

Horlick Drive Riverbank Restoration

“We have money for restoration.” Chuck Haubrich greeted me with these welcome words last fall. Some mitigation money was available for work in the Root River watershed, he said, and did I have any suggestions?

After conversing with Donnie Snow, Director of Racine Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services, we selected a portion of the riverbank along Horlick Drive downstream from Island Park as being an area we could clear of invasives and add restoration plantings while staying within budget. In addition, the area is along the Root River Pathway, and restoration there would improve aesthetics as well as the ecosystem.

An initial survey indicated that some of the bank was too severely eroded and needed reconstruction before other restoration work could be done. We began on the remainder last fall.

Step one was hiring Invasives Warrior Drew Ballantyne to remove the thickets of honeysuckle, buckthorn, white mulberry, and even spirea and privet. Step two was to engage Jerry Kubert’s tree service to take down the larger trees, especially

the black locust and tree of heaven. As a bonus, Jerry also trimmed the large oaks and willows, removing dead and conflicting branches, thus improving the view as well as the health of the trees.

Third, we planted 100 two-year old oaks this spring, free thanks to the Living Lands and Waters Million Tree Project. The Workforce Development Center’s E3 summer youth workers also planted more than 170 container-grown trees purchased at Johnson Nursery’s restoration rate. These included musclewood (*Carpinus caroliniana*), basswood (*Tilia americana*), elderberry (*Sambucus canadensis*), chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*), red and grey dogwoods (*Cornus* sp.), and hop trees (*Ptelea trifoliata*). It was quite a sight to see the Johnson’s large semi-truck negotiating the narrow roadway! Chuck Haubrich and Ron Rasmussen augured holes while students dug and planted and hauled buckets of water from the river.

Fourth we planted understory forbs. We used the Prairie Nursery bulk pricing, and stuck to hardy plants that would tolerate spring flooding. We wanted plants that added color, but were not so highly prized that they would walk away. Our choices were Jacob’s ladder (*Polemonium reptans*), big leaf aster (*Aster macrophyllus*), zigzag goldenrod (*Solidago flexicaulus*), and woodland



sunflower (*Helianthus strumosus*).

Recently I was tagging the newly planted trees when I heard a cheery voice from a kayaker paddling upriver, “Are you marking invasives to take out?” When I explained I was marking the ones we’d planted to help them survive over winter, she seemed pleased. “Thanks for all your work in there,” she said. I am excited that more people understand about the problems invasives cause, and how important it is to manage them effectively.

This fall we will do some follow-up spraying of resprouting invasives, and prepare our new plants for wintering over. We are hoping the City will undertake reconstruction of the eroded banks along this portion of the Root River Pathway.

Look what’s new

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Message from Our President– Chuck Haubrich

Membership Renewal Time

The K/RLT membership renewal drive is held in conjunction with the fall/winter newsletter. We only conduct one such effort a year, so please consider renewing now.



Welcome Ron Rasmussen and Sarah Wright

K/RLT is pleased to welcome Ron Rasmussen and Sarah Wright to the K/RLT Board of Directors. Ron retired from Abbott Laboratories a few years ago where he was a chemist. On his 17 acre homestead in the Town of Salem he has planted thousands of trees and shrubs and a prairie. Ron is also president of the WWOA Foundation, which operates the Seno Woodland Education Center in Wheatland Township. He is a graduate of the UW Stevens Point Master Woodland Steward and Wisconsin Woodland Leader programs.

Sarah joined The Johnson Foundation in June 2008 as an environmental policy fellow, where she helps develop the Foundation's environmental programs. Previously, she did graduate work on air quality modeling at Ohio University and in her spare time was an assistant coach for the women's NCAA field hockey program. In 2005, she served as a program associate at the U.S. Forest Stewardship Council in Washington, D.C., researching illegal logging and forest carbon credits. In 2004, she worked as a research assistant at the Taiwan International Institute for Water Education and as a conference organizer for the International Small Islands Studies Association. Sarah earned her bachelor's degree in environmental science and policy in 2003 from Duke University.

Restoration Projects

K/RLT achieves its open space and natural area protection mission through conservation easements, land purchases, education on the value of preserving land, and land restoration projects. This newsletter focuses on the latter, with Melissa Warner writing about a Root River restoration project and Nan Calvert about converting former farm fields in conservation subdivisions back to a more natural state.

Funding for Melissa's project comes from Legacy Bogs, a mitigation bank, which receives most of its funds from the Department of Transportation when it fills wetlands on road projects. To compensate for the loss of these wetlands, Legacy funds projects to restore wetlands or, in this case, a related river environment.

Volunteer Opportunities: Want To Help in 2010?

We are looking for volunteers to help lead, plan and work on properties to rid them of nasty invasive species. Please email Therese at krlt@yahoo.com if interested.

Welcome Therese Probst

With the help of a three year grant from the Gaylord and Dorothy Foundation, K/RLT is pleased to announce the hiring of Therese Probst as our first executive director. She will be working on a part time basis. Therese graduated from the UW LaCrosse with a Master of Science in Recreation Management. Over the past eight years she has held naturalist/educator positions with the Wisconsin Conservation Corps, Town of Menasha, Bubolz Nature Preserve, and Green Bay Botanical Garden. Most recently Therese was the Director of River Bend where she was responsible for the environmental education program and overall management. With Therese's involvement, K/RLT will be able to better focus on the following priorities.

- Completing land donations and purchases in our Des Plaines River Basin project area
- Engaging volunteers in our land preservation efforts
- Seeking new members through community outreach
- Assisting land owners interested in protecting their land through a conservation easement or land donation
- Expanding our work with the Lake Michigan Shoreland Alliance, whose focus is protecting the watersheds of Lake Michigan

Please join us in welcoming Therese to K/RLT. We are fortunate to find someone with her conservation ethic and experience and are confident she will significantly accelerate our mission to protect open space and natural areas.

The Mission of Kenosha/Racine Land Trust is to protect open space and natural areas in Kenosha and Racine counties for the benefit of current and future generations.

Thank You Larsons

Walking the path that winds through the conservation easement land in Blue River Preserve it is sometimes difficult to see the path, that is until you come to the section that runs behind the prairie style home of Larry and Suzanne Larson on Belmar Avenue. For 100 feet, the path is clear and thickly mulched with wood chips. It feels good under your feet – springy but secure – and it beckons the walker to continue.

The path sits atop a steep hillside and just like the path, there is a notable change here as well. Gone are the imposing Buckthorns and Honeysuckles that existed at the expense of the vegetation around them. Their graying stumps are the reminder of their once formidable presence. Some Buckthorn

has dared to sprout here and there but they won't be long for the world. No - not with Larry and Suzanne Larson around.

About a year ago the Larson's retired here from Minnesota where Larry taught social studies and Suzanne taught English before becoming a principal. They realized that something was not quite right on the county owned land behind their new home and set about the business of rectifying it. They got permission from Racine County – owner of the hillside – to remove invasive species and replant with native shrubs like Nannyberry, Red-osier dogwood and American highbush cranberry. They cut the Buckthorn and Honeysuckle down and immediately painted the stumps with Glyphosate to prevent regrowth. The removed weeds from the path and mulched it heavily to keep it clear just as the conservation easement

stewardship plan intended. They created brush piles at the foot of the hill for wildlife that need them like Cardinals, small mammals and Salamanders. They have worked diligently for a year and it has paid off.

The view down the hill is pretty and will only improve as time goes on thanks to Larry and Suzanne Larson. They are both very humble about their efforts but deserve recognition and credit. They model good stewardship and a land ethic. They embody what Aldo Leopold meant when he said, "When the land does well for the owner, and the owner does well by his land, both end up better by reason of their partnership and we have conservation. When one or the other grows poor, we do not. We are very grateful to Larry and Suzanne Larson for their efforts on behalf of the land.

Wish List: Perhaps you or someone you know might be willing to donate an item on our list. Thanks in advance!

- * Laptop computer
- *Field Guides
- *Waders
- *Digital camera



Membership

The efforts of the Kenosha/Racine Land Trust and the Helgren Johnson family are a tribute to the spirit of conservation and to the potential for pairing private and government efforts in that cause. *Racine Journal Times*

YES, I WILL HELP THE KENOSHA/RACINE LAND TRUST PROTECT OPEN SPACE & NATURAL AREAS.

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

- Land Steward\$25
- Nature Nurturer\$50
- Forest Friend\$100
- Wetland Watcher\$500
- Prairie Protector \$1000
- Benefactor\$5,000

Additional donation for land acquisition \$ _____

TOTAL Enclosed.....\$ _____

SPECIAL GIFT

My employer _____ matches this gift.

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Would you like to volunteer? o Yes o No

Let us know if you would like your donation to remain anonymous.

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A copy of our financial statement is available on request.



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The mission of the Kenosha/Racine Land Trust is to protect open space and natural areas in Kenosha and Racine Counties for the benefit of current and future generations.

Invasive Plant Species

Invasive plant species exist at the expense of everything around them. They take up space, water, soil and reduce the biodiversity of the rest of the community. In short they degrade the environment in a very significant way. For example, Garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*) actually sterilizes the soil. Healthy soil should contain loads of beneficial microorganisms.

Fortunately, people can make a big difference as far as Invasive species reduction is concerned. Here are some simple suggestions:

- Learn what is most problematic in your area, how to recognize it and where it is found.
- Learn how it is most effectively controlled.
- Know what you are buying at local nurseries. Buckthorn is sold still as a desirable landscaping shrub. Sometimes is called Columnar buckthorn.
- Request that your favorite nursery stop carrying invasive species.
- Start in your own backyard by removing invasive species.
- Get involved in your neighborhood or community with invasive species removal. There are lots of opportunities.

Where to Find the Answers

If you have questions about invasive species, the plants in your subdivision's conservation easement areas or native plants, **call or email Nan Calvert at 262-681-4899 or prairiedog@e-3.cc**. She is the ecological consultant for the Kenosha/Racine Land Trust, Inc and she is ready and willing to help you.

The Invasive Plant Association of Wisconsin is a great resource too. Go to www.IPAW.org

Des Plaines River Project Area DESIGNATED A WETLAND GEM

Kenosha/ Racine Land Trust's Des Plaines River Project in Kenosha County has been designated a *Wetland Gem* by the Wisconsin Wetlands Association. This designation recognizes not only the value of the site area, but the work being done by staff, volunteers and donors to preserve even more of our local vanishing wetlands. "Wisconsin is lucky to be home to thousands of acres of wetlands, and we hope these *Wetland Gems* will help the people of Wisconsin get to know the wonderful diversity and extraordinary beauty of these natural communities," according to Becky Abel, Wisconsin Wetlands Association Executive Director.

Wetland Gems are high quality habitats that represent the wetland riches—marshes, swamps, bogs, fens, and more—that historically made up a quarter of Wisconsin's landscape. The Wisconsin Wetlands Association embarked on the task of selecting *Wetland Gems* as part of the organization's work to increase appreciation for and protection of wetland resources. The 100 *Wetland Gems* all represent high quality wetland habitats and collectively represent Wisconsin's wetland heritage.

Since the early 1800s, nearly half of Wisconsin's 10 million acres of wetlands have been drained or filled to make way for land uses like agriculture, forestry, and urban and suburban development. A large portion of the 5 million remaining acres have been altered and degraded. "Historically, wetlands were not recognized and valued as natural treasures, but were instead generally considered wastelands and obstacles to progress," said Abel. Wisconsin's 100 *Wetland Gems* were selected from a long list of sites recognized by an array of conservation planning efforts that identified critical habitats, threats, and conservation actions to protect the state's natural communities, species and special places.

