

RIVER CURRENTS

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF MILWAUKEE RIVERKEEPER



NEW MILWAUKEE URBAN WATER TRAIL MAP NOW AVAILABLE!

For your next canoe or kayak trip, look no further than your own backyard! We are excited to announce the launch of the NEW, EXPANDED Milwaukee Urban Water Trail map. The Milwaukee Urban Water Trail is a cooperative effort to help connect citizens and visitors of the Greater Milwaukee area with our three rivers.

This new edition now connects a large natural stretch of the Milwaukee River and its tributaries in Ozaukee County to the more urban stretches of our rivers in Milwaukee County. The map also connects our three rivers to access points along Lake Michigan – which includes

launches that are part of the Lake Michigan Water Trail as well as some newly acquired lakefront parks in Ozaukee County.

BONUS: The maps are printed on water and tear resistant paper – perfect for taking along on your next paddle. Stop in our office to pick up your own copy or email a request to: info@milwaukeekeeper.org

For more information about the Milwaukee Urban Water Trail and to download a copy visit: milwaukeekeeper.org

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Feature Story:

Milwaukee Riverkeeper
Spring Cleanup Thank You
Page 4

Riverkeeper Watch
Page 6

Estabrook Dam: Gratitude
& Restoration
Page 7

Advocacy in Action:
Racine Water Diversion
Page 7



WELCOME



PROTECT



RESTORE



CONNECT



ADVOCATE



Jennifer Bolger Breceda | Executive Director

Dear Friend of the Rivers,

We are excited to announce that after more than fifteen years, we are MOVING! Since 2003, Milwaukee Riverkeeper officed at the Milwaukee Environmental Consortium, a shared working space on Milwaukee's East side.

During that time, our organization grew in both depth and breadth, expanding our efforts to PROTECT, RESTORE, CONNECT and ADVOCATE on behalf of our city's waterways. 2018 has already been a year of great change for us, we launched a new logo and website, witnessed a decades-long dam removal dispute reach its conclusion, and we grew our small staff of 5 to a robust team of 9!

It is fitting then, that this year will also include another major step forward for Milwaukee Riverkeeper as we relocate to

our new home. We can't officially announce where yet, but we will soon. Rest assured this move will CONNECT us with greater access to more partners and collaborative opportunities.

In the meantime, it is with sincere gratitude to all who helped our organization grow, including our friends at the Milwaukee Environmental Consortium that we begin to transition to our new space. We truly enjoyed the space, camaraderie and partnership during our time here. We aim to continue that spirit of partnership and collaboration as we work to lift our voices in harmony on behalf of our city's natural resources.

We will officially announce the location in September and can't wait to share more!

To healthy, free flowing rivers,

Jennifer Bolger Breceda

Executive Director

Look what we've been up to...



2018 Annual River Regale



Rain Barrell Workshops at Lakefront Brewery

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Eric Vogel
President

Lilith Fowler
Treasurer

Joseph Cincotta
Michael DiStefano

Beth Handle
Demaris Kenwood

Mike Sauer
Brian Spahn
Peter Thornquist

Chris Daood
Vice President

Brian Lambert
Secretary

Mustafa Emir
Jessica Ginster

Patti McNair
Catherine Mercuri

SNEAK PEEK: 2017 Milwaukee River Basin Report Card

Between May and October, our dedicated Water Quality Monitors make their way to over 100 river monitoring sites throughout the Milwaukee River Basin.

While in our rivers, our monitors collect physical, chemical, and biological data that we use to help assess the overall health of the Basin. One of the primary ways we use data collected by our volunteers is to produce our Annual River Basin Report Card.

To create our Report Card, our volunteer data is combined with data from our partners, and compared against relevant water quality standards. If a data point meets water quality standards, it receives a passing grade, if not, it receives a failing grade. From this analysis we are able to assign letter grades that can be used to easily interpret the water quality of the Milwaukee River Basin.

How healthy are our rivers?

In 2017, our rivers continued to struggle to meet water quality standards for specific pollutants. Problem pollutants include total phosphorus, specific conductivity, and bacteria. However, parameters like water transparency, temperature, and dissolved oxygen came back with good to exceptional water quality grades.

Though the water chemistry data that we observe is typically less than perfect, Milwaukee Riverkeeper and our project partners continue to push forward practices and policies that will have a

positive impact on the water quality of our 3 rivers.

In addition to chemical parameters, our volunteers also collect information on stream macroinvertebrates found in our rivers. While in the field, our monitors identify specimens, and then separate them into groups according to sensitivity to pollution. Based on the taxonomic composition of the sample, a score, called a Biotic Index of Integrity (IBI), is given to assess the water quality of the river station.

With the exception of our more impacted water bodies, the IBI's observed for our rivers came back fair to good in 2017. Since sensitive species of macroinvertebrates have trouble living in poor water quality conditions or in streams that have been highly degraded or modified, high IBI scores can be great indicators of healthy rivers!

Want to learn more? You're in luck. Our 2017 River Report Card will be hitting your mailbox this fall. This report will provide a further breakdown of our water quality grades and stream macroinvertebrate data.

We will also be highlighting some interesting Milwaukee Riverkeeper monitoring projects and cool data analyses. Until then, we'll see you on the river!

Questions? Contact Zac Driscoll
zac@milwaukeekeeper.org

Get your feet wet: Freshwater Science

It's been a busy spring and summer for our freshwater science team. We've successfully launched multiple water monitoring events and trainings and wrapped up a WDNR funded mussel survey of the Milwaukee River Basin.

Want to get involved? Visit:
milwaukeekeeper.org/protect



Monitoring for a mussel survey in Cedar Creek.



Teaching families about mussels at Jackson Park!

STAFF

Jennifer Bolger Breceda, J.D.
Executive Director

Cheryl Nenn, M.S.
Riverkeeper

Zac Driscoll, M.S.
Freshwater Biologist

Anne Michalski
Communications Manager

Christina Taddy, M.P.A.
Director of Operations & Development

Rose Alvarez
Cleanup & Event Coordinator
Marshfield Clinic AmeriCorps

Felice Green
Civic Engagement Coordinator

Katie Rademacher
Water Quality Volunteer
Coordinator

Anna Urban
Education Coordinator
Trinity Fellow

THANK YOU FOR HELPING RIVERS SWIMMABLE AND FUTURE GENERATIONS.



Our 23rd Annual Spring River Cleanup was once again an incredible success! Thousands of volunteers braved the weather following an unprecedented spring snowfall only days before the event. Nevertheless, we persisted. In one day, our volunteers removed thousands of pounds of trash from 64 locations. In 2018, we added 9 additional sites reaching even further into Milwaukee's River Basin and broadened our efforts with invasive plant removal at a select few sites. In total, we restored 40 miles of the river, making this the most expansive cleanup in our organization's history.

64 locations = 40 miles of river restored!

We are so thankful for the support we received this year on the ground and in the waters. 39 businesses, organizations, and government agencies helped to support our mission through generous sponsorships of time and money. BRP Evinrude even brought boats and extra hands to help gather hard to reach trash.

It is only through our collective efforts to help restore our rivers that this event is possible. Our impact reverberates far beyond the rivers into the heart of our community as we embrace our duty as members of this great city to preserve our natural resources for everyone to enjoy for generations to come.

THANK YOU TO OUR BUSINESS MEMBERS!

Accelity Marketing | American Transmission Company | Baird | BOLDT | Bostik, Inc. | BRP Evinrude | Brewers Community Foundation, Inc. | CH2M | City of Milwaukee Environmental Collaboration Office | City of Milwaukee Department of Public Works | Clark Dietz | DentaQuest | Erehwon Mountain Outfitter | Forest County Potawatomi Foundation | Gilbane | Greenfire | Inter-fluve | Kahler Slater | Keep Greater Milwaukee Beautiful | Korb + Associates Architects | Kuhl Family Charitable Fund | The Milwaukee Boat Line | Milwaukee Kayak Company | Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District | National Business Furniture | Natural Awakenings | Natural Resource Technology | PaveDrain | Rotary Club of Milwaukee | Sid Grinker Restoration | Shorewest Realtors Northshore and Downtown Offices | The Sigma Group | Visual Impressions | von Briesen and Roper, s.c. | The Water Council | We Energies Foundation | Xylem | Yellow Wood Gear



Become a business member and receive special recognition throughout the year!
Contact Christina Taddy for more info: christina@milwaukeekeeper.org

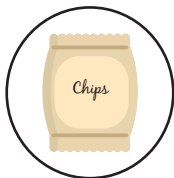
MAKE OUR THREE FISHABLE FOR

TALKING TRASH...

Every year, we track frequently found items during our annual clean up. You may be surprised to find that they are all extremely common and in most cases recyclable.

Here are the top 6 most frequent finds:

#1



Chip Bags

#2



Plastic Bottles

#3



Cans

#4



Plastic Bags

#5



Glass Bottles

#6



Cigarette Butts

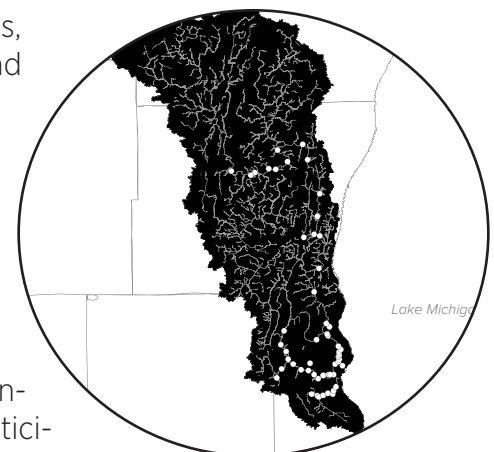


Contributing is it's own reward... but some lucky volunteers found several \$100 bills!

HELP US CLEANUP ALL YEAR!

In 2017, we grew our Annual Spring Cleanup from a one-day event into a year round cleanup program launching Milwaukee's first ever Adopt-A-River Program. The program, sponsored through a generous grant from MMSD allows individuals, companies, organizations, and community groups to adopt sections of waterways in the Milwaukee River Basin.

Adopters pledge to clean their adopted section of the river at least two times per year for two years! 15 of the 64 Spring Cleanup sites involved an Adopt-A-River participant. So far we have 56 of sites and 70 adopters.



Milwaukee River Basin current Adopt-A-River sites - more available!



Get everyone involved! Cleanups are great for kids and families too.

To learn more, become an adopter, or join a public clean in your area, visit: bit.ly/MRKAadopt

Riverkeeper Watch



Cheryl Nenn | Riverkeeper

Good Progress on Coal-Tar Based Asphalt Sealants Ban

On Tuesday June 12, Wauwatosa became the 11th municipality in Wisconsin to pass a ban on coal-tar based asphalt sealants that contain high levels of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, or PAHs. Other municipalities passing bans include: Milwaukee, Glendale, Greenfield, Franklin, Brown Deer, Elm Grove, Shorewood, Whitefish Bay, Port Washington, and West Allis. Milwaukee County and the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewage District (MMSD) also banned PAHs.

In a recent USGS study, scientists found that 77% of PAH pollution in Milwaukee streams came from coal tar based sealants. These compounds are toxic to water quality and aquatic life, require significant taxpayer expense to clean up, and endanger community health. Studies show that living near coal-tar sealed pavements from birth to age six increases cancer risk 14 times more compared to other children.

With many reliable, cost-effective and safer alternatives, switching is not only easy, it's critical to keep these toxic compounds out of our communities.

Burnham Canal Cleanup Efforts to Begin in Fall

Milwaukee Riverkeeper supports cleaning up heavy metals and PAHs from the Burnham Canal Superfund Alternative Site by Miller Compressing, planned for this fall. The contaminants came from a former wire reclamation furnace area and caused ex-

tensive soil and stream sediment contamination. The site extends from the western terminus of the Canal to the 11th Street Bridge. While we advocated for a more extended cleanup (to the South Menomonee Canal confluence), the proposal to dredge contaminated sediments and install an aggregate cap to isolate pollutants on the west end of the canal (around 200,000 square feet) should be sufficient for future use. The future plan by MMSD includes a "betterment" fill, which would create a base for a wetland and habitat improvement project in the Milwaukee River Estuary Area of Concern.

Restoring a small wetland to this area will create needed habitat, improved water quality, further linkage to the Menomonee Valley, better recreation and an homage to our city's past geography and water rich environment. Currently, MMSD is in the design process, and we are advocating for one that will minimize shoreline hardening post-dredge, and reduce or eliminate combined sewer overflows (CSOs) to the Canal (3 CSO locations discharge to the Canal) to further improve water quality. We also plan to work with adjacent landowners to encourage and install green infrastructure and other stormwater management practices over time that would further minimize any new sources of industrial runoff into the canal (and future wetland) after the cleanup.

Case Challenging WDNR-DBA Settlement Moves Forward

As last reported, Midwest Environmental Advocates is challenging a settlement agreement between the Dairy Business Association (DBA) and the WDNR on behalf of Milwaukee Riverkeeper and several other Wisconsin groups. This case is about defending WDNR's authority to protect water quality through the science-based application of state law and prevent pollution from concentrated animal feeding operation (CAFO) vegetated treatment areas and calf hutches. The basis for the challenge is that the DBA-DNR settlement agreement changes WDNR policy and rules, which WDNR is only allowed to do through rulemaking procedures - not through agreements with special interest groups. We are currently briefing the matter and our hearing is set for Monday, September 10, in Milwaukee County Circuit Court.

WDNR Livestock Waste Management Rule Updates: Good Step for Our Rivers

WDNR announced rule revisions regarding livestock waste and runoff management that went into effect on July 1, 2018. These rules are a good first step to protect many waterways in Southeastern Wisconsin, including the Milwaukee River Basin, from manure spreading and agricultural runoff in areas with karst and shallow soils. These rules prohibit: farmers from spreading manure in areas with less than 2 feet of topsoil over bedrock or groundwater (already prohibited for factory farms) and impose additional restrictions on manure spreading for farms with between 2 to 20 feet of topsoil. The rules also prohibit spread of manure on frozen or snow-covered ground on fields with less than 5 feet of soil over bedrock, and require that farmers do not apply manure within a 250 foot setback from drinking water wells.

Ethanol Shipping Begins from the Port of Milwaukee

On April 30, U.S. Oil (aka U.S. Venture) loaded its first shipment of 100,000 barrels of ethanol onto a barge headed for Quebec from the upgraded liquid cargo pier in the Port of Milwaukee. This is the first time ethanol left the Port in a decade and follows \$3.6M in improvements to the liquid terminal. U.S. Oil estimates 3-7 ethanol shipments per year from Milwaukee, because they are at capacity in Green Bay. While ethanol is not as toxic as petroleum or crude oil, it does pose a risk to our waters. It robs waters of oxygen and can lead to massive kills of fish and aquatic life. Ethanol also poses a public safety risk. Nearly 500 hazardous, flammable, ethanol tanker trucks will travel our streets on the way to each barge.

Last September, we raised concerns, along with our partner, Citizens Acting for Rail Safety (CARS-Milwaukee), about proposed lease amendments for U.S. Oil. This resulted in the City placing restrictions on crude oil storage and shipping from the Port. On June 20, the Common Council voted in a new Port Director, Adam Schlicht, who did not rule out future petroleum shipments. We will continue to ask the Milwaukee Common Council members to establish a formal policy against crude oil shipments from the Port of Milwaukee to protect Lake Michigan and our drinking water supply.

Gratitude & Restoration

Thanks to all of you, our tireless dam warriors! We made it - the Estabrook Dam has been removed! Our collective impact exemplifies the four main areas of our mission:

PROTECT | Without your support, our work to protect the river from further neglect due to the decay of the Estabrook Dam would not have been possible;

RESTORE | Now that the demolition is complete, efforts to restore both natural ecological and recreational functions of this portion of the river can begin;

CONNECT | We look forward to the increased opportunities the dam removal will provide for all of us to spend more time on this portion of the river.

ADVOCATE | Removing the Estabrook Dam exemplifies what happens when the voices of many come together in support of a common goal. You can continue this important work by educating others on the benefits of dam removal. Check out our new video: milwaukeekeeper.org/

Our work to protect, restore, connect and advocate for our three rivers is far from over. Since the dam removal, many have expressed interest in learning what's next.

Answers to this and other common FAQ's:

Q. What's next?

A. The future of this project lies in the work to restore the river upstream and downstream of the former dam. While it will take some time for mother nature to heal and for the river to find a new course, we will be watching and working to help along the way.

Q. Can I paddle through the dam site?

A. This section of the river is now open for paddling, hiking, and fishing! The final pieces of rebar were removed from the former gated section of the dam and the adjoining land impacted by construction activities is being restored. The former parking lot is not being replaced, but there is a drop-off for boats.

Q. How will we commemorate this generational milestone?

A. Most of the waste materials were disposed of following the removal. We saved a few remnants of the original structure. Future plans include the development of an interpretive sign and commemorative artistic installation incorporating these materials.

Advocacy In Action

Racine Diversion: The Challenge Moves Forward

In late May, Milwaukee Riverkeeper in partnership with other environmental groups (League of Women Voters of Wisconsin, River Alliance of Wisconsin, and Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy) challenged the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' (WDNR) approval of the City of Racine's request to divert seven million gallons (daily) of Lake Michigan water to the Foxconn facility. We believe the WDNR's decision to grant the diversion violates requirements of the Great Lakes Compact. Earlier this month, the WDNR approved our legal challenge, and now our arguments about why this diversion approval is in conflict with the Great Lakes Compact will move forward.

The 2008 Great Lakes Compact, a federal law and binational agreement, exists to safeguard water resources of Lake Michigan and the rest of the Great Lakes Basin through a ban on water diversions outside the Basin, except in rare instances. The petition alleges that the WDNR ignored a key requirement in the Compact, that any water diverted outside the Great Lakes Basin must be for a public purpose. The Compact specifies that any diversion should "serv[e] a group of largely residential customers." As stated in the petition, the seven million gallon per day of diverted water requested by Racine will be provided to one private industrial user and other commercial users, rather than residential customers.

Milwaukee Riverkeeper joined the challenge because the careful consideration of when it is appropriate to send Great Lakes water outside the Basin, is essential to the central goal of protecting the world's largest freshwater ecosystem from piecemeal decision-making that benefits some while burdening many. We view the approval of our challenge as a step forward and remain hopeful that the integrity of the Great Lakes Compact will be honored. There is broad support for this legal action to protect the integrity of the Great Lakes Compact from citizens, organizations and state representatives across the Great Lakes Basin.

Since our challenge was filed, Foxconn modified its diversion request from 7 million gallons a day to 3.5 million gallons a day, using a closed loop waste water system. While we commend any water conservation efforts, this still does not address the public purpose tenet of the Compact, nor does it give the public any real answers about how our water will be used, treated, managed, or maintained.

Stay tuned, advocates, for more updates and requests for action on this issue, and all Milwaukee Riverkeeper issues with Action Alerts and Newsletters. Head over to our website and subscribe, by clicking the updates button. It's quick, easy and will keep you informed on matters you care about.



Paddlers explore the Milwaukee River in Grafton using the new Milwaukee Urban Water Trail Map.



1845 N Farwell Ave, Suite 100
Milwaukee, WI 53202
www.milwaukeekeeper.org

Return Service Requested

Nonprofit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Milwaukee, WI
Permit # 3679

JOIN US FOR AN EVENT!

For more information, registration and other events please visit:
milwaukeekeeper.org/connect/events

AUG
11

CREAM CITY CLASSIC

Milwaukee's first open water swim
8:00 AM Race Start

AUG
20

STREAM SENSOR KAYAK TOUR

Test innovative equipment monitoring our rivers
5:00pm | \$30 | Boat or board provided

AUG
21

PADDLE & A POUR | KINNICKINNIC RIVER

Enjoy a guided paddle
5:30pm | \$30 | Boat or board provided

SEP
8

MILWAUKEE BOAT PARADE

Celebrate our waters and Milwaukee's art community
View at Harbor Fest & through our downtown riverwalk

SEP
11

PADDLE & A POUR | MILWAUKEE RIVER

Enjoy a guided paddle!
5:30pm | \$30 | Boat or board provided

SEP
18

HIKE & HEAR | ESTABROOK PARK

Take a guided hike and hear about water monitoring
5:30pm | Free

OCT
9

HIKE & HEAR | KLETZSCH PARK

Take a guided hike and hear about fish passages
5:30pm | Free

NOV
8

ANNUAL FALL MEMBER EVENT

Come hear about our latest projects and updates
5:30pm | Free

APR
27

SAVE THE DATE 24TH ANNUAL SPRING CLEANUP

Help clean and restore our rivers at a location near you
9:00 AM - NOON

www.milwaukeekeeper.org

