NEWSLETTER

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Friends of the 14 Mile Creek Watershed,

All in all, it's been an interesting 2020. Our 14 Mile watershed committee received the state DNR Secretary/Director award for outstanding service in support of the DNR's natural resource mission, and the EPA and DNR approved the Nine Key Element Plan (9 KEP) for the 4 county, 10-year, $8 million restoration of our watershed.

We ended the year recognizing some very special people on our 14 Mile committee. **Scott Provost**, DNR Water Management Specialist has been the driving force behind our upstream and in-lake water testing program, so important in our 9 Key Element Plan application. He's been our DNR advisor from the start in 2016. **Kason Morley**, our Adams County Conservationist since 2018, worked with conservationists from the 3 counties around us and WI Land and Water to gain approval on the first 9 Key Element Plan in the state that focused on both groundwater and surface water. **John Endrizzi**, our citizen committee member of the year, has been in the water testing upstream every month for the past 3 years. His testing provided the primary scientific basis for the initial EPA 9 Key Element Plan application. John is the first to volunteer and the last to leave when there's work to be done.
See the awards - https://trilakesmanagement.com/14-mile-latest-news/

So, where did we focus our activities in this difficult COVID year? In a word, "outreach". We extended our reach within our watershed and throughout the state, with organizations like the Wisconsin Wetlands Association, Wisconsin Lakes, the Little Plover River Partnership, the Rivers Alliance and Clear Water Farms program, Wisconsin Potato and Vegetable Growers (WPVGA),

and numerous others who have expertise and influence throughout our entire 14 Mile watershed and beyond.

Our outreach puts us in touch with people and groups who can help us build relationships with all stakeholders in our watershed, and also help identify solutions to improve our water quality. It's working. A tour of our watershed with Wisconsin Wetlands, Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, WPVGA, and the Little Plover Partnership resulted in a synergistic project with the DNR for experimental denitrification in the Leola Ditch network upstream from the lakes. That's mitigation of nitrates, one of the key contributors to our Blue-Green Algae. And working with the WPVGA to identify upstream parcel owners resulted in a plan for an initial meeting of key 14 Mile committee members and interested upstream cranberry and crop farmers to begin building a relationship.

Our Healthy Lakes program, under committee member Dave Trudeau from Lake Sherwood, has become one of the most successful in the state. More than 50 projects have been applied for and/or approved by the state program within our lakes these past 3 years. Fifty of your neighbors have taken advantage of the 75% funding to improve fish habitat, restore shorelands, and reduce erosion and runoff issues, all while improving and protecting our lakes.

So, what do we do next year? We continue to expand our reach, and we make this 14 Mile Creek Watershed committee an inclusive, welcoming group open to all stakeholders in the watershed. When it's safe to do so, you'll see us at every public event, sharing information about what we can all do to return these lakes and streams, and our groundwater, to their former quality. And, we take part in the rollout of the 9 Key Element Plan, working with stakeholders throughout the watershed on milestone activities identified to improve the entire watershed. Let's remember that our watershed is over 55,000 acres of mixed-use properties, covering four counties, with 22.4 million gallons flowing through 14 Mile Creek each day. It will take all of us working together.

Please join us at our next monthly committee meeting on January 11, 2021, at 2:00. Find Zoom instructions and agenda here. Our guest speaker will be Todd Weik. He's 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. 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 experimental, this is another possible tool for improving water quality in the 14 Mile Creek Watershed.

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

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