

Founding BRWA Board Member Wins Leopold Conservation Award

On June 24, in Madison, Wis., the Sand County Foundation will award Terry Peters, BRWA founding board member, a \$10,000 prize for his outstanding landowner stewardship and timber harvesting practices.

Terry's prize honors his careful woods work that protects water quality, wildlife habitat, and overall forest health, especially in encouraging reproduction of such shade loving species as cedar, hemlock and white pine.

The Leopold Conservation Award, named in honor of world-renowned conservationist Aldo Leopold, is comprised of the cash award and a Leopold crystal. The award is presented annually in seven states to private landowners who practice responsible land stewardship and management. Terry was one of four finalists in Wisconsin.

"These finalists were chosen from a number of exceptional, well-deserving candidates," said Dr. Brent Haglund, Sand County Foundation President. "The candidates' overall commitment to conservation's role in agriculture is proof that Aldo Leopold's land ethic, developed on Wisconsin soil, is still alive and well."

A fourth-generation landowner in the Mellen area, Terry and his family take the long view in managing more than 3000 acres of family-owned timberland.

"We've abandoned many of the harvest practices of the 70s and 80s in favor of newer technologies that leave the smallest footprint possible," says the prize-winning logger. In 1992, Peters was named Great Lakes Logger of the Year by the Forest Resource Association and in 1993, a National Outstanding Logger.

In addition to BRWA leadership, Peters serves on his local school board, the Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute Advisory Board and in 1995 helped promote the Forest Stewardship Council certification of Bayfield county forests.

BRWA congratulates Terry Peters on this well-deserved recognition, and is grateful to Terry for sharing his prize money to support local organizations, including BRWA. ♦



SETTING THE STANDARD: Fourth-generation Mellen logger and founding BRWA board member Terry Peters.



How does bacteria get into our rivers and streams? See page 4.

Also inside...

- **News Around the Watershed**
- **Secrets of Winter Rye**
- **Ready to Volunteer?**

BRWA Looking to Hire Volunteer Coordinator

BRWA needs a well-organized and friendly person to help us by monitoring volunteers. You will keep track of equipment, fill in at monitoring spots when needed, and learn a lot. Flexible hours, about 20 hours per month, car needed. \$15/hour. Applications accepted until position is filled. Interviews to begin the week of June 16. Call 715-682-2003 for position description.

News Around the Watershed



BRWA works with Paul Johnson (NRCS), Mike Pero (Ashland County), and Ted Koehler (USFWS) on culvert designs for Montreal Creek.

Culvert Project Site Selection

As part of our ongoing commitment to help towns protect fish habitat, BRWA and its partners chose two sites for in-stream work this summer. Both Montreal Creek in the Town of Anderson and a tributary to 18 Mile Creek in the Town of Grand View will get replacement culverts in spots that were giving fish a hard time.

In cooperation with National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and Northland College, BRWA will provide the “pipes” and towns will contribute labor and machinery. Town crews also attended a training on installation techniques in April. The main lesson from the training was that we need bigger pipes set lower in the stream so that fish can get through during low flow times.

The sites chosen resulted from an extensive evaluation conducted over the past several years which yielded a priority list of over a dozen problem spots. Conversations with town officials and resource managers helped us narrow the list. ♦

BRWA honored at Spring for the Water

In addition to running our most successful fundraiser to date (thank you to all who attended and selected auction items!), BRWA was pleased to accept the 2008 Stream Monitoring award for a group effort. The Department of Natural Resources and the University of Wisconsin-Extension present Stream Monitoring Awards every year to recognize people and groups for their exemplary work leading to increased participation in stream monitoring, collecting stream data, and sharing their knowledge of stream monitoring.

Nancy Larson, Lake Superior Basin Educator for UW-Extension and BRWA volunteer, presented the award. “Many volunteer organizations throughout the state were nominated for this very competitive award,” said Larson. “BRWA was selected for its extensive quality control measures. Winning this award is a big deal.” ♦

Superior Vistas Bike Tour

Are you up for a non-competitive, eco-friendly bicycle ride on scenic, paved, low-traffic roads through gently rolling hills with views of Lake Superior and nearby forests and countryside? Then grab your helmet and head for Thompson’s West End Park in Washburn on Saturday, June 21.

You can choose loops of 13, 19, 34, 52 or 68 miles. Registration (\$25/individual; \$55 families; \$15 under age 22) starts at 7:30 a.m. Launch for the two longest loops at 8:00 a.m., shorter loops at 9:00 a.m. This is a fully supported ride with route map, support vehicles and food/beverage stops en route and at the finish. Pack a towel for dip in Long Lake. Proceeds from the ride benefit the Friends of Valhalla Ski Club and the Washburn Cultural Center. ♦

Support the work of BRWA

If you live in the Bad River watershed, you’re automatically a member of the Bad River Watershed Association. Consider enhancing your membership by making a financial donation to help support our work.

\$100 Your name _____

\$ 50 Address: _____

\$ 25 _____

\$ ____ _____

Phone and/or email: _____

Clip this form and send with your tax-deductible check to:

Bad River Watershed Association
422 Third Street West, Suite #105
Ashland, Wisconsin 54806

Thank you!



Slowing the Flow: Using winter rye as a cover crop in the Bad River watershed

Dairy farmers in our region face the challenge of feeding animals through the long winter. Harvesting and storing summertime crops is essential for good nutrition over the winter months. Winter feed for dairy farmers is typically a mix of corn silage and grasses and legumes stored as hay or haylage. In dry years, having enough feed can be a challenge. Crops such as winter rye that do most of their growing in the fall and early-spring can be a reliable feed or grain option because its growth can take full advantage of fall, winter, and spring moisture. Alfalfa and corn silage rely on summertime rains that can be spotty at best.



For the Bad River watershed, a primary concern is rapid run off over open lands. Rain and snow falling on forested lands is “held up” on the landscape as it is intercepted by tree branches and drawn up by roots. In contrast, on bare fields, that same amount of rain is more likely to flow quickly across the ground as “overland flow.” Overland flow rushes to river and streams, increasing the magnitude of flood events during heavy rains and carrying away lots of soil and nutrients in the process.

How can we address both of these concerns in one project? Perhaps...winter rye.

Winter rye has a long agricultural history and has been studied and used extensively. Organic farmers have created a sort of rye renaissance recently with use of rye as a cover crop, trap crop, and for weed control. As a cover crop, winter rye helps prevent rapid runoff and soil loss by maintaining ground cover in the fall, winter, and spring. As a forage in our region, rye can exceed 15 percent protein and yield significant tonnage by mid-May.

Ashland and Bayfield County UW-Extension Agriculture Agent Jason Fischbach is working with Jerry Richardson, Todd Berweger, and Bob Mika to test the use of winter rye in heavy clay soils this summer. The idea is to use winter rye as a multi-purpose cover crop, green chop forage, and nurse crop through on-farm research trials.

According to Fischbach, winter rye is a multi-purpose crop that gives the growers lots of room for error. You can seed winter rye pretty much anytime between August and October and you can harvest the rye as high quality haylage, low quality heifer feed, or let it ripen and harvest it for grain and straw. Spring and fall can be a tricky time to work in our red clays and rye gives you some flexibility if the weather isn't cooperating. “This study will hopefully give us

a little more knowledge on how to manage it (rye) so folks are more comfortable using it in their crop rotations,” said Fischbach.

The main question they are trying to answer is can the winter rye, seeded in the fall, be used as a nurse crop for a legume such as red clover or alfalfa. Oats and wheat, other grain crops similar to rye, are often seeded in the spring with alfalfa as a nurse crop and the oats are harvested in June. The problem with seeding the grain crop in the spring, though, is that the field is

bare all fall, winter, and spring until the oats are planted. If the rye could be seeded in the fall and the legumes seeded in the spring into the standing rye then one could protect the soil all winter long, have a nurse crop for the legume seeding, and be able to harvest the rye almost a month before one would harvest the oats.

As part of this project, winter rye was planted in August or September of 2007, and had excellent stands going into the winter. In early-April of 2008, the research team frost-seeded alfalfa, red clover, or berseem clover into the rye. The rye will be harvested at different times this spring to evaluate the effect of harvest timing on legume establishment and growth. Other plots will not be seeded in the spring until after the rye is harvested. These plots will be no-till seeded with the same legumes.

The research team will collect data on rye yield, rye forage quality, and legume establishment and growth. What they hope to learn is how best to establish legumes with the winter rye. Such a system would be a great option following corn silage harvest in August or September. Corn silage fields are most often the fields left bare all winter until something can be planted the following spring.

“This project will be the first on-farm research trial in the region since the University of Wisconsin Ashland Agricultural Research Station was closed in 2006,” says Jason Fischbach. “I hope this will be the beginning of expanded cooperative on-farm research...our only remaining option for acquiring the locally-specific knowledge we need.”

A field day will be held on Friday, July 25 at 1:00 p.m. at Jerry Richardson's farm to highlight the research trials and share what's been learned. Folks will meet at the research plots on Hwy 112 immediately West of Richardson Road. The field day is free and open to the public. Brats and beverages will be served. Pre-registration is requested by calling Jason Fischbach at 715-373-6104 ext 5. ♦

How Bacteria Get Into Our Streams

Editor's note: In the last issue of Watershed Waves, we explained about BRWA's bacteria sampling program and why we are concerned that bacteria are present in some of our streams and rivers. But how does E. coli bacteria get into streams and rivers?

The leading cause of water quality problems nationwide, according to the EPA, is from water running off the land during heavy rains. When the land can't absorb water fast enough, excess water runs across the land, picking up all sorts of pollutants, including fecal material.

Fecal material is usually present on lands that support domesticated animals, such as cattle, hogs, or horses. If animals enter the water for drinking or if manure is spread on land, the chances of bacteria entering waterways increases.

Human waste can also end up in surface water. Most rural homes treat waste in septic tanks. Some waste systems are old or clogged or were never installed correctly. In such cases, human waste often ponds at the surface, posing a serious health hazard.

In towns with public treatment works, large quantities of effluent from holding ponds may be released once or twice a year, resulting in high levels of contaminants in waterways. The timing of such discharges is usually in early spring or late fall, to reduce the likely exposure to recreationists.

Finally, human waste from holding tanks is sometimes allowed to be spread on agricultural fields, and, just like agricultural manure, can cause waterway contamination. Such sites need suitable topography and soils, and should also have vegetative interceptor strips to prevent immediate runoff to surface water channels.

The solutions to these problems are more than obvious. Animals should be kept out of streams and landspreading of human and animal waste must done with utmost care. If your town has a public treatment works, ask how old it is and if it is working properly.

If you treat your own waste on your own property, you will want to be sure that your system is large enough for modern levels of water usage, and that it is pumped regularly. Antibacterial soaps and cleaning aids such as chlorine bleach and bowl cleaners can kill off the bacteria that break down the septic waste, so use these only very sparingly if at all. ♦



Spread the
News

Do you have a friend or neighbor who might like learning more about the Bad River Watershed Association by receiving this newsletter? If so, please provide their name and address.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Clip this form and send to:

Bad River Watershed Association
422 Third Street West, Suite #105
Ashland, Wisconsin 54806

Thank you!

Thank You!

Thanks to our contributors, funders, and volunteers:

Bobbi Rongstad, Jim Oakley and Anne Chartier, Elden and Catherine Tetzlaff, Eleanor Bussey, Janice Vogel, Leslie Jagger, Dorothy Lagerroos, Tracey Ledder, Leon Solbert, Carolyn Sneed, Naomi Tillison, Robert and Sondra Dunne, Rebecca McDowell and Davis Taylor, Keith and Laura Carlson, Howard Sibbald, Michael Radtke, Thomas Piikkila, Hans Kastens and Ulrike Cords-Kastens, Terry Peters and Kaye Ortman Peters, Miles Falck, Linda Jorgenson, Ben and Rebecca Bergey, Jane Smith, Wendy Stein and Phillip Freeman, Konnie LeMay and Robert Berg, Jane and Don Tolliver, Beverly Sidlo, Virginia Hirsch, Mark and Pam Dryer, Clyde Eilo, Linda Rise, James and Mimi Crandell, Dennis and Pat Musil, Karen Halbersleben, Diane Daulton, Joy Schelble and Peter Rasmussen, Mary Rehwald, Valena Hoffman, Becky Sapper, Deborah Dryer, Nancy Larson, Joan Elias and Jim Meeker, Carrie Linder and Jay Cablk, Christine Lindsey, Jed and Heidi Ungrodt, William Heart, Alan Brew, Rose Lahti, Shari Eggleston, Kent Goeckermann, Mathey Scholes, Diane Heapy, Joan Solberg, Naomi Tillison, Thomas Wyse, Morris Lewis, Michael Klump, the Stone-Dahl's, Dane Bonk, Karen Danielsen, Joan Elias, John Franke, Matt Hudson, Leslie Kolesar, Tracey Ledder, Rae-Ann Maday, Darienne McNamara, Suzy Sanders, Tana Turonie, the Wichita's, Roland Wolff, Colleen Matula, Alliance for Sustainability, US Environmental Protection Agency, Town of Grand View



2008 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President:

Jack Wichita

Vice-president:

Mark Dryer

Secretary:

Dorothy Lagerroos

Treasurer:

Tom Erickson

At-large members:

Jim Crandall

Karen Danielsen

Matt Hudson

Rose Lahti

Rae Ann Maday

Colleen Matula

Terry Peters

Take Action in Your Watershed

One of BRWA's chief goals is to involve all watershed citizens in actively protecting and maintaining watershed integrity. Aside from things you can do on your own at home, there is much to do with BRWA. We need your help. Here are some current volunteer opportunities for you and your family. To join us, please call Michele at the BRWA office at 715-682-2003.

COUNTY FAIRS: This summer, the BRWA will be attending county fairs in all three watershed counties- Iron, Ashland and Bayfield. Our new displays highlight water monitoring including what we are learning and what can be done to minimize problems. Come join us at the BRWA booth!

Ashland County Fair—August 28–September 1

Bayfield County Fair—August 21-24

Iron County Fair—July 31–August 3

CULVERT INVENTORY: BRWA recently received funding to replace two more culverts next summer. We have completed nearly 700 road stream crossing inventories throughout the basin, but there are nearly 400 left to do. We will be hosting a volunteer culvert inventory training on Saturday, June 28. The training will begin at 9:00 a.m., with a brief orientation to the project. Then we'll travel to a crossing site close by to review the protocols. The training will end at lunchtime. Volunteers will then be ready to visit 5-10 sites near their homes over the course of the summer.

COMMITTEES: BRWA committees plan events and help get the word out about what we are doing and what folks can do to help take care of our beautiful spot on earth. We need you on our membership committee, program committee and communications committee. Meetings are short and often work is done by email. If you would like to meet new folks, we will help you find something easy and fun to do! ♦



Address Service Requested



Summer 2008 Watershed Waves



All the latest news
from your

Upcoming Local Events:

June 27: Knotweed Knockout—Meet at the trailhead to the Brownstone Trail at 9:00 a.m.

June 28: Culvert Volunteer Training—Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the Ashland Area Development Center

July 22: Board of Directors Meeting—time and place to be determined

July 31-August 3: Iron County Fair

August 21-24: Bayfield County Fair

August 28-September 1: Ashland County Fair

