NEWSLETTER

Issue 1 December 7, 2020

Friends of the 14 Mile Creek Watershed,

You'll recall the 14 Mile Creek Joint Citizen Watershed Committee was formed in 2016 to address the issues of Blue-Green Algae in our lakes. We came to understand the primary components of BGA are phosphorus and nitrogen and our testing shows us there is an overabundance of both in our 4-county watershed. Our challenge as a watershed is to reduce the flow of excess phosphorus and nitrogen into our surface water and groundwater.

I'd like to invite all of you to join us at our next 14 Mile Watershed meeting on December 14th. Our guest speaker will be Heidi Keuler of the US Fish and Wildlife Service and area coordinator of the Fishers and Farmers Partnership. Heidi will be sharing the partnership's vision of healthy farms, healthy fish and healthy streams. This is important to us as we build relationships with our neighbors upstream, all of us involved in cleaning up this watershed we live in. It will be a virtual meeting utilizing Zoom conferencing. Here is the agenda and Zoom link 14 Mile Watershed Committee Agenda 12-14-2020.

You might also be interested in our guest speaker for our January 9th meeting. Todd Weik is an engineer who has worked with a process just approved by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for phosphorous removal utilizing blast furnace slag. It's a system installed to intercept subsurface (tile) flow, groundwater or surface runoff flow, and reduce the concentration of phosphorus. We first became aware when Sheboygan County used the process at Elkhart Lake to filter out phosphorous draining from tiled agricultural fields, much like we have in our watershed. While preliminary, this is another potential tool for improving water quality in the 14 Mile Creek Watershed.

Many of you are aware of the EPA approval of the Nine Key Element Plan for our 14 Mile Creek watershed. It brings together all stakeholders in the watershed in a coordinated effort over the next 10 years to improve surface and groundwater. The formal implementation is expected to begin this coming spring, while our 14 Mile committee continues the work we began 4 years ago.

We reach out to organizations and groups to build relationships and identify solutions, much as we've done recently with the Wisconsin Wetlands Association. Through John Endrizzi's relationship with Executive Director Tracy Hames, we scheduled a watershed tour that resulted in Tracy partnering with our DNR advisors in a potential ditch re-engineering demo project on DNR owned parcels in the Leola Ditch network that would reduce nitrogen in groundwater and surface water through a natural process of denitrification. The process of denitrification converts the nitrates in the water to a harmless hydrogen gas in the air when water levels are raised into the rich organic soil. John's also gained support from his fellow Adams County Drainage Board members, and through his water testing efforts, gained the interest of two cranberry marsh managers, all with a vested interest in understanding this natural process of denitrification. If successful, we feel this process will be well accepted by our agriculture partners as a low-cost, minimally-burdensome activity, and one of a series of actions that can help clean up our watershed.

The citizen-led 14 Mile Creek Joint Watershed Committee is an organization of volunteers with advisors from the DNR, Adams County Conservation, TriLakes and the Town of Rome. Follow us on Facebook https://www.facebook.com/14MileWatershed

14 Mile Creek Joint Watershed Committee
Recipient of 2019 DNR Secretary/Director award
Don Ystad, Chairman

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