



MILWAUKEE
RIVERKEEPER®

WINTER 2019

RIVER CURRENTS

A PUBLICATION OF MILWAUKEE RIVERKEEPER



WINTER WATCHDOGS PATROL FOR ROAD SALT POLLUTION

This winter, twenty-five of our hardiest volunteers monitored 36 locations throughout the Milwaukee River Basin for road salt impacts, focusing on the northern tributaries of the Milwaukee River, an area with minimal historical data.

Our Winter Watchdogs were on the hunt for streams exceeding Wisconsin water quality standards for chloride. As Wisconsinites, we know snow and ice are an unavoidable part of winter, and chloride based de-icers help to keep our roads safe. However, when used in excess, deicers find their way into our waterways and can leave lasting impacts on our streams. Exceedances are measured as chronic, a high concentration sustained for at least

four days, or acute, a one-time, extremely high concentration. Most freshwater organisms cannot tolerate saline-rich environments and exceedingly high levels of chloride often result in stress or death.

Our Winter Watchdogs play an essential role in identifying these problem areas and contribute to statewide efforts to improve water quality and reduce chloride pollution. Decisions also need to be applied properly to work – more is not always best. If you shovel early and often, salt is usually not necessary except in certain conditions.

Learn more:

milwaukeekeeper.org/road-salt

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Feature Story:

24th Annual Spring Cleanup
Locations & Details
Page 4

Riverkeeper Watch
Page 6

Senior Water Advocacy
Network Takes Action
Page 7

Advocacy in Action:
Celebrating & Protecting the
Great Lakes Compact
Page 7



WELCOME



Jennifer Bolger Breceda | Executive Director

Dear Friend of the Rivers,

Last year was filled with tremendous organizational growth, we relocated offices, welcomed new team members, successfully advocated for the removal of the Estabrook Dam, expanded our program and event offerings, and so much more! 2019 is here and we have yet to show signs of slowing down. With many projects on the horizon, this year is already shaping up to be better than ever. Learn more about our plans to PROTECT, RESTORE, CONNECT, and ADVOCATE on behalf of our waters this year...

PROTECT. This past fall we launched a new version of our Annual Milwaukee River Basin Report Card, displaying our data in new ways along with more information on our water quality monitoring projects. Our monitoring is becoming even more important as we continue to be one of the largest data collectors in the Basin. We look forward to a new monitoring season and increased awareness around our water quality programs.

RESTORE. Last year was Adopt-A-River's BIGGEST year yet. More than 1,300 volunteers cleaned 42 miles of river over

the course of the year maintaining the health and beauty of our waterways. We are committed to continuing the exciting growth of this program. Also coming up in 2019, we will be working with partners in a more organized way to bring focus to restoring the "Area of Concern." Milwaukee Riverkeeper will play an active role by engaging and organizing the public around this work, through leading the newly named "Milwaukee Blue Crew." This increased attention creates an exciting opportunity to unite the community in a common goal. Stay tuned for more as we officially kick-off the restoration efforts this spring.

CONNECT.

With support from our Trinity Fellow, we worked over the past two years to develop a robust educational program that brings the rivers and our science into the classroom. This work helps build future generations of environmental stewards and targets underserved communities that may have limited interactions with our waterways. This year we plan to build on that momentum, as we add a new effort to educate individuals on single-use plastics. Plastics persist as the most frequently found trash in our rivers during cleanups.

ADVOCATE. With a new administration in

place, we are hopeful, that Wisconsin will re-emerge as a leader in environmental stewardship. Governor Evers has declared 2019 the year of 'Clean Water' and we're committed to supporting this vision -- we believe everyday of every year should be committed to clean water!

While our state's outlook is hopeful, the President and his administration continue to further threaten the safety of our rivers by proposing a monumental rollback of water protections redefining the Clean Water Act's "Waters of the United States." The rule will eliminate protections for historically protected waterways across the country, including many water bodies Wisconsin-ites rely on for clean drinking water, hunting, fishing, and recreation. We will be watching and working to support the current bipartisan rule that is protective of our waterways.

We hope you share in our excitement and look forward to seeing you on the river!

Jennifer Bolger Breceda
Executive Director



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chris Daood
President

Patti McNair
Vice President

Lilith Fowler
Treasurer

Catherine Mercuri
Secretary

Joseph Cincotta
Michael DiStefano
Mustafa Emir
Jessica Ginster

Beth Handle
Christian Keene
Demaris Kenwood
Catherine Mercuri

Mike Sauer
Heather Schmidt
Brian Spahn
Peter Thornquist

FROM CURRENT TO CLASSROOM



Anna teaching MCA students about water quality!

Over the past two years, we have been working hard to develop and launch an exciting new program that provides in-classroom water quality and stream ecology experiences for students in Milwaukee. As an organization, we are driven to provide meaningful interactions with water for young people, as they are our next scientists, water quality monitors, and changemakers in the environmental field, which is what inspired us to create the program.

Through a partnership with EarthEcho International, an international nonprofit connecting youth with water quality worldwide, we received 25 water quality kits for students. By testing samples from a river near their school, students receive first-hand knowledge of their waterway, and develop a new connection to local water. This connection, coupled with a better understanding of how individual actions can affect our waterways helps

students identify personal choices they can make to protect our rivers.

Students' eyes light up when they see the color changing pH and Dissolved Oxygen tests, and they can hardly contain their excitement as they learn what those colors mean. Classroom by classroom, students begin to feel a sense of ownership for their waterways after participating in our program. In turn, we hope this inspires our youth to protect and preserve Earth's most precious resource -- WATER!

So far, we have reached 150 students in nine different schools across the city. We look forward to expanding the program this spring and into the next school year. If you are a teacher or know of a teacher who may be interested in learning more, contact:

Anna Urban, Education Coordinator
anna@milwaukeekeeper.org



Failing Streambank before stabilization project

Get your feet wet: River Restoration

In 2018, we worked to restore 500 feet of streambank along the Menomonee River and improved a 30-foot stream buffer, previously planted in turf grass, with dying evergreen trees. We planted a variety of seeds and plant plugs to create mesic, wet mesic, and emergent habitats, improved river access by constructing a ramp to the water, and stabilized 3 failing stormwater outfalls.

We also planted 8 large Oak trees and installed a river rock toe with 3 large boulder clusters to improve flow and protect the streambank. This project will reduce an estimated 38 lbs per year of total suspended solids (sediment) and 0.26 lbs per year of total Phosphorus.

This project was coordinated by Milwaukee Riverkeeper with assistance from Menomonee Falls. Funds for this project came from Elm Grove, Brookfield, Menomonee Falls, and West Milwaukee as part of their "group project" requirement in the Menomonee River Watershed Group Stormwater Permit and Fund for Lake Michigan.



Completed river rock toe installation - can't wait to see new plants take root!

STAFF

Jennifer Bolger Breceda, J.D.
Executive Director

Cheryl Nenn, M.S.
Riverkeeper

Anne Michalski
Communications Manager

Rose Alvarez
Cleanup & Event Coordinator
Marshfield Clinic Health System
AmeriCorpsMember

Felice Green
Civic Engagement Coordinator

Katie Rademacher
Water Quality Volunteer
Coordinator

Anna Urban
Education Coordinator
Trinity Fellow



Spring CLEANUP 2019



SATURDAY, APRIL 27 | 9AM - 12PM

Join us for the 24th Annual Milwaukee Riverkeeper Spring Cleanup! We'll provide the bags, gloves, and FREE T-SHIRTS. YOU bring the energy (and a waterbottle!) as we work together to clean up our beautiful river system during this epic one-day event!. **For more information, site map and to register visit: bit.ly/MRKCleanup24**

2019 CLEANUP SITES

KINNICKINNIC RIVER

- **1st & Lincoln** - Meeting at the intersection of S 1st St and W Lincoln Ave.
- **3rd and Orchard** - Meet at the intersection of S 3rd St and W Orchard St.
- **Great Lakes Research Facility** - Meet at the KK River Trail access point on the south side of Cermak Grocery (1236 S Barclay St).
- **Holler Park** - Meet in the Holler Park parking lot (5151 S 6th St).
- **Jackson Park (Milwaukee)** - Meet at the Jackson Park Community Room adjacent to the park and Kinnickinnic Pkwy (3500 W Forest Home Ave).
- **Jackson Parkway** - Meet at the intersection of W Jackson Park Dr and S 51st St.
- **Kinnickinnic River Trail (Rosedale Ave)** - Meet at the intersection of S Chase Ave and W Rosedale Ave.
- **Lyons Park** - Meet at the Lyons Park Pavillion.
- **Pulaski Park** - Meet in Pulaski Park (2677 S 16th St).
- **Harbor District** - Meet in the vacant lot at the intersection of E National Ave and KK River Trail.

MENOMONEE RIVER

- **Emmber Bridge Boatyard** - Meet at the entrance to the boatyard on the northwest corner of the Emmber Lane Bridge.
- **Hart Park** - Meet in front of the Muellner Building in Hart Park.
- **Honey Creek** - Meet in the Jacobs Engineering Group (formerly CH2M Hill) parking lot in the Honey Creek Corporate Center (135 S 84th St).
- **Hoyt Park** - Meet in Picnic Area #1 in the Tosa Pool parking lot.

- **Jacobus Park** - Meet behind the Jacobus Park Pavilion near the flag pole off of 68th St.
- **Krueger Park** - Meet in the Krueger Park parking lot.
- **Little Menomonee River Parkway** - Meet at the intersection of W Appleton Ave and W Bobolink Ave.
- **Menomonee River Parkway: Capitol to Hampton** - Meet at the corner of W Congress St and Menomonee River Pkwy near the Oak Leaf Trail.
- **Menomonee River Parkway: North Ave** - Meet at the intersection of N Menomonee River Pkwy and W North Ave (2300 N Menomonee River Pkwy).
- **Three Bridges Park** - Meet at the Urban Ecology Center - Menomonee Valley (3700 W Pierce St).

MENOMONEE VALLEY & HANK AARON STATE TRAIL

- **HAST: 65th & Dickinson** - Meet at the intersection of S 65th St and W Dickinson St.
- **HAST: 84th to 94th** - Meet at the intersection of W Fairview Ave & S 116th St.
- **HAST: 94th to 116th** - Meet at the intersection of S 116th St and W Fairview Ave.
- **HAST: 121st St** - Meet at Kelmann Restoration (12001 W Dearbourn Ave).
- **Lakeshore State Park** - Meet at the west side of Discovery World by the flagpoles. ADULTS ONLY! MUST PRE-REGISTER!
- **Miller Park** - Meet just south of the Klements Sausage Haus, east of the stadium.
- **Menomonee Valley Community Park** - Meet at 3700 W Milwaukee Rd.

MILWAUKEE RIVER

- **Capitol Bridge** - Meet at the intersection of E Capitol Dr and Estabrook Pkwy.
- **Caesar's Park** - Meet at the entrance to the park off of N Warren Ave (1939 N Warren Ave).
- **Estabrook Invasive Removal** - Meet at the parking lot by Picnic Area #5. MUST PRE-REGISTER!
- **Estabrook Park** - Meet in the parking lot by Picnic Area #6.
- **Gordon Park** - Meet in the parking lot by the Gordon Park Pavilion.
- **Havenwoods State Forest** - Meet at the Havenwoods State Forest Nature Center.
- **Hubbard Park** - Park in the parking lot on N Morris Blvd and walk through the tunnel. Meeting spot is to the left down the hill.
- **Kern Park** - Park on the street along N Humboldt Blvd or E Singer Cir then walk toward the center of the park and down the hill. Meet at the tree line of the bluff on the river.
- **Kletzsch Park** - Meet at the Kletzsch Park Pavilion on the east side of the parkway.
- **Lincoln Creek: Green Bay Ave** - Meet at Oholiab's Visual Arts Gallery (5350 N Green Bay Ave). More parking is available in the Eastbrook Church parking lot (5353 N Green Bay Ave).
- **Lincoln Creek: N 35th St** - Meet at the intersection of N 35th St & W Congress St (4400 N 35th St).
- **Lincoln Creek: N 51st St** - Meet at the footbridge near the intersection of N 54th St and W Lincoln Creek Dr.
- **Lincoln Park: N 60th St** - Meet at the southeast corner of N 60th St & W Parkway Dr CLEANUP IS APRIL 28TH.
- **Lincoln Park (Land & Water Cleanups)** - Meet at the Blatz Pavilion (1301 W Hampton Ave). For the Water Cleanup: Canoe needed. MUST PRE-REGISTER IF YOU WILL JOIN THE WATER CLEANUP.
- **Locust Street** - Meet in the Riverside University High School parking lot, northwest corner (1615 E Locust St).
- **Milwaukee Rowing Club Boathouse** - Meet at the Milwaukee Rowing Club Boathouse (1990 N Commerce St).
- **North Ave: East** - Meet at the intersection of E North Ave & N Cambridge Ave by the Cambridge Commons Residence Hall.
- **Pleasant Valley Park** - Meet in the Milwaukee Friends Meeting parking lot (3224 N Gordon Pl). Additional parking in Gaenslen School lot.
- **Rite-Hite Family YMCA** - Meet and park in the back parking lots behind the Walter Schroeder Aquatic Center (9250 N Green Bay Rd).
- **Riverside Park** - Meet at the Urban Ecology Center at Riverside Park (1500 E Park Pl).
- **Riverview Residence Hall** - Meet at the intersection of E North Ave and N Humboldt Blvd.
- **UWM UPark Lot** - Meet in the park and ride parking lot on N Humboldt Blvd.
- **Washington Park** - Meet at the Urban Ecology Center - Washington Park (1859 N 40th St).

NORTHERN WATERSHED

- **Bratt Woods, Grafton** - Meet at 1610 East Cedar Creek Rd, Grafton.
- **Brown Deer Rd** - Meet at the intersection of N Upper River Rd and W Brown Deer Rd. Launch from the west side of the river, paddle from W Brown Deer Rd to Kletzsch Park while picking up trash. CANOE/KAYAK REQUIRED! MUST PRE-REGISTER.
- **E Riverside Park, Saukville** - Meet at the Saukville Wastewater Treatment Facility (1600 Cottontail Ln / Saukville).
- **Kratzsch Conservancy, West Bend** - Meet at the Conservancy (6670 Lovers Lane / West Bend).

- **Lime Kiln Park, Grafton** - Meet by the river at the old dam site (2020 Green Bay Rd / Grafton).
- **River Hill Park, Kewaskum** - Meet at the pavilion building in River Hill Park.
- **Rotary Park, Menomonee Falls** - Meet by the pavilion building near the parking lot.
- **West Bend** - Meet in the UWM at Washington County student parking lot (400 University Dr).

8TH ANNUAL EARTH DAY CELEBRATION!

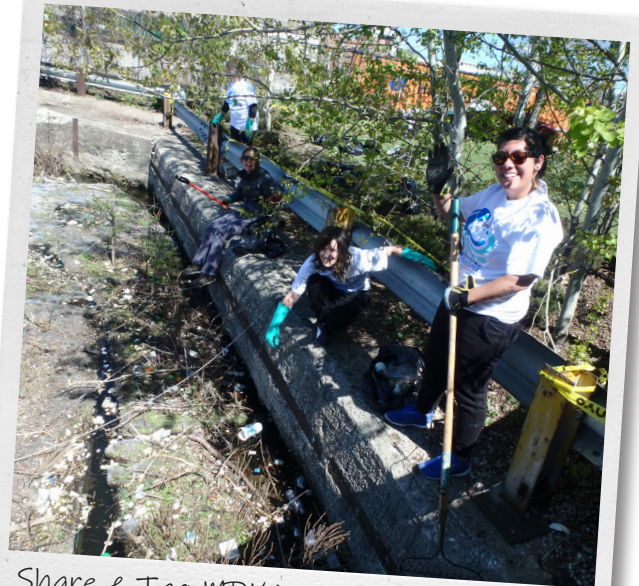


ESTABROOK PARK PICNIC AREA #8 | 12PM - 2PM

Join us immediately following the cleanup for an afternoon of sustainable fun at Rock the Green's 8th Annual Earth Day Celebration! Featuring live music from Lex Allen & Chickenwire Empire, local food vendors, on-site eco-education, and a pedal-powered stage!

2019 CLEANUP PHOTO CONTEST

Share your favorite photos of the cleanup (Think: interesting finds, teamwork, rivers scenes). Tag **@mkeriverkeeper** and **#MRKCleanup24** to participate. Winner will be notified after the event.



Share & Tag MRK in your favorite photos and you could win! **#MRKCleanup24**

QUESTIONS?

Visit **milwaukeekeeper.org** or call **414-287-0207**.

Riverkeeper Watch



Cheryl Nenn | Riverkeeper

Circuit Court Ruling a Win for Clean Water Groups

On January 11th, Judge Pocan of the Milwaukee County Circuit Court sided with Milwaukee Riverkeeper and 3 other Wisconsin groups when he ruled that a settlement agreement between the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Dairy Business Association (DBA) violated state law. Many thanks to Midwest Environmental Advocates (MEA) who represented us!

The November 2017 settlement agreement, which resulted from a lawsuit brought by DBA against the DNR, limited DNR's authority to protect water quality through the science-based application of state law intended to prevent pollution from Wisconsin's largest concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs). We challenged the settlement on the basis that the agreement changed DNR pollution permitting policies and rules without going through the official rulemaking process.

The Judge invalidated the most concerning provisions of the settlement on the basis that they were unlawful rules that changed the status quo. This ruling will allow the DNR to implement existing laws on CAFOs and disallows an overly stated settlement agreement that improperly legislated rules. More importantly, it will help reduce water pollution caused by CAFOs and reach our clean water goals.

We Can't Afford to Weaken the Clean Water Act

In 1972, Congress passed the Clean Water Act to eliminate pollution and restore our nation's waters to a level that is safe for drinking, swimming, and fishing. Under this monumental law, all waters that are defined as "waters of the United States" (WOTUS) are federally protected from pollution and must meet standards for recreational uses, public health, and wildlife.

The Trump Administration proposed a new definition of WOTUS that would remove a wide swath of the nation's waters from protection. It is estimated that 1 in 3 waters in the country would be removed. Potentially effected waterways include "ephemeral streams" that don't flow all year round, wetlands without direct connections to flowing streams and lakes, isolated quarries, and swimming holes.

This proposal to change the definition undermines the goals and spirit of the Clean Water Act. We need broad federal power to protect our waterways from pollution and development that crosses state boundaries. Unregulated pollution and destruction of upstream waters and wetlands will lead to degraded water quality downstream. Proposed rule changes have been published, and the public comment period is open. Go to milwaukeekeeper.org and tell the EPA to protect our waters!

Strengthening MMSD's Permit and Stormwater Rules Protects Our Waters

Over the last few months, Milwaukee Riverkeeper has commented on the wastewater discharge permit for the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD) system proposed changes to MMSD's Chapter 13 which regulates stormwater runoff, manages flooding, and reduces flows to the combined sewer system. Milwaukee Riverkeeper is very supportive of permit updates including as new limits for phosphorus and sediment and new green infrastructure requirements.

We did comment to the DNR, that the combined sewer overflow (CSO) at the South Shore Treatment Plant in 2018 was not protective of human health. We also highlighted that there have been no significant improvements to the CSO section

of this permit for over a decade. Last year, we experienced more CSO events than normal. The permit proposes a limit of no more than 6 CSOs per year with an alternate compliance measure of treating "no less than 85% by volume per year." It's unlikely that even 20 CSOs would result in MMSD breaching the 85% treatment requirement. Although that is a federal allowable standard, we encouraged the DNR to drop the alternate compliance metric.

Milwaukee Riverkeeper strongly supports MMSD's proposed repeal and redrafting of Chapter 13 aimed at reducing stormwater runoff. Under the new rules, green infrastructure is required for NEW impervious surface between 5,000 square feet and one-half acre throughout the entire sewer system. There are currently no green infrastructure requirements for development less than one-half acre.

Runoff management at all sites adjacent to rivers over which the District has jurisdiction, including the estuary, is also required under the new rules. Previously, much of this runoff drained to the river without treatment. The increasing impacts of climate change, particularly more intense and frequent storm events that cause CSOs and flooding, necessitate that more stormwater must be managed on-site and these rules help our community do just that.

You can find all of our recent comments on the advocacy page of our website at: milwaukeekeeper.org/take-action

Kletzsch Park Fish Passage

The DNR is proposing new improvements to the Kletzsch Park Dam including creating a new fish passage. We believe that a fish passage at this part of the river is an integral step in the process to restore our fisheries. A public listening session in January showcased possible designs. Based on community comments and input, developers are considering changes to the initial concepts. Stay tuned as we learn more about the future of this project.

Want more? Sign up for our Action Alerts and be the first to know when to take action on important issues you care about.

milwaukeekeeper.org/take-action

Senior Water Advocacy Network Takes Action

In 2018, the Senior Water Advocacy Network (SWAN) held four film screenings and discussions, and participated in four events which helped educate and inform people, 50 and older, about important ways to PROTECT the Milwaukee River Basin. Although the majority of SWAN members are retired from their professional roles, they are not retired from engaging in the community. Since December of last year, they have collected 3,000+ signatures in collaboration with Preserve Our Parks to support increased funding for Milwaukee County Parks.



SWAN members learn about Lake Michigan aboard the Neeskay

One of the most popular SWAN events in 2018, was the "Great Lakes Boat Cruise and Discussion" with former Milwaukee Riverkeeper Freshwater Biologist Zac Driscoll and Captain Greg Stamatelakys aboard the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee School of Freshwater Sciences' research vessel, "The Neeskay." Everyone learned about issues impacting the Great Lakes.

This year, we have a lot planned for SWAN, including a trip to Madison to protect and advocate for our rivers. On March 27, we will travel to Madison during Wisconsin Conservation Lobby Day.

Join us! Register at: bit.ly/MRKswan

Advocacy In Action

Celebrating and Protecting the Great Lakes Compact

Milwaukee Riverkeeper, and dozens of other environmental organizations, celebrated the 10th anniversary of the signing of the historic Great Lakes Compact last fall.

In 2008, George W. Bush signed the Great Lakes Compact into federal law - as a strong shield for protecting the waters of the Great Lakes for the 40 million people who depend on it for their drinking water and livelihood. The Compact stands as a promise to future generations that Great Lakes water will not only be available to them, but it will be cared for and protected.

Yet, we find ourselves, having to defend our Great Lakes water again. Despite years of effort dedicated to ensuring that a strong, protective law is in place to safeguard the use of Great Lakes water, Wisconsin is permitting diversions that violate the Compact and its intent to protect the world's greatest freshwater resource.

Earlier this year, we (and our partners: Midwest Environmental Advocates; River Alliance of Wisconsin; The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin; The League of Women Voters-Lake Michigan Region; Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy, and the Natural Resources Defense Council) challenged DNR's approval of the City of Racine's proposal to divert 7 million gallons per day of Lake Michigan water to serve solely private industrial and commercial customers in a newly-designated "electronics and information technology manufacturing zone" for Foxconn in the Village of Mt. Pleasant. The Compact prohibits Great Lakes water diversions except in rare instances when needed for public consumption. Foxconn, and the other commercial users, are private entities. Hooking up to a public water supply does not change that a key tenant of the Compact was not met.



We ask you to stand with us and renew your commitment to our waters and to STRONG protections so we may preserve these waters for future generations

The tradition of the Great Lakes is time-honored and our personal commitments should be, too. It's time to renew our promise to these treasured waters.

Join hundreds of other water lovers and pledge your support for the STRONG protections in the Great Lakes Compact: protectourgreatlakes.org/pledge.

For more information about the Great Lakes Compact and the Racine legal challenge, visit: protectourgreatlakes.org.



Collaborative Office Space:

600 E. Greenfield Avenue
Milwaukee, WI 53204

www.milwaukeekeeper.org

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

JOIN US FOR AN EVENT!

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

**MAR
27**

CONSERVATION LOBBY DAY

Meet with decision makers at the state capitol
10:00am - 5:00pm | Free

**APR
27**

24TH ANNUAL SPRING CLEANUP

Test innovative equipment monitoring our rivers
5:00pm | Free

**MAY
4**

WATER QUALITY LEVEL I TRAINING

Learn how you can help monitor our rivers
9:00am - 3:00pm | Free

**MAY
19**

RAIN BARREL WORKSHOP

Decorate your own home water collection system
5:30pm | \$30

**MAY
28**

ADOPT-A-RIVER TRAINING

Join the movement to restore our rivers
5:00pm | Free

SAVE THE DATE

**JUN
23**

2019 RIVER REGALE

Tour our rivers, enjoy drinks, food
& fun raffle prizes!

**AUG
14**

MILKY MOONLIGHT

Marvel at the moon with other river
lovers during this twilight paddle

**SEP
8**

3RD ANNUAL BOAT PARADE

Join us for this twist on a family tradition
with parade floats that really FLOAT!

www.milwaukeekeeper.org

