice cream and socialize with your fellow river-enthusiasts. Long sleeves, insect repellent, gloves and sturdy shoes encouraged.

Native Plant Walk

June 12, 6:00-7:00pm, Indiana Avenue Wayside

July 24, 6:00-7:00pm, Esslingen Park

Aug. 14, 6:00-7:00pm, Kiwanis Park—Stone Pavilion

Join local ecologist and Sheboygan River project contractor, Scott Horzen, to see and identify some of the native trees, shrubs, grasses, sedges and wildflowers planted at the habitat projects. Discuss **their ecological importance and get ideas for “going native” with your own landscaping.**

Wednesday Morning Bird Walk

May 8, 15, 22, 29; June 5; July 3; August 21

7:00am, Esslingen Park

Join UW-Extension natural resources educator, Debbie Beyer and other local birders, for a morning walk to **identify birds along the Sheboygan River. We'll start at Esslingen Park and drive to other project sites and eBird hotspots as time allows. Drop in for just a short excursion before work, or stay for several hours. Our observations will be submitted to ebird. Bring your binoculars and field guide.**

Mussel Walk and Picnic

July 16, 5:00-7:30pm, UW-Extension Office

Join WDNR biologist, Lisie Kitchel, to explore the quiet and over-looked, but fascinating world of freshwater mussels. Expect a 1-hour indoor program, break for a quick picnic, then 1-hour of walking the river in search of mussels. Great family activity. Volunteer to survey mussels later on your own. Wear shoes that can get wet! Picnic food provided, BYO beverage.

Wisconsin Master Naturalist Volunteer Training Program

Thursdays, Sept. 5 – Nov. 7,
6:00-8:30 pm

Riveredge Nature Center, Newburg

UW-Extension is proud to partner with Riveredge Nature Center and Kettle Moraine State Forest

Northern Unit to offer the Wisconsin Master Naturalist Program! This program is a statewide effort to promote awareness, understanding, and stewardship of the **state's natural resources. Its goal is to develop a corps of volunteers dedicated to education and service within their community. Once trained and certified, a WI Master Naturalist provides volunteer service in one of three areas: education/interpretation, stewardship, or citizen science.**

For additional information, and to register, go to www.wimasternaturalist.org.

Fee: \$250

WISCONSIN
Master Naturalist



Canoeing & Kayaking with Camp Y-Koda

Sheboygan River Canoe and Kayak Trips

To register contact Camp Y-Koda at 920-467-6882 or yeducation@sheboygancountyymca.org

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.

- Kayak Trip: Saturday, May 29, 9:30-noon
- Kayak Trip: Sunday, June 2, 1:00-3:30pm
- Canoe Trip: Wednesday, June 12, 9:30-noon
- Canoe Trip: Sunday, June 16, 1:00-3:30pm
- Canoe Trip: Wednesday, June 26, 9:30-noon
- Canoe Trip: Sunday, June 30, 1:00-3:30pm

No trips in July and August. Watch for fall trip dates to be announced later!



**7th Annual
Sheboygan River Clean Up**
Saturday, May 18, 2013

“Clean the river now, keep it clean forever!”

Enjoy a morning walk or paddle along a stretch of the Sheboygan River picking up litter in this great family and community event! In cooperation with the Sheboygan River Basin Partnership and the UW-Extension, we will again be picking up trash along various stretches of the Sheboygan River and other local areas.

Bring your own canoe, use a Camp Y-Koda canoe for free or walk a riverside park. Please be prepared for any kind of weather; rain, sleet, snow or sunshine, we will be picking up litter!

All ages are welcome; however, youth under the age of 18 must be with an adult. Please return form to the *Sheboygan YMCA, Sheboygan Falls YMCA; or Camp Y-Koda, W3340 Sunset Rd, Sheboygan Falls, WI 53085.*

The registration deadline is May 10, 2013.

CAMP Y-KODA 2013 SHEBOYGAN RIVER CLEAN UP

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____
 Zip _____
 Phone# _____
 Birth Date _____ M F
 Email _____

Youth under the age of 18 must be with an adult. Please select one of the following options:

- Trash pick-up on foot along the Sheboygan River
- Invasive species eradication at Willow Creek
- Trash pick-up using a camp canoe
- Trash pick-up using your own canoe or kayak
- I want to donate \$10.00 for a River Clean Up t-shirt. Add \$2.00 for size XXL.

Youth SM MED LG
 Adult SM MED LG XL XXL

Confirmation and instructions will be mailed or emailed to you at least three days prior to the event. Please call Camp Y-Koda at 920-467-6882 with questions or for more information.

HOLD HARMLESS AGREEMENT

I hereby agree to waive any claim or liability I may have on the YMCA arising out of use of the facility, and further agree that I will indemnify and save harmless the YMCA from any and all claims brought against the YMCA, its members and volunteers, on account of death, injury, or damage to persons or property received by any persons by reason of the acts or omissions of the users in their use. I also agree to waive any claims against the YMCA, its members and volunteers for injuries or damages that may result from the conduct of other persons, including participants in the program. I understand the above responsibilities and I give permission for myself and/or my child to participate and be photographed in YMCA activities.

Participant Signature _____
 Receipt# _____
 Date _____

Volunteer Citizen Scientists Needed!



Have fun, get into nature, continue Sheboygan River restoration, and meet fellow Sheboygan River enthusiasts! Contact Deb Beyer at 920-459-6644 or deb.beyer@ces.uwex.edu, or Amy Kretlow at akretlow@uwm.edu, to join one of the projects and register for a training session. See page 2 for related programs. Learning and fun will be had by all!

Mussel Monitoring:

Want to get your feet wet, collect shells and take pictures? Information is needed on Wisconsin mussels and you can help! Get trained and sign up to volunteer for mussel monitoring. Volunteers can walk rivers, lakes, or streams anytime to search for mussels and collect shells for identification. Live mussels should be photographed and replaced where they were found. Training, but no prior experience necessary. Great family activity!

Bat Surveys:

Learn about bat biology and use of the Ana-Bat Detector, a gadget that records bat vocalizations imperceptible to the human ear. If desired, select from a variety of locations to detect bats in the night sky three times during the spring and summer. Also, learn how to search for bat roost locations. Training, but no prior experience, required. Great family activity!

eBird:

Calling all birders! We're looking for people to regularly bird along the Sheboygan River Area of Concern and enter their observations on Cornell Laboratory's eBird web-based database. Aim for one outing monthly year-round, with more frequent outings in spring. Birders of all skill levels welcome! Join a scheduled bird walk, or be on your own.

Invasive Plant Ground-Army:

Join in Sheboygan County's fight against invasive species by adopting a portion of the Sheboygan River shore or floodplain to protect it from invasive plants. Participate in a training or work event to learn how to control these aliens along the river or on your own land. Great family or club activity!

Plant Surveys:

If you have advanced botany training and can identify a wide variety of native plants, we need you! Further botanizing needed in certain high-quality natural communities identified within the Sheboygan River Area of Concern. Call Stacy Hron at (920) 892-8756 x 3051 and stacy.hron@wi.gov to discuss the project.

Testing the Waters Update

On April 22, 160 students from Sheboygan South, Kohler, Howards Grove, Elkhart Lake, Sheboygan Christian, and Plymouth high schools held a symposium at Sheboygan South High School to learn about water **pollution and the implications of water data they've** collected over the past school year. USFWS toxicologist, Steve Choy, gave a keynote presentation about contaminants of emerging concern.



Steve Choy, USFWS Toxicologist

Help Document Sheboygan River Birdlife!

In March, we hosted an orientation session for folks interested in birding along the river and recording their observations on the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology's eBird website. On Wednesday mornings starting in May, we're hosting 7:00 am bird walks starting at Esslingen Park. We encourage everyone who can identify birds to open up an eBird account (free!) at eBird.org, go birding along the Sheboygan River as often as possible, and enter your observations on eBird. Once logged into eBird, zoom into a map of the Sheboygan area and you'll see that there are thirteen eBird "hotspots" established along the river:

- Settler's Park in Sheboygan Falls
- Falls View Park in Sheboygan Falls
- Rochester Park in Sheboygan Falls
- Kohler river access, near the municipal garage off W. Riverside Dr.
- USGS gauge station just up-river from Esslingen Park on Indiana Ave.
- Esslingen Park
- Pond at SW corner of Taylor/Indiana intersection
- Wayside at NE corner of Taylor/Indiana intersection
- Wildwood Island, best view is from end of 22nd Street
- Kiwanis Park
- Sheboygan Inner Harbor
- Sheboygan Outer Harbor at South Pier
- Sheboygan Outer Harbor North Pier



You can also note birds found in other locations, easily mark them on the eBird map, and enter them into the eBird database. This is a world-wide database and is a great tool for us to use in building and sharing our knowledge of Sheboygan River birdlife!

Upcoming Events

3rd Annual Buckthorn Removal Day
 May 18, 9am-noon
 Remove buckthorn at Trailhead Park along Willow Creek as part of the annual river cleanup. Trailhead Park is located at the end of Erie Ave, just past Shopko. Bring gloves, boots and hand saws or pruners. For more info contact Jon Gumtow at 920-980-2800.



Healing Our Waters-**Great Lakes Coalition's**
 9th Annual Conference, Milwaukee, WI
 September 10-12, 2013
 For more information go to:
conference.healthylakes.org

State of Lake Michigan Conference
 Blue Harbor Conference Center
 Sheboygan, WI
 October 16-17, 2013
 For more information go to:
<http://aqua.wisc.edu/solm/>

Join Sheboygan's invasive plant ground-army

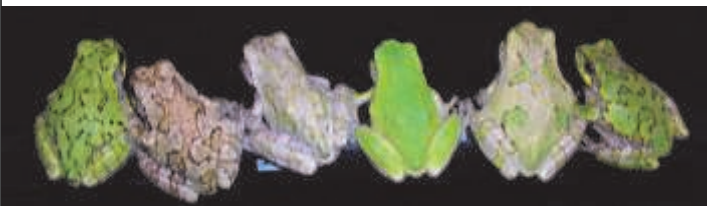
Many hands make light work, so evening weed-outs (with ice cream!) are being scheduled throughout the growing season so you can easily join in the fight against invasive plants. See our program list for dates!

Over the past year, more than 30 people have joined **Sheboygan's fight to control invasive plants**. Invasive plants are different from weeds in that they out-compete native plants and cause ecological harm. Weeds are defined as plants that grow in places where we do not want them. Invasive plants are those that grow so aggressively that they crowd out native plants and hinder young plants from growing. Some emit a chemical that is toxic to other plant species so that they gradually die out and the invaders are then able to grow without competition.

Volunteers become frog and toad "listeners"

In March, seven families – the Ritters, Klemmes, Millens, Dwans, Pierces, Boeckmanns, and Rhodes-participated in our Frog and Toad Survey Training. From April-July, they will select three evenings to head out to their selected wetlands to listen for frogs and toads and determine what species are calling and their relative abundance. The species they can expect to hear include the wood frog, spring peeper, chorus frog, leopard frog, American toad, **eastern gray tree frog, Cope's gray tree frog, green frog** and bull frog. If we are lucky, they may find pickerel frogs in special habitats where groundwater is seeping out of the **ground**. They will also keep the **Blanchard's cricket frog** in mind as they listen, since cricket frogs have not been recorded in the area for decades.

Thank you to our frog and toad survey volunteers! You are greatly helping build our knowledge of local frog and toad populations!



Mussels: More than meets the eye!

Do you laugh when you hear names like "fatmucket", "cylindrical papershell", "deertoe", "giant floater", "squawfoot", "stout floater", "Wabash pigtoe", or "white heelsplitter"? These are names for some of the freshwater mussels, or clams, which have been found in the Sheboygan River.

At first, clams may not seem like the most exciting thing to study, but on the contrary, these quiet, over-looked critters lead



amazing lives. We need to learn more about them. Help build our knowledge base by volunteering to walk in rivers and streams this summer searching for mussels. See the program list for details on a fun training July 16.

Help needed for Wisconsin's bats

Help discover more about bats by volunteering to be a citizen bat monitor this summer. A lethal threat is knocking on the door for Wisconsin bats – a disease called white-nose syndrome, which in 2012 was discovered to have spread from eastern states to just 30 miles from the Wisconsin border.

If you don't like mosquitoes, you should like bats!

Wisconsin's bats eat literally hundreds of tons of mosquitoes and mosquito-sized insects each year – for free! In just one night a little brown bat eats half of its body weight in mosquitoes. Eight species of bats are recorded in Wisconsin and five of those species were found along the Sheboygan River in 2010 and 2011.

Help build our knowledge about bats in the Sheboygan area and help bat conservation efforts.

Updates on Sheboygan River Projects

Dredging

Beginning as early as May 15, you may see heavy equipment in the river to remove a small area of sediment upstream of the Pennsylvania Avenue Bridge and to place a sand cover in certain areas between Kiwanis Park and the 8th Street Bridge. Canoe and kayak this stretch with caution. The 8th Street bridge boat access will be closed through mid-summer.

Habitat

This spring contractors will finish up the remaining planting and seeding of native species in the habitat restoration project areas. They will continue removing invasive plants and maintaining the new vegetation for the next several years. River restoration work is especially tricky because of the nature of rivers. Their flow increases when it rains or snow melts. While the habitat projects fared pretty well through flooding in the past several months, there will be some repair work including seeding and repair of erosion control fabric.

Goose fencing will also be installed in several areas to discourage the birds from grazing on the new vegetation as it establishes this summer.

What's Next?

Now that the majority of the work is done, contaminated sediment has been removed and the habitat projects are nearly complete, we enter a period of monitoring and evaluation. The Sheboygan River is considered to be in **"restoration phase" and monitoring will be done in several ways over the next decade (or more) to determine the environmental response to our projects.**

Samples will be analyzed to determine the PCB loads in fish and wildlife. Inventories will be done at habitat project sites to ensure that native plants are taking hold and invasive plants are under control. Citizen volunteers will help monitor frogs and toads, birds, bird nest box success, bats, mussels, and invasive plants. If you are interested in volunteering, contact Deb Beyer or Amy Kretlow.



Explore Your Sheboygan River This Year!

Canoe, kayak and boat with extra caution May through mid-summer 2013 from Kiwanis Park to 8th Street Bridge.



Congratulations to the winners of the billboard contest and thank you to those who were photographed helping keep the river clean!

Want to see more Sheboygan River photos?

Check out <http://sheboyganrivercleanupproject.shutterfly.com/> to choose from 22 albums featuring nearly 300 pictures of the dredging projects, habitat projects, programs and events. Photos will continue to be added, so check back!



For dredging or habitat project questions contact:

Stacy Hron
 Sheboygan River AOC Coordinator
 Phone: (920) 892-8756 extension 3051
 Email: stacy.hron@wisconsin.gov

For programs, volunteering, or material 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



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