

RIVER CURRENTS

A PUBLICATION OF MILWAUKEE RIVERKEEPER



Volunteers participating in the 10th Annual Milwaukee Riverkeeper Spring Cleanup

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS

Helping Our Waters Thrive Since '95

Milwaukee Riverkeeper wasn't always the organization it is today. Back in 1995, we were founded as the "Friends of the Menomonee River" -- and that wasn't just a name. At that time, we were a handful of friends who shared the same vision: cleaning up the river we cared about. There were no paid staff or formal programs, just a lot of dedicated people and hard work.

Soon the vision and mission expanded to include the whole Milwaukee River Basin which was crippled by trash and pollution. The mission became clear and our founders knew to make real progress, advocacy and legal action

supported by science and data must be included. Our grassroots organization sprouted and grew, and eventually, we became one of the first groups to join the Waterkeeper Alliance, an international coalition of activists fighting for clean water, which today boasts more than 350 organizations.

Milwaukee Riverkeeper has changed, but one thing remains true, the heart and soul of our work lies in the time, talent, and dedication of our volunteers. Together, we will continue the fight for a swimmable, fishable future for our waterways.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Feature Story:

25th Annual Spring
Cleanup Sites

Page 4

Riverkeeper Watch

Page 6

Don't be Salty. Road salt is
hurting our rivers.

Page 7

Advocacy in Action:
Plastic Free is the way we all
need to be

Page 7



WELCOME



Jennifer Bolger Breceda | Executive Director

Dear Friend of the Rivers,

Spring has traditionally been a time of celebration. A time when life breaks free from winter's grasp, the planting season begins, and we can get our feet wet and enjoy our waterways. With Milwaukee Riverkeeper's 25th anniversary year under way our 25th annual Spring Cleanup on April 18th, and the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, this Spring has more reason to celebrate than most!

During this milestone year, we plan to celebrate and highlight all the work, support and effort our volunteers and members have contributed over the last 25 years to our mission. We have grown from a small (but mighty!) neighborhood group to a Basin-wide change-maker and critical force and voice making our community healthy and our waters clean. In fact, last year, volunteer participation increased over 80%. That means more than 100 people

monitored the health of our waters, more than 800 people advocated for our rivers through letter writing and other actions, more than 100 protected our waterways through the Adopt-a-River program, and thousands more participated in our 2019 Spring Cleanup. I am especially proud of our efforts to bring our community leaders together to align around a common cause: safeguarding the future of our waterways by addressing historical pollution in Milwaukee's Area of Concern. This is a generational opportunity we cannot passby.

I am also looking forward to the DNC this summer and the increased attention our city will receive hosting an event of this scale, we foresee some exciting events on the horizon! It will be a great opportunity to show the nation what real water stewards do to protect, restore, connect and advocate for local waterways.

As Spring begins to spring, I hope to see even more people on the water, so look for a fun event near you. Let's look to the year ahead with a positive eye and a hope for change. See you at the Spring Cleanup!

To healthy, free flowing rivers,

Jennifer Bolger Breceda
Executive Director

Look what we've been up to...



**RIVER WALK + TALK
@ ESTABROOK PARK**



**MILWAUKEE BLUE CREW
PANEL DISCUSSION**

JOIN THE MRK BOARD OF DIRECTORS!

Now accepting applications for for November 2020 terms. For more information contact:

newboard@milwaukeekeeper.org

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Patti McNair
President

Lilith Fowler
Treasurer

Juan Alsace
Joseph Cincotta
Jessica Ginster

Beth Handle
Christian Keene
Demaris Kenwood

Brian Spahn
Vice President

Catherine Mercuri
Secretary

Peter Thornquist

All Aboard! New Faces at MRK.



JULIUS

JULIUS GAYO

EDUCATION COORDINATOR, TRINITY FELLOW

What made you become an environmentalist? Wildfires in Colorado Springs caused my family to evacuate and greatly impacted our community. It made me think about how we treat our natural areas and what we can do better.

What's your best memory from childhood? Having snow-ball fights with my siblings and always winning.

If you had to be a walleye or a catfish, which would you be and why? Walleye, their dorsal fins look pretty stylish.



ALLIE

ALLIE MENDEZ

CLEANUP & EVENT COORDINATOR, AMERICORPS

What's your biggest pet peeve? Ignorance! It's frustrating when people get stuck in their ways of thinking.

If you had to be a walleye or a catfish, which would you be and why? Walleye! I took care of walleye fry in college. As babies, they were adorable.

What's your favorite experience at MRK? Working under a leadership team -- who are all ladies! It's encouraging to see women in science thriving and fighting tirelessly for clean waters.



ANNA

ANNA OSTERMEIER

SUSTAINABILITY COORDINATOR, AMERICORPS

What's your biggest pet peeve? When I'm given a straw, or even TWO straws, without asking for one at a bar.

What's your best memory from childhood? My family has a little red cottage in Door County. Some of my best memories from childhood happened there.

If you had to be a walleye or a catfish, which would you be and why? Catfish! People would be less likely to eat me.



JACOB

JACOB ROGERS

WATER QUALITY ASSISTANT, AMERICORPS

What's your biggest pet peeve? Reckless pollution.

If you had to be a walleye or a catfish, which would you be and why? Catfish, because their whiskers are stylish.

What's your favorite experience at MRK? Working in the field alongside our volunteers. Best part, hands down.

Get your feet wet: Freshwater Science

Milwaukee Riverkeeper is gearing up for our 2020 Baseline Water Quality Monitoring Season. Join our volunteer waitlist to be notified about signup information as it becomes available. New monitors are required to attend a 6-hour training at Riveredge Nature Center on May 2nd from 9am - 3pm.

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



**MONITORS LEARN TO
MEASURE STREAM FLOW**



**MONITORS STUDY
MACROINVERTEBRATES**

STAFF

Jennifer Bolger Breceda, J.D.
Executive Director

Cheryl Nenn, M.S.
Riverkeeper

Anne Michalski
Communications Manager

Leah Holloway
Program Manager

Lisa Greco
Operations Manager

Katie Rademacher
Water Quality Manager

Julius Gayo, *Trinity Fellow*
Education Coordinator

Allie Mendez*
Cleanup & Events Coordinator

Anna Ostermeier*
Sustainability Coordinator

Jacob Rogers*
Water Quality Assistant

***Marshfield Clinic Americorps**

25TH ANNUALMILWAUKEE
RIVERKEEPER®

SATURDAY, APRIL 18 | 9AM - 12PM

SPRING CLEANUP

It's time for the 25th Annual Milwaukee Riverkeeper Spring Cleanup! We'll provide the bags, gloves, and FREE T-SHIRTS. YOU bring the energy. Join over 3,500 volunteers as we work together to clean up our waterways during this epic one-day event! **For more information, site map and to register visit: bit.ly/MRKCleanup25**

2020 CLEANUP SITES

KINNICKINNIC RIVER

- **1st & Lincoln** - Meeting at the intersection of S. 1st St. and W. Lincoln Ave.
- **Boone & Crockett** - Meet at Boone & Crockett, use the main entrance.
- **Great Lakes Research Facility** - Meet at the KK River Trail access point on the south side of Cermak Grocery (1236 S. Barclay St.).
- **Harbor District Neighbors** - Meet at the intersection of S. 4th St. and W. Greenfield Ave.
- **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.).

MENOMONEE RIVER

- **Emmber Bridge Boatyard** - Meet at the entrance to the boatyard on the northwest corner of the Emmber Lane Bridge.
- **Gravel Sholes Park** - Meet at the Watertown Plank Park and Ride.
- **Hart Park** - Meet in front of the Muellner Building in Hart Park.
- **Honey Creek** - Meet in the Jacobs Engineering Group 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.).
- **HAST Near Underwood Creek** - 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 Tailgate Haus, east of the stadium.
- **Menomonee Valley Community Park** - Meet at 3700 W. Milwaukee Rd.

MILWAUKEE RIVER

- **Caesar's Park** - Meet at the entrance to the park off of N. Warren Ave. (1939 N. Warren Ave.).
- **Capitol Bridge** - Meet at the intersection of E. Capitol Dr. and Estabrook Pkwy.
- **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.
- **Good Hope to Mill Rd** - Meet at the corner of 51st and Mill Rd.
- **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.
- **Lincoln Park** - Meet at the southeast corner of N. 60th St. & W. Parkway Dr.
- **Locust Street** - Meet in the Riverside University High School parking lot, northwest corner (1615 E. Locust St.).
- **Milwaukee Riverwalk: Third Ward** - Meet at the spiral staircase on the Riverwalk between N. Water St. and E. Buffalo 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 WATERSHEDS

- **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.
- **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).
- **Peninsula Park, Saukville** - Meet at Peninsula Park (303 E. Clay St.).
- **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.).

PHOTO CONTEST

Share your favorite photos of the cleanup on social media (Think: interesting finds, teamwork, river scenes) and you could WIN a Patagonia Prize Pack! Tag [@mkeriverkeeper](#) and use [#MRKCleanup25](#) to enter.



2019 CONTEST WINNER!

ROCK THE GREEN

Join us immediately following the cleanup for an afternoon of music and sustainable fun at Rock the Green's 9th Annual Earth Day Celebration! Details coming soon. [rockthegreen.com](#)

QUESTIONS? Visit [milwaukeekeeper.org](#) or call 414-287-0207.

Riverkeeper Watch



Cheryl Nenn | Riverkeeper

Kletzsch Park Fish Passage Project Hits Some Hurdles

After testifying before the Milwaukee County Parks, Energy, and Environment Committee for approval on at least 4 occasions in the last few months of 2019, the Kletzsch Park fish passage project was held yet again without a vote being taken in January. This project is a generational opportunity to improve connectivity along the Milwaukee River and pass native fish, such as northern pike and sturgeon, around a significant barrier so they can access upstream habitat for spawning. It is also a priority habitat restoration project for the larger Milwaukee River Estuary Area of Concern work. Milwaukee Riverkeeper and many partners signed a letter in support of this fish passage in the form of either fish passage or dam removal. Please see our website for more information.

Coal Tar Sealant Ban Passes State Assembly, and Moves to Senate

In February, Milwaukee Riverkeeper registered our support for AB797, which would prohibit the sale and use of coal tar-based sealants and high PAH sealant products in the State of Wisconsin. Coal tar sealants are the primary cause of PAH pollution in many urban areas, and in fact, a recent study found that 77% of PAH pollution in Milwaukee streambeds came from these substances. PAHs are harmful to fish and other aquatic life in our lakes

and rivers. Milwaukee Riverkeeper, along w/ partners like Clean Wisconsin, helped to ban coal tar-based sealants via local ordinance at the City of Milwaukee and several other communities in Southeast Wisconsin. The risks to human health and aquatic life that come from the PAHs contained in these sealants is real and significant. On February 18th, the Wisconsin Assembly approved this legislation as part of a larger bill package (including 13 bills coming out of the State Water Quality Task Force); it passed unanimously 98-0. This legislation now moves to the State Senate, and we hope they pass this bill that will better protect our waterways and the health of our children.

Trump Administration Rolls Back Protections for Waters of the United States

In late January, the Trump administration released long-awaited rollbacks to the Clean Water Act, dramatically reducing the waters of the US that will be considered protected. Many waters that will lose protection, including “isolated” wetlands not directly connected to navigable waters and ephemeral streams that do not run all the time, but still affect downstream waters that are used for drinking, swimming, and fishing. It is estimated that over 50% of our nation’s wetlands and millions of miles of stream will no longer have protections. This threatens our drinking water, our public health, our water-based tourism economy, and our quality of life. These rollbacks threaten 40 years of progress and settled law, and could allow development and pollution of many of our State’s waters that are currently protected. Waterkeeper Alliance, of which we are a member, filed notice of intent to sue the Trump Administration (EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers) on February 18, 2020, challenging these proposed changes.

NEPA Rollbacks

In early January, the Trump administration, via the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), unveiled significant rollbacks to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), a landmark environmental law that requires federal agencies to report on the environmental impacts of actions that significantly affect “the quality of the human environment.” These rollbacks—sought largely by

pipeline, transportation, and construction interests—would make it easier for federal agencies to approve infrastructure projects without considering climate impacts. The changes narrow the scope of projects that require a NEPA review (often in the form of an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement), which favors polluters and profits, over science-based decision making and robs citizens of a voice on projects that affect them, like mines. The proposed rollbacks allow agencies to ignore “indirect effects” of actions such as socioeconomic or community impacts, let companies draft their own environmental reviews, and create loopholes that could let agencies ignore public comments. NEPA does not require that an agency select the most environmentally friendly alternative, but provides a process whereby agencies enter into actions with eyes wide open as to environmental and community impacts. The deadline to comment is March 10th, and Milwaukee Riverkeeper will be submitting comments opposing these changes.

Another Water Main Break. Kewaskum Creek edition.

On January 24th, a few of our road salt monitors spotted a large slug of sediment entering Kewaskum Creek, a small tributary of the Milwaukee River that enters near the Kewaskum Dam. The volunteers found the source of the sediment, which was a stormwater pipe discharging a BIG plume of dirty water to the creek. These experienced volunteers took pictures and video that they sent to Milwaukee Riverkeeper staff. We were able to work with WDNR and Kewaskum staff to follow up on this problem, and city staff found that there was a broken water main in the vicinity, which they quickly repaired. See anything out of the ordinary? Call or email us or use our “report” button on our website!

To see all letters and statements issued by Milwaukee Riverkeeper visit:

bit.ly/MRKletters

Don't Be Salty.

Road salt is hurting our rivers.

When used in excess, road salt does lasting damage to our roads, vehicles and waterways. Since freshwater organisms are not equipped to tolerate saltwater, rapid fluctuations in chloride can seriously harm life within our streams. To help fight this threat, our volunteer water monitoring program is focused on monitoring vulnerable areas and finding where salt is entering our waterways.

From January to March, our trained road salt monitors identify streams that are saturated with chloride. Thanks to a devoted group of 24 volunteers, we were able to keep tabs on 32 locations. In 2020, our monitoring efforts focused on northern areas of the Milwaukee River Basin, which previously had minimal data.

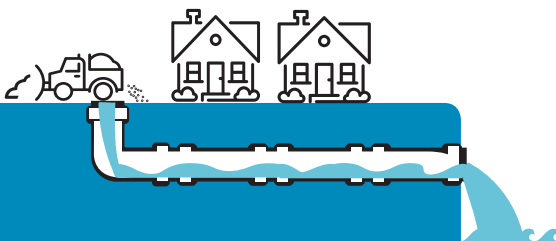
In an effort to stop chloride from polluting our waterways, Milwaukee Riverkeeper promotes proper road salt application by winter maintenance professionals and community members alike. Since 2017, we have hosted Snow and Ice Control Workshops for winter maintenance professionals, welcoming groups from both public and private sectors to hear about the latest, best practices for salt application. Through this program, and with the help of our partners Fortin Consulting, and Fund for Lake Michigan, we have trained 110+ professional road salt applicators. Using less salt protects the environment, and saves communities money!

Know a winter maintenance professional?

Our FREE 2020 Snow & Ice Control Workshop Certification classes for Winter Maintenance Professionals will be held on September 9th & 10th, 2020.

For more information visit:

bit.ly/MRKwinterprofessionals



Help spread the word about road salt:

bit.ly/MRKroadsalt

Advocacy In Action

Plastic free is the way we all need to be.

Plastics are a rapidly increasing threat to Milwaukee ecosystems and communities. A recent study showed that 85% of fish from the Milwaukee River have plastic in their digestive tract, and 11 million pounds of plastic (244 dump truck loads!) enter Lake Michigan each year. Not only do plastics harm our wildlife, but emerging research shows they also harm human health. Plastics also have global impacts, contributing 300 million tons of carbon dioxide to climate change each year.

Through Milwaukee Riverkeeper's Adopt-A-River program, volunteers have found an alarming amount of plastic choking our rivers. In 2018, volunteers picked up 2,496 food wrappers, 1,384 plastic bottles, and nearly 1,000 plastic bags—it was clear something needed to change. We joined forces with passionate community members, other non-profit organizations, government agencies, and environmentally-conscious businesses. Together we formed the Plastic-Free MKE movement, with the goal of reducing single-use plastics in Milwaukee and surrounding communities.

Milwaukee Riverkeeper has been a leader in developing a coalition and building capacity for the movement, hiring a full-time Sustainability Coordinator to coordinate the growing number of volunteers tackling local plastics by educating the public, and encouraging local restaurants, bars, cafes, and breweries to reduce their single-use plastics consumption.

Join the movement!

Every first Monday of the month, volunteers, partners, and interested newcomers meet to discuss local plastics updates, public education, and new programs and events. Visit plasticfreemke.org to learn more.

Plastic Free Legislation: Break Free From Plastic Act

Milwaukee Riverkeeper is proud to be 1 of 470 organizations endorsing the Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act of 2020. In February, U.S. Senators Udall and Merkley along with U.S. Representatives Lowenthal and Clark introduced a landmark bill that provides a comprehensive approach to reducing plastic pollution. This law would reduce single-use plastic products in packaging, reform recycling and waste collection and hold manufacturers accountable for waste. This law shifts the burden from the consumer to the producer and would be a huge step forward in the fight to end plastic pollution.





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
28

SPRING WATER SAMPLING EVENT

Help monitor for emerging contaminants in our waterways. **All Day | Free**

APR
18

25TH ANNUAL SPRING CLEANUP

Help cleanup and restore our rivers at this community wide, one-day event! **9am-12pm | Free**

MAY
4

WATER QUALITY LEVEL I TRAINING

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

MAY
19

SWAN FILM & DISCUSSION

Celebrate World Fish Migration Day with a special screening of Love Flows. **1pm | Free**

MAY
31

RAIN BARREL WORKSHOP

Decorate your own home water collection system.
5:30pm | \$40

SAVE THE DATE

JUN
28

2020 RIVER REGALE

Take a guided tour of our rivers by boat, enjoy food & fun raffle prizes!

AUG
4

MILKY MOONLIGHT

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

SEP
13

4TH ANNUAL BOAT PARADE

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

www.milwaukeekeeper.org

