



*Friends
of the
Platte River, Inc.*

Winter

2010

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
Meeting Dates:*

*Jan 8, 2011; 9:00am
March 5, 2011; 9:00am
May 7, 2011; 9:00am*

*Area Families Monitor the
Platte River Water Quality*

The Friends of the Platte River Inc. recently trained six local families in water monitoring parameters as the first step in the implementation of a water monitoring program in the Platte River watershed. The families are affiliated with the Tri-State Homeschool Association. The families met in Memorial Park in Platteville in September to learn about becoming a Water Action Volunteer (WAV). The WAV training was performed by Kris Stepenuck, the volunteer stream monitoring coordinator, and Peggy Compton, the UW-Extension basin coordinator. The WAV training focused on 6 parameters that are used to establish the health of a river: temperature, turbidity, biotic index, habitat, stream flow, and dissolved oxygen. This was a hands-on learning opportunity where members of each

family found themselves in the stream collecting water samples and testing for dissolved oxygen, filling up a tube with water and checking for water clarity, and scooping up macroinvertebrates and identifying the critters they found.



Kris Stepenuck helps participants identify macroinvertebrates

Besides learning how to collect the necessary data, the families were instructed on the implication of each parameter as an indication of stream health.

- **Temperature** is an important indicator of overall aquatic health.

Warmer water tends to hold less oxygen than colder water and can cause higher plant growth and increase metabolic rates for organisms. Temperature fluctuation can make fish and insects more susceptible to environmental disturbances. In addition certain fish require a specific temperature range in order to survive in a particular stream.

- **Turbidity** measures the transparency of water in a stream. Changes in clarity especially after a rain event can indicate runoff from construction sites, fields or other sources.
- **Biotic Index** is used to determine the presence or absence of certain macroinvertebrates in the stream. Macroinvertebrates are small animals without backbones and different types respond differently to differing physical, chemical and biological stream conditions. The types of macroinvertebrates found can indicate the level of pollution in the stream segment.
- **Habitat Assessment** measures the overall conditions of the land adjacent to the stream. The land use will affect the water quality and the habitat.
- **Stream Flow** indicates the amount of water moving through the stream during a set period of time. Stream flow will affect the stream habitat as well as the types of organisms and plants that can grow in the stream.

- **Dissolved Oxygen** in the water is a requirement for the survival of both plants and animals and is influenced by temperature, turbidity, wave action and by both living and decaying plants in the stream.

Together, these indicators give a good picture of the health of the stream. The collection of such data can help decision-makers quantify stream quality and will assist in the determination of areas of the watershed in need of further action. The monitoring program also helps watershed residents learn more about the waters of the Platte River and how our behaviors can affect water quality.

The families were loaned supplies from the water education library and each family will monitor a stream segment in the Platte River watershed monthly over the coming year. For more information on becoming a Water Action Volunteer or for learning more about the process you can visit <http://clean-water.uwex.edu/wav/>.



Collection of sample for Oxygen assessment

Canoe Launch at Ellenboro Complete

As part of ongoing efforts to develop a water trail on the Platte River, a canoe launch has been constructed on the Platte River in Ellenboro. *Landshapers*, a Platteville area contractor completed the work. Large stone for the site was donated by *Allied Stone*. This site was made possible through a partnership with Ellenboro Township and UW Extension with grant funding from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. This same grant also paid for dredging of the Banfield Recreation Area boat launch and removal of log jams on the Platte River. Special thanks to board member, Mark Sethne for his hard work in securing the permitting needed for the project and coordinating the construction process. Thanks Mark!



Completed canoe launch (above). Board members, Mark Sethne and Dale Hood, inspect the site (below).



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:

- Student _____ \$10.00
- Individual _____ \$20.00
- Family _____ \$35.00
- Municipality _____ \$50.00
- Corporate Silver _____ \$100.00
- Corporate Gold _____ \$250.00
- Corporate Platium _____ \$500.00+
- Add'l donation _____

Total _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

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