

## Upper & Lower Rock Basins



# Rock River Basin Environmental Action Resource Guide



The Rock River Coalition is a 501 (c)(3) not for profit educational organization. Its purpose is to educate and provide opportunities for people of diverse interests to come together to protect and improve the economic, environmental, recreational and cultural history of the Rock River Basin.

The RRC has more than 250 members and volunteers helping it to achieve these goals. Membership is:

Individuals or classrooms	\$25
Families, organizations or small business	\$35
Students or senior citizens	\$15
Corporations	\$200

Any donation or more will be recognized and linked to your website on our website: [www.rockrivercoalition.org](http://www.rockrivercoalition.org)

*The Rock River Coalition, University of Wisconsin-Extension and their partners prohibit discrimination in programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or family status.*

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Rock River Basin Educator  
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Foreword by  
Warren Topel, President  
Rock River Coalitio  
July 2003



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**Rock River Coalition Membership Form**

- \$10 – Student
- \$20 - Individual
- \$20 - School/Classroom
- \$25 - Family
- \$25 - Small Business/Organization
- \$50 – Corporate

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_

*Send this form with payment to:*  
 Rock River Coalition, PO Box 141, Watertown, WI 53094

**Are you interested in participating in the following Rock River Coalition Issue Teams?**

<b>Interested in being a member</b>	<b>Current Member</b>	<b>Activities planned for 2003-2004</b>
0	0	<b>Wetlands/ Shoreline Protection:</b> 1) Identifying methods for prioritizing for wetland restoration in the basin, 2) Developing natural vegetative shoreline demonstrations in parks and other public land
0	0	<b>Groundwater:</b> 1) Developing GFLOW computer model of Rock River Basin, 2) Promoting the Wisconsin Groundwater Guardian Program
0	0	<b>Storm Water:</b> Storm Water Education primarily for municipality agency staff and developers
0	0	<b>Rural Development Concerns:</b> Developed and promoting a basin policy on residential growth and farmland preservation
0	0	<b>Recreation:</b> 1) Currently developing book of basin trails; 2) Interested in promoting water trail development
0	0	<b>Water Quality:</b> Citizen stream monitoring program

## Action Chart

Activity \_\_\_\_\_

Action # \_\_\_\_\_

What needs to be done	Who will do it	By when

*Make additional copies for each action*

## Foreword

Since 1994, thanks to the dedication of many volunteers, the Rock River Coalition (RRC) has worked to further its mission: to educate and provide opportunities for people of diverse interests to work together to improve the environmental, recreational, cultural and economic resources of the Rock River Basin.

This guide, published in the summer of 2003, represents another example of the Coalition's successful efforts to provide citizens of the Rock River Basin with information, inspiration, training and tools.

As a volunteer myself since 1994, and as President of the Rock River Coalition since 2000, I would like to personally thank you for putting your interest and concern for our Basin's ten county region into action.

When asked, the majority of us say we consider ourselves to be environmentalists. We care. But many of us are unsure about how to go about making a difference. This easy-to-use guide is designed to lead you through simple steps: "How action helps", "What you do" and "Action checklist".

As you, your family, group, or school gets started, know that what you do *does* help. By completing any of these "environmental action projects" you make a difference for our Earth, our environment, our economy, our culture, for all of us, in the Rock River Basin. Thank you.

Warren Topel, President, Rock River Coalition

July 31, 2003



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864 Collins Rd  
Jefferson, WI 53549-1976  
[rriver@excel.net](mailto:rriver@excel.net)  
920-674-7443

<http://www.rockrivercoalition.org>

<http://basineducation.uwex.edu/rockriver/>

#### **Why TOP Ten?**

These ten issues help address a number of concerns in our basin. They were chosen because they are generally effective, involve people in hands-on action and are fun and rewarding. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources states that improving water quality should be our top priority for protecting our natural heritage. Several of our top ten actions address water quality. Other actions can help reduce the impact of invasive species or help instill an environmental ethic. We also sought to vary the amount of planning and preparation that the actions require, from not much to quite a lot.

*Prairie Restoration for Wisconsin School* and other information about the Earth Partnership Program at the UW Madison Arboretum is available [http://wiscinfo.doit.wisc.edu/arboretum/earth\\_partnership\\_index.htm](http://wiscinfo.doit.wisc.edu/arboretum/earth_partnership_index.htm) or at the UW-Madison Arboretum, 1207 Seminole Highway, Madison, WI 53711

Purple Loosestrife (pamphlet) WDNR Pub #WT-276-2001

Rain Gardens (pamphlet) is available from UWEX offices; Pub #GWQ 034

See Cella Chow! (Loosestrife Manual) is available from WDNR Pub-WT-276-2001 or at <http://www.wiscwetlands.org/>

Shoreland Restoration: A Growing Solution Step-by-Step Guide (brochure) is available from county UWEX offices Pub # GWQ0032

Shoreland Restoration Workshop for Landowners Seminar, March 2000 - handouts and binder is available by calling Suzanne Wade at Jefferson County UWEX 920-674-7295

Taking Action! a resource publication available at <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/caer/ce/pltwild/pdf/takingaction.pdf> or from DNR, Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707-7921; Pub #CE-5000-2001

*The Kid's Guide to Service Projects*, author Barbara A. Lewis Free Spirit Publishing, 400 First Avenue North, Suite 616, Minneapolis, MN 55401-1730, 612-338-2068

*The Kid's Guide to Social Action*, author Barbara A. Lewis Free Spirit Publishing, 400 First Avenue North, Suite 616, Minneapolis, MN 55401-1730, 612-338-2068

*The Water's Edge* available from DNR Pub #FH-428-00 or <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/wm/dsfm/shore/publications.htm>

*Wetland Restoration Handbook for Wisconsin Landowners*, available from the Wisconsin Wetland Association or at <http://www.wiscwetlands.org/>

Wisconsin Native Plant Sources, available at <http://clean-water.uwex.edu/pubs/shore/index.html>

Wetland Restoration Specialists, a partial listing <http://clean-water.uwex.edu/foxwolf/resources/NATIVES.htm>

## Resource List for Environmental Action Guide

**All of these materials are available for review at UWEX Jefferson County, 864 Collins Road, Jefferson. Please arrange an appointment so materials can be available by calling 920-674-7295.**

A Fresh Look at Shoreland Restoration, Protecting and Restoring Shorelands, and Protecting Our Living Shores (fact sheets) are available from county UWEX offices; Pub #GWQ027 or <http://clean-water.uwex.edu/pubs/shore/index.html>

Adopt-A-Lake Activity Manual available by calling UW-Stevens Point 715-346-3366 or at <http://www.uwsp.edu/cnr/uwexplakes/adopt-a-lake/>

Aquatic Invasives Information available from UWEX - Mandy Beall, Aquatic Invasives Education Specialist, 204 Hiram Smith Hall, 1545 Observatory Drive, Madison, WI 53706-1289, 608-261-1092 or [mandy.beall@dnr.state.wi.us](mailto:mandy.beall@dnr.state.wi.us)

Give Water a Hand Action Guide is available on the web at <http://www.uwex.edu/erc/gwah/>

Give Water a Hand Leader Guidebook is available on the web at <http://www.uwex.edu/erc/gwah/>

Green Works!, 5-page photocopied examples of projects are available by calling Jefferson County UWEX; at 920-674-7295

Ground Water Guardian information is available at: [www.uwsp.edu/cnr/gwguardian](http://www.uwsp.edu/cnr/gwguardian)

Home \*A\* Syst: An environmental risk-assessment guide for the home is available at <http://www.nraes.org/publications/nraes87.html> or email [nraes@cornell.edu](mailto:nraes@cornell.edu)

Make Waves for Action: Water Action Volunteers Fact Sheets is available at <http://clean-water.uwex.edu/wav/index.html> by from the Department of Natural Resources Publications, 2421 Darwin Road, Madison, WI 53704, ask for publication #PUBN-WT-388-98

Natural Shorelines Websites to help you protect and restore your natural shoreline <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/shoreland> or [www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/fhp/waterfront.htm](http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/fhp/waterfront.htm)

Plant Identification Photos are available at <http://www.botany.wisc.edu/herbarium/>

## Introduction

The Rock River Coalition recommends the following ten environmental actions to you, your family, friends, neighbors and other community citizens. They are actions which will improve the environmental resources of the Rock River Basin.

What is the "Basin?" If you live, work, or enjoy the outdoors in a ten county area north to the Horicon Marsh, east to the Oconomowoc Lakes, west to the Madison area lakes, and south to Beloit, you are in the "basin!"

In addition to a listing of ten environmental actions, this guide also provides you with a detailed description of why this action helps, what you can do, how to get started, and resources to help you.

The Rock River Coalition provides resources in the form of: literature, like this guide and equipment for activities like storm drain stenciling and water quality monitoring. The Coalition provides professional expertise from volunteer Board members and staff from the University of Wisconsin-Extension and from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

As with any other activity, always remember: safety first. Doing Environmental Action Projects is work, but it is also very rewarding. Thank you for making a difference. Have fun!

Suzanne Wade, UW-Extension Rock River Basin Educator  
Ellen Rulseh, Rock River Coalition Community Outreach &  
Citizen Monitoring Coordinator

# The Rock River Coalition Environmental Action Resource Guide

## *TOP TEN ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIONS TO IMPROVE THE ROCK RIVER BASIN*

- 1 Storm Drain Stenciling
- 2 River/Lake Clean-ups
- 3 Monitoring Streams, Lakes, Butterflies or Frogs
- 4 Prairie Restoration
- 5 Shoreline Restoration
- 6 Controlling Purple Loosestrife and Garlic Mustard
- 7 Rain Garden Development
- 8 Reduce, Reuse, Recycle
- 9 Lake or River Festivals
- 10 Groundwater Guardians

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Resource Pages  
Your Action Plan Chart

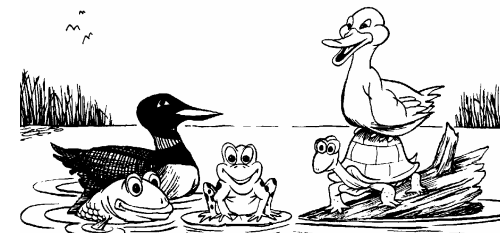
This guide provides an overview of each of these 10 actions. Once a project is selected, additional detailed information should be obtained from your school, community, library or other resource. We've helped you with this search by providing sources within the project description and at the end of this guide.

Call 920-674-7443 or email [river@excel.net](mailto:river@excel.net) for assistance from the Rock River Coalition.

***This booklet was produced by the Rock River Coalition (RRC) to encourage and support groups working on these and other action projects.***

## Action Checklist:

1)	Develop a committee or core advisory team consisting of at least one representative from local citizenry, education, business or agriculture, and government.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2)	Contact your county Health, Land Conservation or UW-Extension office to find out more about potential groundwater concerns in your area.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3)	Decide on your goals.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4)	Brainstorm possible actions your group could do. Choose one or more actions	<input type="checkbox"/>
5)	Develop your plan on how to accomplish your action. This will be different depending on what you choose. Contact your county Health, Land Conservation or UW-Extension offices to find out more about potential groundwater concerns in your area.	<input type="checkbox"/>
6)	Work with community leaders to develop a proposed action plan (ROA Plan) for groundwater awareness and/or protection.	<input type="checkbox"/>
7)	Prepare and submit an annual entry form and an ROA Plan. These can be gotten on the web at: <a href="http://www.uwsp.edu/cnr/gwguardian/gg/index.htm">http://www.uwsp.edu/cnr/gwguardian/gg/index.htm</a>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8)	Seek funding and implement your plan.	<input type="checkbox"/>
9)	Prepare and submit an annual report of accomplishments.	<input type="checkbox"/>
10)	Celebrate your success!	<input type="checkbox"/>



# Environmental Action #10

## Groundwater Guardians

The Groundwater Guardian program promotes stewardship and sound management of the groundwater resource. It's a national program with specific requirements listed below. Wisconsin has several local groups working to educate and improve groundwater near their homes.



### How Action Helps:

Our health and our animals' health as well as the health of our lakes, rivers and wetlands depend on a clean and abundant groundwater resources. Unfortunately, we don't always understand how we can protect this important resource. The Groundwater Guardian program helps people look at, understand and do something to help.

### What You Do:

Your group develops at least one planned groundwater protection activity a year. You then submit an application with an action plan to become a Groundwater Guardian (GG) Community Team. A GG Community Team consists of volunteers who annually implement activities that will help raise awareness of and/or protect their local groundwater resource. A "community" is broadly defined as a city, county, watershed, neighborhood, etc. The action plan includes a minimum of one Results Oriented Activity (ROA) per year. An ROA is an activity implemented by the GG community that helps conserve and protect the local groundwater resource. ROAs can fall under a variety of categories such as: education and awareness, public policy, pollution prevention, conservation, and best management practices.

## Project Plan: First Steps

**This is your project:** You may want to start by asking some of these questions in order to pick out the best project for your group

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Maybe</i>
1) Is the project something everyone in the group wants to do?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2) Do you have the resources such as time, money and help, to get the project done?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3) Does your project help solve an important problem in your community or does your project enrich your community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4) If money is needed, do you know where you can go for help?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5) Are other people, specialists or consultants available to help you with the project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6) If the action calls for a long-term obligation, is your group willing and able to make the commitment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Action Plan: List here ways you can turn a 'no' or 'maybe' into a YES!**

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# Environmental Action #1

## Storm Drain Stenciling

Stenciling storm drains or attaching messages to storm drains is one of the most popular activities for Rock River Basin groups.

### How Action Helps:

The storm drains in streets or parking lots are how the city prevents flooding by moving rainwater and snow melt directly to your local river or lake. Most people think that these drains are connected to a wastewater treatment plant...BUT THEY ARE NOT!

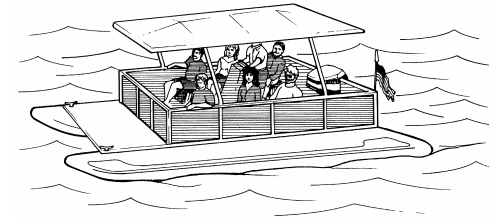
That's where the problem lies. Dirty water from washing cars or emptying a swimming pool runs down into these drains. Some people pour oil, paint, fertilizer and other toxic chemicals down these drains thinking the city will take care of it. Instead, all this 'yuck' goes right into our lakes, streams or rivers. Your stenciled message will help people recognize this.

### What You Do:

A stencil is a large piece of plastic with the words: "Dump no Waste – Drains to River" (or Lake or Stream) and a picture of a fish cut out of the plastic.

You use spray paint or dab paint on the letter and picture openings to leave a message on the storm drain.

You may prefer to use small signs or markers that are glued on or near the drain. These typically last longer and look nicer but are more expensive. While some of you are painting the message others can go place a special UW-Extension door hangers explaining the project on neighborhood front doors.



### Action Checklist:

1)	Identify the purpose for the event. What do you hope to accomplish? The event you develop will be very different if you want people to learn how to do something versus wanting them to be aware of a special resource.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2)	Find out if other local groups are planning an event that you could tie in with.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3)	Talk to people in the community to see if they would be interested in attending or helping with the event.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4)	Brainstorm possible types of events.	<input type="checkbox"/>
5)	Plan date, time and location and what to do if weather is bad.	<input type="checkbox"/>
6)	Decide on activities (children and adult), food, displays, entertainment, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>
7)	Organize a small committee for each activity – they figure out equipment needs, budget, volunteers, site needs, funding sources.	<input type="checkbox"/>
8)	Consider whether there are safety issues, get insurance if needed.	<input type="checkbox"/>
9)	Publicize event.	<input type="checkbox"/>
10)	Hold event.	<input type="checkbox"/>
11)	Clean-up.	<input type="checkbox"/>
12)	Send out thank you's and evaluate the event.	<input type="checkbox"/>
13)	Celebrate your success!	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Environmental Action #9

### River or Lake Events

Having fun while learning is one sure way to make a deeper and lasting connection with the earth.

### How Action Helps:

The best way for this earth connection to happen is for people to frequently interact (or play) in the natural world. However, many people need someone else to organize such activities for them. A one day event has its place in helping people understand better their relationship to their local river or lakes.

### What You Do:

Develop a concept for an event; identify volunteers, location, and date. Work with a committee to develop the details.

### Successful Events

Some projects that have been done with success include fairs, where you have fun and it's educational. You can have kid and family activities, panels on local issues, lake or river monitoring, bike rides with educational stops, canoe trips, pontoon boat rides, environmental scavenger hunts and bus tours.

Events are time consuming and take careful thought to be successful. It's helpful if there is an obvious need or a carefully targeted audience and lots of publicity. Things to consider include planning for the weather with a rain date or indoor options and planning for safety.



### Action Checklist:

1. First get permission from the Department of Public Works in your city, village or town if you want to stencil on public land. Landowner permission is needed on private property.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Get detailed directions on stenciling from Wisconsin Water Action Volunteers (WAV) <a href="http://clean-water.uwex.edu/wav">http://clean-water.uwex.edu/wav</a> .	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Equipment: See chart below for sources.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Purchase paint or the storm drain markers. Get door hangers.	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Send out publicity before and after the event.	<input type="checkbox"/>



### County Contacts for Storm Drain Stenciling Materials in the Rock River Basin

Columbia: Susan MacLeisch UWEX 608-742-9685

Dane: Mindy Habecker, UWEX 608-224-3718

Dodge: Suzanne Wade, UWEX Rock River 920-674-8972

Fond du Lac: Paul Tollard, Land Conservation 920-923-3033

Jefferson: Suzanne Wade, UWEX 920-674-7295

Rock: Norm Tadt Land Conservation 608-754-6617 ext 117

Walworth: Joeann Douglas, Resource Management Division  
262-741-3450

Washington: Riveredge Nature Center 262-675-6888

Waukesha: Jayne Jenks, Land Conservation 262-896-8305

## Environmental Action #2

### River or Lake (or park or school) Clean-Up

#### How Action Helps:

People care more about something when it looks appealing. Therefore, your work to clean up a public area can be rewarded both by the immediate improvement of an area and by longer term care and support for the area.

Frequently junk, which is carelessly tossed out, can end up killing wildlife. Crayfish have been known to climb into a soda can when small and after molting and getting bigger become trapped and can't get out!

#### What You Do:

All trash is removed from the designated area, the amount and type recorded and the final result publicized. Volunteers work in teams, each team with a designated leader. Volunteers should wear heavy gloves, thick pants, and sturdy shoes. Safety glasses may be needed if working in thick brush or when removing woody debris.



### Action Checklist:

1)	The list of possible activities can go on and on. The RRC Outreach Coordinator can help you brainstorm possible actions and help you design a plan to accomplish the project.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2)	In Jefferson and Waukesha counties a special waste reduction project is working to reduce waste at festivals and help high school students develop waste reduction projects.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3)	An annual Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel April supplement called 'The Green Pages' has many suggestions of actions and locations of earth friendly companies.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4)	Celebrate your success!	<input type="checkbox"/>

Southwest Wisconsin Waste Reduction Coalition has lots of suggestions. Below are just a few. They can be contacted at: 1-866-91-SMART; web site: [www.besmart.org](http://www.besmart.org)

#### Be Smart - Save Money and Reduce Trash

**Glass bottles and jars:** Can be made into new bottles and jars. The mixed colors can become sand for sandblasting, road base or pavement additives.

**Steel and aluminum cans:** Can be used to make new cans for beverages and food. Almost every steel or aluminum product we use today is made from recycled material.

**Plastic No. 1, soda and water bottles:** Can be spun into a fiber for carpeting and fleece clothing.

**Plastic No. 2, milk jugs:** Can be used to produce non-food plastic bottles or plastic lumber for picnic tables, piers and walkways, playground equipment or parking bumpers.

**Paper and cardboard:** Can become new paper and cardboard items, paper towels and napkins, facial and toilet tissue, animal bedding, insulation or packing material.

## Environmental Action #8

### Reduce, Reuse and Recycle

*Recycle-Reuse-Reduce-and Refuse are all ways you can reduce the solid waste problem in Wisconsin. Projects can involve glass, cans, plastic, paper and even batteries!*



Used with permission © 2002 Milwaukee Journal Sentinel.

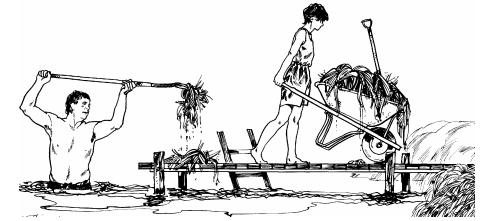
### How Action Helps:

Americans continue to use more of the Earth's resources than any other country in the world. More and more of what we purchase is thrown away after just one use. That means our landfills take up more and more land each year. Landfills can cause drinking water contamination when poisonous materials wash out of the waste and into our groundwater.

### What You Do:

There are many actions you can take to reduce the waste coming from your home, school or business. Below are just a few examples of what could be done.

- You can figure out a way to increase recycling of paper, plastic or aluminum around your school, neighborhood center or home.
- You can setup collection sites to recycle special materials such as mercury thermometers or batteries, many of which are potentially toxic and important to keep out of landfills.
- How about hosting an arts and craft fair that only uses items that would normally be tossed out?
- Reduce your energy impact by hosting a 'ride your bike to school' (or work) day.
- As a group, develop a list of products you will refuse to buy because of excess packaging or the products disposable nature. Let the company know you are doing this and ask why they couldn't change.



### Action Checklist:

1) Get a complete set of instructions from the state Water Action Volunteer program. <a href="http://clean-water.uwex.edu/wav">http://clean-water.uwex.edu/wav</a>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2) Check to see if anyone else is already planning a project that you could join.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3) Work with your local schools or the park and highway departments to get permission for the clean up. In some cities, the local employee union must approve you doing any work that normally would be done by a paid employee.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4) Do a preliminary stream walk of potential areas using the WAV worksheet. Identify potential hazards.	<input type="checkbox"/>
5) Choose your clean-up stretch; keeping in mind the age and abilities of your group.	<input type="checkbox"/>
6) Make arrangements for garbage removal, first aid, and media coverage.	<input type="checkbox"/>
7) Have liability release forms for all participants.	<input type="checkbox"/>
8) Have a registration area with refreshments and displays.	<input type="checkbox"/>
9) Plan volunteer thank you.	<input type="checkbox"/>
10) Get garbage bags and gloves for volunteers.	<input type="checkbox"/>
11) Pick a date for the clean-up and advertise it.	<input type="checkbox"/>
12) Measure how much junk you picked up.	<input type="checkbox"/>
13) Celebrate your success!	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Environmental Action #3

### Citizen Ecological Monitoring

#### How Action Helps:

Monitoring provides critical information about a specific stretch of river, a lake, or the health of a habitat or a target species.

Sometimes it's the first time that information has been collected about a river, stream or lake. Lake and Stream Monitoring is a particularly good project for a group that is willing to go through training and make a long-term commitment since Wisconsin has programs and staff hired to coordinate these programs.

Many other programs also exist that groups can get involved with including ones on: exotic plants or animals, frogs and toads, milkweed (an indicator of air quality), Monarch butterflies, birds, and butterflies. A complete list of programs can be found at:

<http://basineducation.uwex.edu/rockriver/links2> under monitoring links. The most common monitoring projects are including in the DNR publication '*Taking Action!*' <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/caer/ce/pltwild/pdf/takingaction.pdf>

#### What You Do:

**Stream Monitoring:** Trained monitors take water quality readings from April – November. Each month they measure the oxygen in the water, temperature, clarity and flow at the same spot. Once a year they do a habitat survey and twice a year they collect stream critters (insects, clams, crayfish, worms, etc.) to determine water quality based on an animal's habitat needs.

**Lake Monitors:** There are several programs a lake monitor can sign up for. One program is taking monthly Secchi disk readings that measure clarity, another involves taking water chemistry measurements or samples and, in a third program, volunteers collect biological information about aquatic plants and animals, especially exotics such as Zebra Mussel and Eurasian Water Milfoil. Monitors even keep track of "ice in/ice out" dates.

**Other Monitoring Programs:** Typically these programs focus on a specific species and are held during a critical time of the year for that species. Everyone normally monitors on a specific day or during an identified week or month of the year. Monitoring frog songs in the spring or counting butterflies during June are some examples.

### Action Checklist:

1)	Rain Gardens are an easy way to make a positive environmental impact. First print the UW-Extension publications: Rain Gardens: A household way to improve water quality in your community (GWQ 034) or Rain Gardens: A how-to manual for homeowners from the website: <a href="http://clean-water.uwex.edu/pubs">http://clean-water.uwex.edu/pubs</a> . Many other guides are also available.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2)	Locate an area of lawn where your downspouts can be directed towards.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3)	Develop your design. You may wish to work with a consultant to get the right mix of plants for your location. UW-Extension has a list of plant sources and a website with sources and consultants. Since a Rain Garden is not a prairie usually beautiful native flowers and not grasses are planted. Enjoy!	<input type="checkbox"/>
4)	Use a hose, or string to mark the boundaries of the rain garden. Then dig out the depression, 3-4 inches deep, with a level bottom. It should be slightly downhill from the house. (The consultant can help you size it properly.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
5)	Once planted, the garden needs little maintenance and little or no fertilizer.	<input type="checkbox"/>
6)	The old flower stalks should be cut or mowed off each spring. (The seeds can feed the birds through the winter and the pods can add winter interest.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
7)	Celebrate your success!	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Environmental Action #7

### Rain Gardens

This is a great project for those with a green thumb who want to do a small-scale project. A Rain Garden is a shallow depression in a yard that's planted with native wetland or wet prairie wildflowers and grasses that catches the runoff from the roof.

#### How Action Helps:

Whenever a home, a road or parking lot is built water that used to soak into the ground runs off into a ditch or a storm drain. A Rain Garden intercepts this water allowing it to soak in. Rain gardens conserve water and protect downstream lakes or rivers. They also provide a sanctuary for many birds, butterflies and dragonflies. The native plants are hardy and require little maintenance, once established.

#### What You Do:

A Rain Garden is an low area where rain water from a roof flows into and gradually drains. Therefore, you need to locate a suitable area, design and dig out some of the soil and plant with native flowers and grasses. During the first year your rain garden may even need to be watered and of course weeds pulled.



*A flourishing rain garden*



*A new rain garden already working to absorb rainwater from the home's downspouts*

### *Citizen Monitoring Continued:*

#### How to Get Started:

**Stream Monitoring:** The Rock River Coalition has a basin-wide stream monitoring program already established. Monitors are expected to attend an annual training session. Each county has a Local Coordinator who develops training workshops and works with monitors helping them identify appropriate monitoring locations and even joining them during their first time monitoring experience. They also enter the volunteer's data into the state database. An annual 'Confluence' for monitors is held each year as well.

The Coalition works to find funding for equipment and the Local Coordinator's salary. Since, the cost to support each team is roughly \$900 any help in finding sponsors is always appreciated.

A brochure about the program can be found at <http://basineducation.uwex.edu/rockriver>.

People should take on the monitoring role only if they are willing to make a long-term commitment. If you are interested in using monitoring as an educational tool see the discussion under Environmental Action #9: River or Lake Events.

**Lake Monitoring:** Contact the DNR Self-Help Lake Coordinator at 608/266-8117 or check the website at <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/fhp/lakes/shlmmain.htm> to see if there is already a Self-Help Lake Monitor at your lake. The Coordinator can help you decide on the best parameters to monitor, and help you become trained. The DNR provides all equipment for this program.

**Other Monitoring Programs:** The RRC Outreach Coordinator can help you decide whether other monitoring programs are right for you and can provide contact information. There are more than 40 different monitoring programs in the US including such programs as:

- Nesting Bird Survey
- WI Frog and Toad Survey
- Riverwatch Health Survey
- The Globe Program
- WI Wetland Watch

## Environmental Action #4

### Prairie Restoration

At one time buffalo wandered through southern Wisconsin with native grasses and flowers tickling their bellies. Places with these native plants are now rare jewels on the landscape.

#### How Action Helps:

While preserving our native prairie remnants is critical, bringing back these plants and animals native to Wisconsin is helpful too. We'll never be able to restore enough prairie to bring back free roaming buffalo but perhaps we can make a new home for a rare butterfly, a brilliant tiger beetle or a grasshopper sparrow.



#### What You Do:

Typically, you first look for a sunny location, design and measure your prairie shape, and have the soil analyzed to determine the type of prairie to restore. Then you develop a plant list and either order seeds or plants or collect and process the seeds. The ground is then prepared by plowing, mulching or with herbicides. The seeds or plants are planted. The prairie will take annual maintenance to remove invasive plants and remove brushy plants (either by mowing or fire).

**Getting Help:** The UW-Arboretum has the oldest restored prairie in the nation – it's a good place to see what a restored prairie can look like. The Arboretum and many nature centers have workshops on restoring prairies. The Arboretum also has special training for teachers incorporating curriculum suggestions with restoration techniques. The Madison Audubon Society, the Wild Ones and others have prairie seed collecting days; often they share the seeds with the volunteers. The Arboretum and the Aldo Leopold Nature Center hold 'burn workshops' annually. Special help may also be available from the DNR or US Fish and Wildlife Service Wildlife Biologists.

Prairie Enthusiasts: [www.prairie.pressenter.com/](http://www.prairie.pressenter.com/)

Wild Ones: <http://www.for-wild.org/chapters/madison/>

Madison Audubon: <http://www.madisonaudubon.org/>

Wisconsin Wetland Association: <http://www.wiscwetlands.org/>

UW-Arboretum: <http://wiscinfo.doit.wisc.edu/arboretum/>

#### Action Checklist:

1)	Find out if Purple Loosestrife or garlic mustard is a problem in your area. (Wisconsin Wetlands has a new survey you can participate in to find out.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
2)	Get pamphlets/wild cards to learn more about these pests.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3)	Get garbage bags and gloves for volunteers.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4)	Garlic Mustard: This is best controlled in the spring when it's easy to identify.	<input type="checkbox"/>
5)	Garlic Mustard: Organize pulling parties. Decide on place, time and date.	<input type="checkbox"/>
6)	Publicize the event to members or the public.	<input type="checkbox"/>
7)	Be sure to bag and destroy all plants.	<input type="checkbox"/>
8)	Purple Loosestrife: Since control is more difficult. Contact the DNR or the Wisconsin Wetland Association for specifics on how to control. Two main ways –1) cut and remove then use pesticide on cut stems or 2) Raise and release Galerucella beetles	<input type="checkbox"/>
9)	Celebrate your success!	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### Action



## Environmental Action #6

### Control Purple Loosestrife and Garlic Mustard

Purple Loosestrife is a beautiful but aggressive perennial plant that likes moist to wet soil. Garlic Mustard is an invasive biennial (takes two years to flower) that is smothering native woodland plants.

#### How Action Helps:

Wetlands are one of our most biologically rich habitats in Wisconsin. Countless plants, insects, amphibians, birds and mammals are dependent on them. Purple loosestrife can take over wetlands forcing out the native plants. That colorful expanse of purple flowers is a poor home for animals or birds. Few animals will eat it or nest in it. In many ways the invaded wetland is a desert to native animals.

Garlic Mustard has the same effect in woods. It takes over, and soon Spring Beauties, Trilliums, Trout Lilies and other wildflowers are gone.

#### What You Do:

Purple loosestrife is very difficult to control. Many people have luck with small infestations with pulling, cutting or digging plants in June, July or August before seeds are set. If not completely removed, the plant will regrow. An application of herbicide can prevent this but a permit is required.

Large or high-density stands are best controlled by using beetles that eat only purple loosestrife.

For more information see:

<http://clean-water.uwex.edu/lakeshore/dcist/invaders>

#### Using Beetles to Control Purple Loosestrife

If you identify a very large patch, contact the state Purple Loosestrife Control Program Coordinator at 608/221-6349 (or email [woods@dnr.state.wi.us](mailto:woods@dnr.state.wi.us)). This program uses Galerucella beetles that like to munch on loosestrife to control it. Rearing your own beetles is easy but needs a permit and a \$30 application fee plus some easy to find equipment. Total cost is around \$75. A new book can help you plan a project using these beetles "*See Cella Chow! A Purple Loosestrife Biological Control Manual for Teachers*"; available at <http://www.wiscwetlands.org/>.

### Action Checklist

1)	Do some homework. There are many books and many experts who can help you decide whether a prairie is the right project for you and your site.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2)	Contact the Maintenance Department. If the prairie is being planted on public land or a commercial/industrial site, the most important people to be involved in the planning are the maintenance staff.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3)	Find the right location, determine if the soils are wet, dry or in between.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4)	Determine plant list: many consultants and organizations are available to help – see box.	<input type="checkbox"/>
5)	Develop a planting and maintenance plan.	<input type="checkbox"/>
6)	Raise money for seeds and plants and other necessary costs.	<input type="checkbox"/>
7)	Collect seeds from existing prairies.	<input type="checkbox"/>
8)	Hold a seed cleaning party.	<input type="checkbox"/>
9)	Prepare site for planting.	<input type="checkbox"/>
10)	Plant seeds and/or plants.	<input type="checkbox"/>
11)	Water and weed until established.	<input type="checkbox"/>
12)	Host a media day or workshop for others	<input type="checkbox"/>
13)	Celebrate your success!	<input type="checkbox"/>



## Environmental Action #5

### Shoreline Restoration

A shoreline restoration uses native plants to reduce erosion and increase native habitat in a 10 – 30 foot ribbon along a waterway.

#### How Action Helps:

A native shoreline has a number of beneficial effects. Tall plants hold rainfall allowing it to soak into the ground so less soil and chemicals run into the lake or river. Their roots anchor the soil helping prevent erosion. Many animals including frogs, dragonflies and redwing blackbirds depend on a rich network of plants adjacent to and in the water during part of their life. Many more fish species and numbers of fish can be found in regions of a lake that has native vegetation both on the shoreline and in the near shore areas.

#### What You Do:

An area, from the high-water mark back 10 or more feet, is planted with native vegetation, primarily grasses and flowers. The area must be weeded and watered during the first year or so. Depending on the plants, annual maintenance to control non-native and woody plants will be required. Educational signs can be installed to explain the project and encourage others to restore their shoreline as well.

#### Getting Help:

Once you have their support planning can begin. Just like restoring a prairie, the most important step is doing your homework. The Outreach Coordinator can help you find a consultant for the project. The DNR has had funds in the past to help pay for designs in the Rock River Basin-but most likely you will need to pay the consultant or convince them to donate their time. Having a design done professionally is important for most shoreline planting. The forces that wind and waves exert can destroy hard work if not properly designed.

### Action Checklist:

1)	First investigate what it takes to restore a shoreline. The Wisconsin Association of Lakes and many other organizations have websites that help people understand how to do a good shoreline restoration. The University of Wisconsin-Extension office also has publications.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2)	Locate a stretch of river or lake frontage that is currently mowed but could be planted with native plants.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3)	Enlist the owner's support. If the land is publicly owned talk with the Parks Director or the person who oversees the land.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4)	Locate a consultant or another person with expertise to design the restoration.	<input type="checkbox"/>
5)	Brainstorm ideas for how you would like the restoration to look.	<input type="checkbox"/>
6)	Figure out budget and ways to get funds or inkind donations.	<input type="checkbox"/>
7)	Have site prepared.	<input type="checkbox"/>
8)	Organize a planting day.	<input type="checkbox"/>
9)	Develop a maintenance plan, be sure young plants are watered and weeded.	<input type="checkbox"/>
10)	Develop an educational plan – tours, signs, brochures, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>
11)	Celebrate your restoration!	<input type="checkbox"/>

