

Friends of the Lower Wisconsin Riverway

2018 Annual Summary



Friends of the Lower Wisconsin Riverway (FLOW) is a non-profit member organization that works to protect and preserve the wilderness-type experience of the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway.

Our Strategic Plan includes three primary goals:

- 1) Information and education
- 2) Advocacy
- 3) A well informed membership

Riverway Champions 2018

Each year, Flow identifies a “Riverway Champion.” This individual has demonstrated outstanding commitment to the protection and preservation of the Lower Wisconsin River. For 2018, we honor Ron Grasshoff, past FLOW board member and current activist of GreenFire.

New this year is the Youth Riverway Champion Award granted to a younger champion for the river who has been supportive of the FLOW effort. This honor is bestowed upon Lola Abu for her work!

Congratulations to both Ron and Lola!

Information and Education

The Second Riverway Symposium



In October of 2018, FLOW brought together a host of scientists, historians, land owners, managers, students,

advocates and general river lovers at its second symposium on the Lower Wisconsin Riverway. As in 2017, it was funded by a DNR River Planning grant and local sponsors, and included a day of presentations and discussion, followed by another day of field trips. We met at the Vintage Brewery in Sauk City which afforded a sweet view of the river.

Topics focused on natural history, ecology, geology, restoration on private lands, wild foods, night skies, and a special session “Thinking and Acting Beyond the LWR Borders” on management of watersheds that drain into the LWR. The evening banquet featured an engaging portrayal of renowned author and riverway icon August Derleth, by David Schweitzer.

Saturday field trips began with a demonstration by current and retired DNR fish biologists who electroshocked native fish from the river below the dam and displayed them to the public before being released frightened but unharmed. High water precluded

a paddling trip, but many attendees joined one of the two bus trips: one, covering ecology,



land management and water quality issues, geology and archeology; and the other focusing on water and soil conservation along the river and the nearby Iowa County Upland Watershed Project.

Total Symposium registration was 141, including 20

students, and evaluations indicated that over 95% of attendees were satisfied with the event and considered it affordable. Thanks to all the presenters, organizers, supporters, and Vintage staff who made it possible.

Our plan for 2019 is to alter the format away from an indoor symposium to focus more on outside activities that will include hands-on learning, lectures by local experts on field trips along the riverway.

If you have field trip suggestions, comments on the symposium, or any feedback on FLOW’s outreach, please let us know. And look for our announcements on the FLOW website.

River Teaching and Safety



When available, FLOW volunteers assist groups who want to learn about the river and help groups with boater safety. This year

some groups served were Save the Boundary Waters, Agriculture in the Driftless, Prairie Music and Arts, Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation, and the Lower Wisconsin River Canoe Race.

FLOW also participated in or hosted events to share information about the river including Canoecopia, the FLOW Annual Meeting and a Water Safety Class. FLOW members also modeled safe recreation through sponsored events such as Rhythm on the River and Fire on the River.

FLOW Stewardship Workdays

FLOW takes an active role in helping protect and improve the lower Wisconsin river by coordinating various workdays. Sandbar cleanups,



prairie restorations, native American effigy mounds maintenance and more to improve your experience on the river. Examples are work accomplished at the Twin Lizard Mound and Blue River Sand Barrens. Check our website - <https://www.wisconsinriverfriends.org/> - for work day announcements.

Advocacy

“Kids Don’t Float”



The Kids Don’t Float Life Jacket Loaner program maintained by the Friends of the Lower Wisconsin River (FLOW) is a cooperative effort between the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) and various local partners. The purpose of the program is to supply life jacket loaner stations at 11 of the boat landings on the Lower Wisconsin River. The stations provide an opportunity for boaters of all ages and sizes who find they do not have enough life jackets or Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs) to borrow one. These PFDs are also used in working with youth groups and community members.

While we cannot take full credit, no one drowned during 2018 on the Lower Wisconsin River! And, to our knowledge, no one has ever drowned on the Lower Wisconsin River while wearing a Coast Guard

approved, appropriately fitted PFD in good condition.

We ask for your support in keeping each kiosk stocked with approved PFDs. We also provide mileage reimbursements for volunteers to re-distribute PFDs to landings where they are needed, usually up river after busy summer weekends. Thank you in advance and Buckle Up!

Science Committee

Re-Establishment of the State-Endangered Starhead Topminnow in the Wisconsin River Above the Prairie du Sac Dam

The starhead topminnow (*Fundulus dispar*) is a small fish native to the central United States. It reaches the northern edge of its range in southern Wisconsin, where it is a species of the backwaters, sloughs, floodplain lakes, and slow-moving areas of medium to large warmwater rivers. Starhead topminnows are thought to have once occupied the Mississippi River and its larger tributaries as far north as the Black River, the Wisconsin River possibly as far upstream as Necedah, the Sugar and Rock rivers and their larger tributaries, and the Fox River (Illinois River drainage) and its larger tributaries. Currently, starhead topminnows are known from only five areas, the lower Black River in Jackson County, the Mukwonago and adjacent Fox rivers in Waukesha County, Camp Lake in Kenosha County (Fox River drainage), the Sugar River in Rock County, and the Lower Wisconsin River in Sauk, Richland, Crawford, Grant, Iowa, and Dane counties. Because of its scarcity, the species is listed as endangered by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

In recent years, these populations have come under threat from two fronts. First, agricultural runoff from fertilizer use in adjacent farm fields and second, the non-native western mosquitofish (*Gambusia affinis*), a starhead topminnow competitor, has

become established in the Mississippi River in Pool 11 downstream of the Lower Wisconsin River.

With permitted approval from DNR, a FLOW-supported effort to rear starhead topminnows in a pond on private land and re-introduce them into the Wisconsin River above the Prairie du Sac dam is underway. More to follow!

Informed Membership

Throughout much of the 2018 paddling season, high water levels with minimal sandbars available for recreational stops was the norm.

The FLOW Facebook page regularly publishes river condition reports, safety alerts, and links to the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway reports and site - <http://lwr.state.wi.us/> - for current river information. Check us out before venturing out!

Our website offers information on the latest river issues as well!

Financial Report

INCOME/ASSETS	Amount (\$)
Balance from 2017	6,780
Membership dues\contributions	5,858
Income A.E. Foundation grant	5,000
Income DNR Grant	1,094
Income Symposium Registrations	5,000
Income SCCN fiduciary deposit	1,000
2017 Total Income	17,952
EXPENSES	
Charitable contributions	2,000
Dues and subscriptions	366
Bank service charge	43
Postage and delivery	194
Printing and reproduction	427
Professional Fees	2,090
Professional fees (accounting)	40
Utilities	3,065
Liability insurance	325
Office supplies	339
Outside services	457
Materials Purchase	1,030
Facilities rental (symposiums)	3,478
Symposium food	1,935
Gas/travel/meal reimbursement	1,437
Miscellaneous	333
2017 Total Expenses	17,559
Net Income 2018	393
Treasury Balance into 2019	7,173