



*Friends
of the
Platte River, Inc.*

Summer

2008

A group that exists to serve as a forum to address issues affecting the Platte/Little Platte River watershed and to seek impartial solutions that restore, enhance, and protect this valuable resource

***Upcoming Board of Directors
Meetings/Planning Events***
(These meetings will be used by the board for planning future activities of the group. Our next general meeting will be in the fall.)

June 28, 2008
***Canoe Trip down the Platte
River***
*(details and rain
date information coming soon)*

September 20, 2008
9:00am
Benchmarking Workshop
*with Allison Werner of River Alliance
(location pending)*

***Well-Testing Project
Big Success***

On the evening of May 29, 2008 over sixty local residents crowded into the commons of the Platteville Middle school to receive their individual results from our well testing project and participate in an educational program to learn about the results. Three

levels of testing were offered in this program: a Basic Homeowners Package to give a good indication of overall water quality; a Heavy Metals package for those with concerns about the levels of metals in their drinking water, and a Triazine Screen which indicates the presence of pesticides in drinking water.



Peggy Compton, Basin Educator, explains ground water processes

In total 76 Platte River watershed residents took part in the program.

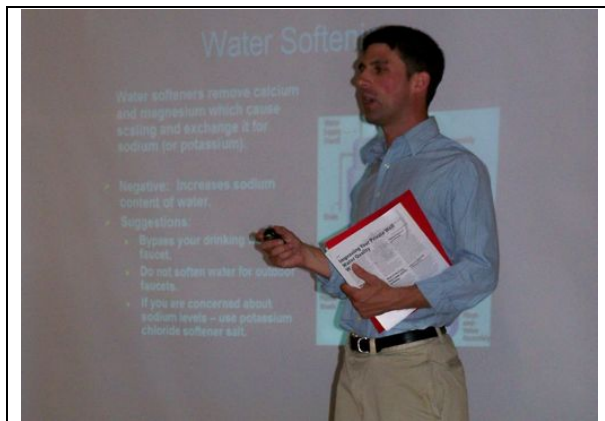
***MUCH THANKS GOES OUT TO ALL
OUR MEMBERS WHO VOLUNTEERED
TO PUT TOGETHER MAILINGS FOR
THE PROJECT OR HELPED WITH
BOTTLE DISTRIBUTION!!!***

The program was sponsored by The Friends of the Platte River, Southwest Badger RC&D, and UW Extension to provide residents of the watershed a ten dollar discount on their well testing.

Funding for the project was provided by the Wisconsin DNR through a River Planning Grant and a donation from Grant County Land Conservation.

Peggy Compton, our local basin educator explained the process of how water moves from the surface of the ground, into the ground, and through our wells using a ground water model.

Kevin Masarik, groundwater education specialist in the College of Natural Resources at UW-Stevens Point explained the meaning of each of the tests and remedies for people with unsafe or undesirable results. He also mapped the results by general location throughout the watershed for comparative purposes.



Kevin Masarik, groundwater education specialist

In general, Kevin felt the ground water in the Platte River watershed was better than he expected for the geography and land use of our region when compared to results from other watersheds in the region—good news indeed!

People of the Platte:

The Platte River watershed is made up of more than just the water and land it runs through; it is the people of the watershed who make the greatest difference in the viability of the watershed. In our newsletter, we profile the people of the Platte River watershed...



Richard Lange—Organic Farmer

“I started out looking for better price, but it moved into a health issue.” –Richard Lange

Organic farming is slowly becoming a more wide-spread phenomenon—organics has grown by over 20% per year for the last seven years, but Richard Lange is a pioneer in the area. “I’m actually the longest certified organic farmer in Grant County. There are only two others that were certified at the same time.” He and his family have been farming organically since 1991 and their farm, *Lange Farms*, has been certified organic since 1994.

The Lange family markets 65 steers, 250 hogs, 1400 chickens and 400 turkeys each year to regional organic markets, primarily in Madison, Viroqua, and Dubuque. The Lange’s supply their organic milk to the *Organic Valley Cooperative* which sells milk under the *Organic Valley* label in local supermarkets.



The Lange's also operate a store on their property to provide organic meats to local residents and they sell products through the *Driftless Market* on Platteville's Main Street.

Organic farming is a method of farming based on a philosophy that looks at the big picture and focuses on sustainability, a healthier lifestyle for animals and producing a product that is free of chemicals for human consumption. Richard explains that his animals are healthier because they are not confined and are outside as much as possible. They are also not given medicines and antibiotics. Richard states, "people think everything dies without antibiotics, but that's not true. We don't have as many vet bills. We don't push the cows as hard."

Many people are beginning to see the value to eating products produced without chemicals and consumer demand is driving the rise in organic production.

Besides the health benefits, Mr. Lange acknowledges that farming organically can have a positive affect on the amount of soil erosion and the amount of chemicals washing into the streams and rivers in the Platte River watershed. He believes that crop rotation and strip cropping make a real difference when it comes to erosion. "As organic farmers we do a better job because

we can't do corn on corn because we don't use any chemicals. We don't do any spraying. We use rotation as our own weed control and to produce nitrogen. We don't buy commercial nitrogen."

A healthier product, a cleaner environment, and a more sustainable lifestyle are important factors to the Lange family in their decision to farm organically. You can learn more about Lange Farm's products at www.wisconsincommonmarket.com or 608-348-4105.

***Project Update:
Banfield Bridge Recreation Area***

Based on the designs of the UWP student engineers, Banfield Boat Launch improvements are expected to start later this summer. The permitting process for dredging at the boat launch is underway.

The Friends of the Platte River also worked with a student group in the Spring semester to develop ideas for future public land/ parks improvement. The results of these feasibility studies will be incorporated into our future planning activities.

***FPR Sends Representative to
River Network's
2008 River Rally***

Tammy Enz had the fortune of receiving a scholarship to attend River Network's 2008 River Rally in Huron, Ohio.

A group of Wisconsin River Alliance staff and several other people working with

Wisconsin watershed groups traveled together to the four day event in late April.

Valuable workshop experiences laid out the process for putting ideas and plans for the group and fundraising ideas into usable documents so that progress can be charted and so that the group's mission can be continually supported with each project and idea implemented. Fundraising ideas and ideas for obtaining more grants were very important topics covered in several sessions.

It was a truly enlightening and inspiring experience to be in the company of hundreds of fellow river enthusiasts who had accomplished so much for their respective rivers.

So Long and Welcome!

At our March, 2008 Annual Meeting members were treated to a presentation from Jeff Hastings of Trout Unlimited concerning the stream restoration projects in the Driftless Area.



Jeff Hastings, *Trout Unlimited*, discusses the Platte River with FPR member, Skip Schuckert at the annual meeting

Also, we said good-bye and good luck to departing board member Everett Malott. Everett has been a tireless advocate for the group as a board member and will be missed.

We also said good-bye to our Student Ambassador, Brian Rogers, who was very helpful in organizing UW-Platteville student volunteers to help with various river workday projects. Thanks Brian and Everett!

We welcome our new student ambassador—Ben Heidemann who has come on board to help out with future projects. We also elected a new Board member and treasurer—Bill Moore.

Welcome Bill Moore

Bill currently works for Ecological Woodland Management. He has been active in the watershed working with landowners to improve natural areas. His interests lie in conservation actions in the watershed and in improving and restoring the diverse species of the watershed and working toward improved water quality. He lives in Platteville. Bill has also worked as a farmer and a journalist.

Wanted: Your Stories

Everyone who lives near or has enjoyed the waters of the Platte River watershed for its beauty and recreation has a story to tell. We would love to read your story or hear about your ideas and inspirations in a future issue of the Friends of the Platte River, Inc. newsletter. Please contact us if you have something you'd like to share.

Join

Your investment in the Friends of the Platte River, Inc. allows you the right to help determine actions for the group, receive newsletters, updates, and invitations to educational events.

Your membership supports the very important mission of the group and insures that we will be able to continue applying for and receiving funding to work toward continued improvements in the watershed.

Thank You!

Membership Form

Sign up for:

<i>Student</i> _____	<i>\$10.00</i>
<i>Individual</i> _____	<i>\$20.00</i>
<i>Family</i> _____	<i>\$35.00</i>
<i>Municipality</i> _____	<i>\$50.00</i>
<i>Organization/Business</i> _____	<i>\$50.00</i>
<i>Add'l donation</i> _____	_____

Total _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Contact:

[*platteriverwisconsin@yahoo.com*](mailto:platteriverwisconsin@yahoo.com)

website: platteriverfriends.org