

Why is the Bad River “Bad?”

By Pam Roberts

Ever wonder why the Bad River is called the Bad? You wouldn't be the only one, for it seems that there are different ideas floating around.

According to “Rivers of the Bad River Reservation” by John J. Teeple, the Chippewa gave the river the name *Mashki Sibing*. This translated to “swamp river,” so called since the river flows through swampy land before emptying into Lake Superior. White settlers mistook the term *Mashki*, meaning “swamp,” with *Matchi* which means “bad.” Thus, the river was named Bad River instead of Swamp River. The French term for the river is *Mauve* which also means “bad.”

Historically, rivers had longer and more descriptive names. But many river names have been shortened because U.S. Department of Transportation signs only allow a maximum of three syllables.

The White River in Ojibwa is *Waabishkaa-ziibi* or *Biitootigweyaa-ziibi*, meaning “river that flows alongside or parallel to another.” The Kakagon River is named *Ogaakaagaang-ziibi*, meaning “full of walleyed pike river.” It is also called *Niinataasowiniing*, which means “my cupboard or place where food was readily available.”

The Bear Trap River is named *Mako-dasoonaagani-ziibi*, meaning “bear's deadfall trap river.”

What do you call the local stream by your home or land? If you have an interesting story or piece of history about the watershed please email Bob Rice at bobrice723@gmail.com. ♦



The beautiful Bad River



Another Way to Support Your Watershed

The health of our watershed comes down to what's in the river. And what's in the river comes down to each of us. BRWA provides a way for local people to get involved in learning about, taking care of, and enjoying their watershed.

This newsletter highlights volunteer activities going on throughout the watershed. Maybe you don't have the time to be able to help in that way. All BRWA Programs need equipment and support to keep them running, and perhaps that's a way you can participate.

You will soon be receiving our annual fundraising appeal. As you know, we do not charge membership dues, and we do not charge for sending out this newsletter.

Please consider supporting BRWA to help us continue connecting people to their watershed. Your donation—whether it's \$10 or \$50—makes a difference in your watershed.

Here are some specific needs we have:

- Box of *Rite in the Rain* field paper: \$30
- E. coli sampling kit: \$40
- Chest waders for volunteer monitoring: \$70
- 300 ft. measuring tape: \$70
- Digital camera: \$100
- Fish tagging equipment for culvert monitoring: \$200
- Water chemistry monitoring kit: \$500
- Sponsor a full issue of the newsletter: \$650

In Memoriam: Karen Danielsen

The Bad River Watershed Association lost a tireless worker recently when Karen Danielsen passed from this life to what is beyond. Karen was a founding board member and a dedicated water quality sampler. Her professional expertise as a forest ecologist helped BRWA establish itself as a credible, volunteer organization. She was a strong voice for BRWA, and attracted many colleagues to the organization.

On Sunday, October 25, 2009, more than 100 of her friends and associates gathered at Cross Woods camp in Drummond to celebrate her life. "The weather was gloomy, but the room was bright with energy," said her husband Dale Thomas. "Later, our son Sean and I, with the help of our extended families, set Karen's spirit free at our sampling site on the White River where she will always help the spring wildflowers grow!"

"Karen recognized the potential of the BRWA in its early days and immediately became involved," said Joan Elias. "She had a wide range of interests, and though she was involved in many things, she had the ability to devote her full attention to whatever was in front of her at the moment. She was able to keep a good perspective on life, she had a great sense of humor, and she laughed a lot. Karen was a good friend whom I'll miss greatly."

"I met Karen for the first time, at the same place that I had seen her at the last... and her energy was always very good," said April Stone Dahl, long-time BRWA volunteer. "The water brought us together and

so she came into my life and into my home and eventually, into my dreams. I was able to honor her with a basket and now she is walking amongst the white pines, pain free and smiling."

In honor of Karen's contributions to our organization, BRWA is creating the Karen Danielsen Outstanding Stewardship Award.

"Karen was involved in BRWA through every opportunity we offer—as a field volunteer, committee member, events planner, board member, and board president," said BRWA Executive Director Michele Wheeler. "She contributed so much to BRWA, and has helped us move forward in so many ways. I think Karen would appreciate honoring others who do the same, as a way of honoring her."

The first Award will be presented at our annual Spring for the Water event this spring. While we all mourn our loss of such a warm and loyal companion, we are grateful for the time we had with her, and for her many gifts to our region and our landscape.

Thank you Karen. ♦



Welcome New BRWA Citizen Involvement Coordinator

By Bill Heart

The Bad River Watershed Association is excited to welcome Valerie Olinik-Damstra as our newest worker. Valerie began working with BRWA as Citizen Involvement Coordinator in October. In her capacity as Coordinator, she is working on the Marengo River Watershed Partnership to involve citizens of the watershed by planning events, organizing



Valerie Olinik-Damstra

field days, and partnering other groups in the watershed on landowner outreach. Valerie comes to the BRWA with outstanding watershed credentials after spending four years as the Watershed Coordinator for the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council in Petoskey in the Lower Peninsula of Michigan. Her duties included managing five Watershed Plans, outreach, writing grants and educating landowners. How does that sound for a good fit with the BRWA? You can tell why we are so excited to have Valerie.

While growing up in Holly, Michigan, Valerie spend a lot of time with her father in the outdoors enjoying fishing and accompanying her father while hunting. This love of the outdoors led her to Lake Superior State University in Sault Ste. Marie and a degree in Fisheries and Wildlife Management.

In our interview, I asked Valerie what she thought about the Marengo River Watershed and how it differs from the Michigan watersheds. "I'm very impressed with the Marengo. The rivers in Michigan have much more home development compared to the Marengo," said Valerie. "I am excited about working with and

getting landowners involved by being aware of how what they do on their land will affect the river."

On a personal note, Valerie, husband Ricky and daughter Violet live in Washburn. She feels that the Chequamegon Bay area is a great fit for her family. "With the wonderful sense of community and all the help from the people we have met in the area, it feels like home to us," she said. ♦

Perspectives on Seven Years of Monitoring

By Kevin Brewster

As the scope and complexity of environmental issues grows in our consciousness, so also does a simple truth: people must work together. No single agency, organization or nation is going to make things right. We are learning rapidly that traditional paradigms of responsibility—relying on distant governments to intervene in our best interest and “us vs. them” thinking—just aren’t going to get the job done. Communities of people, diverse in interests yet aware of being common environmental stakeholders, will.

Such commitment germinates in peoples’ back yards and grows outward, ultimately dissolving the illusion of disconnection between local matters and the larger world. Like the unique watershed it protects, the BRWA encompasses a diverse human landscape that blurs governmental and cultural boundaries—a growing confluence of energy, skills and insights of caring people with a shared concern.

The nuts and bolts of caring about a watershed are long-term water quality monitoring data. Good data is the foundation of important management and resource allocation decisions. How healthy is the watershed? How much, and how rapidly, has it changed over time? What processes are driving change in the present?

The answers to such questions are ultimately rooted in our best possible assessments of the water’s physical and biological state—characteristics such as dissolved oxygen, nitrates, pH, coliform bacteria, sediment, and many other factors. These parameters indicate the health of the watershed and also are accurately measurable with simple and reliable testing methods.

As a newcomer to the BRWA, I am truly impressed at where this “start in your back yard” ethic has gotten in such a short time—a real testament to what is possible when local people get involved and apply their skills and energy to a shared community vision. This effort proves to me that pressing challenges don’t have to be faced with determination alone...they can also be faced with optimism. ◆

Kevin Brewster is an environmental consultant, and the supervisor for the Wastewater Treatment Plant in Eagle River, WI. Kevin also is a founder of the Tierra Hermosa Rescue Center in Costa Rica. He frequents the Bad River watershed on route to see his son in Washburn, and is one of BRWA’s newest members.

BRWA Baseline Monitoring Reports

The BRWA set out to determine the condition of the watershed with the inception of its water quality monitoring program in 2002. The program has two foundation goals: Determine baseline conditions in the watershed based on at least four years of water quality data, and involve residents of the watershed in the data gathering effort. Now entering its eighth year, the monitoring program has certainly achieved its two goals.

Currently, BRWA is working to develop Baseline Monitoring Reports. In these reports, data will be summarized to create a sharper image of present conditions and provide a solid comparative benchmark for the future.

These reports will help local citizens and governments better understand the quality of water in their rivers. The first of these reports will be completed this winter. Look for an update in the next issue of *Watershed Waves*. ◆

WHAT WE MONITOR:

- **Dissolved oxygen:** the amount of oxygen available for fish, other oxygen-requiring aquatic life and certain chemical processes.
- **Turbidity:** a measurement of suspended matter (such as silt or organic material).
- **pH:** a measurement of water’s acidity.
- **Nitrate and Phosphate:** also known as nutrients, can indicate agricultural or other wastewater contamination.
- **E. coli:** bacteria that can make people sick that come from agricultural or wastewater contamination.
- **Habitat Features:** stream flow rate, water color, water odor, etc.
- **Weather Data** during the previous 48 hours.



Month after month, year after year, BRWA’s crew of dedicated volunteers hits the streams and rivers of the watershed to observe and measure various components of water quality.

Working Together in the Marengo River Watershed Partnership

The BRWA staff has been busy the last few months with getting the Marengo River Watershed Partnership (MRWP) project off the ground. The MRWP is a group of citizens, local government representatives, and agencies that are working together to identify watershed issues, develop solutions, and turn these into the “actions” of the Marengo River Watershed Action Plan. Here’s a bit about what we’ve been doing so far and what activities you can be involved in over the next couple of months.

The Marengo River Watershed — What Do You Want it to Look Like?

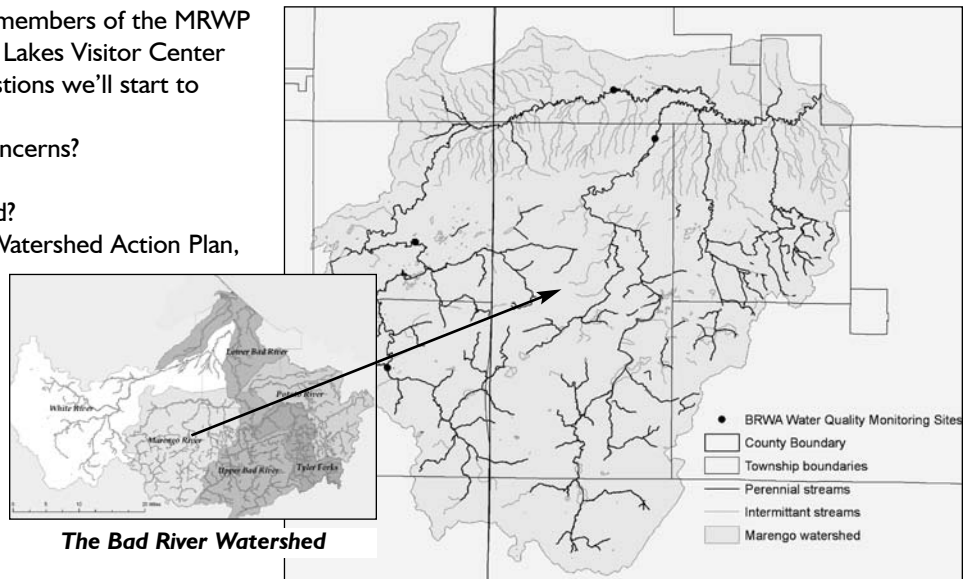
On December 16, from 4:00–6:00 pm, members of the MRWP are coming together at the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center to start answering this question. Other questions we’ll start to answer include:

- What are the watershed issues and concerns?
- What are some possible solutions?
- How do we get more citizens involved?

Ideas generated will be included in the Watershed Action Plan, which is the road map that will guide the work of the MRWP into the future.

Come to the meeting December 16 to share your vision for the Marengo River Watershed and suggest project ideas. Additional meetings will be held in the spring and summer of 2010.

If you would like to participate or find out more, please contact Valerie Olinik-Damstra at 715-292-6142. ♦



The Bad River Watershed

The Marengo River Sub-Watershed

Over 76% of the Marengo River Watershed is forested land. Practicing sustainable land use practices on private and public woodlands can ensure watershed health by stabilizing stream banks and reducing sediment inputs to the river. Attend one of these events to learn about how to best manage your land and water now and for future generations.

“Learn About Your Land” Series

The “Learn About Your Land” educational series hosted by University of Wisconsin-Extension and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is designed to help landowners better understand and manage their woodlands. The classes will explore topics such as the relationship of woodlands to other parts of the landscape, how to improve wildlife habitat, how to have more successful tree plantings, the benefits of a forest management plan, and introduce other management options and resources for woodland landowners.

Classes will be held in Ashland, Iron, and Douglas Counties. For more information please visit <http://basineducation.uwex.edu/woodland/conference/LAYL.htm> or contact Ruth Oppedahl, Lake Superior Basin Educator, at 715-685-2676.



Woodland Conservation Workshops

Woodland Conservation Workshops will be hosted by the Bayfield Regional Conservancy and the Living Forest Cooperative in the spring and summer of 2010, and funded by the Wisconsin Environmental Education Board. These workshops will provide background on the benefits of sustainable woodland management as a way of ensuring watershed health, as well as introduce a variety of options available to landowners such as voluntary incentive programs and tax benefits.

Tentative locations and dates for the workshops are: Mellen, April 17; Solon Springs, May 15; Hayward, June 26; and Iron River, July 10. More detailed information will be featured in the next BRWA newsletter. You can also contact Jason Sutter, Land Protection Specialist with Bayfield Regional Conservancy, at 715-372-4085.



Eroding Banks, Sand Bars, and Beaver Dams, oh my!

Volunteers have been working diligently this fall with BRWA staff to collect more information of the erosion issues on the steep banks of the Marengo River as part of the MRWP project. On October 24, several volunteers gathered for a "Get to Know Your Watershed" field day on a chilly, snow-covered morning. These hearty souls pulled on their waders and stepped into the river to collect information on the Marengo River's eroding banks, sand and gravel bars, and beaver dams that modify the flow of the river.

To date volunteers have identified and documented nearly 50 eroding banks, 85 bars, and 26 beaver dams and/or log jams that are affecting stream flow. This data has been mapped out and we're beginning to prioritize the most important areas that are in need of restoration to improve fish habitat and the health of the river.

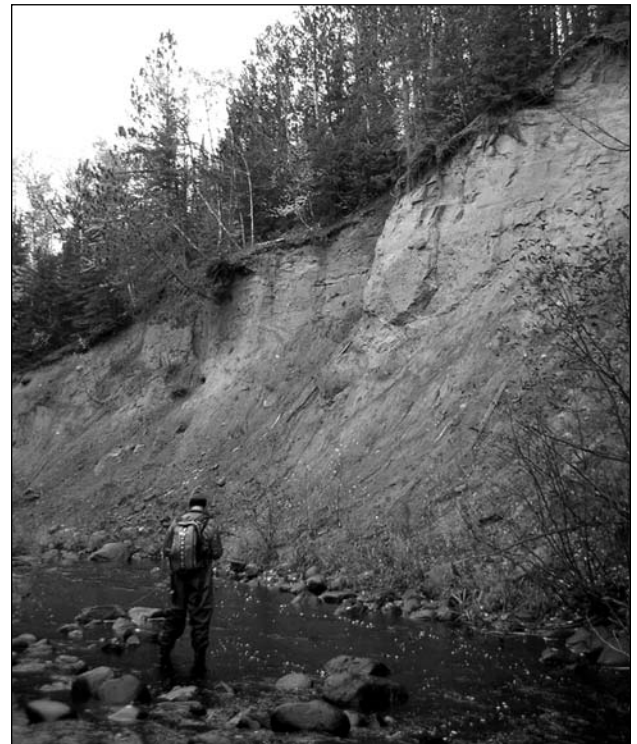


Volunteers Cordell Manz and Jim Emerson measure a depositional bar on the October 24 field day.



Volunteers Jim Crandall and Darienne McNamara on the banks of the Marengo.

Additional opportunities to "Get to Know Your Watershed" will be coming up this spring. Stay tuned for the March BRWA newsletter for the spring 2010 dates. If you'd like to let us know you're interested in helping out this spring, please contact Valerie Olinik-Damstra at 715-292-6142.



Eroding clay banks are a common sight along the Marengo River, and a reason for high turbidity.

Thanks to this everyone who helped make these field days a success.

Volunteers: Mark Dryer, Bill Heart, Darienne McNamara, Jim Crandall, Jim Emerson, Cordell Manz, Kevin Brewster, Tracey Ledder, and Bob Rice.

Landowners who allowed BRWA access to the Marengo River: Mark and Pam Dryer, Bob Brevak, Shawn Miller, Dan and Sandy Vaillancourt, Jeff Vaillancourt, Dave Vaillancourt, Roland and Birgit Wolff, Joe Zirn and Jean Hanson, and Lauren Grevich and Jarred Stone.

Technical support in developing the Get to Know Your Watershed program: Faith Fitzpatrick of the U.S. Geological Survey, Dale Higgins of the U.S. Forest Service, and Lori Lilly of the Center for Watershed Protection. ♦

Did you know?

"Marengo" is a shortened version of the French word *Maringouin*, meaning "mosquitoes."



BRWA Macroinvertebrate Sampling at a Glance

By Bob Rice

BRWA's water quality monitoring focuses on monitoring water chemistry levels, bacteria levels, and collecting aquatic macroinvertebrates - ie. stream BUGS! From time to time, it's good to be reminded of what these different types of monitoring are all about. Since we recently had a couple of macroinvertebrate identification sessions, I thought I'd write a little about what happens with that aspect of our program.

"The best way to get a whole picture on what is happening in a river is to look at the chemical, physical and biological conditions," says Tracey Ledder, BRWA Technical advisor.

"Macroinvertebrates live an entire year (sometimes more) in the river as larvae before hatching out. Therefore, macros give us a long-term picture of the water quality. We sample to see who lives there as an indicator of water quality."

Volunteers collect bugs from the water twice a year, in May and October. Using D-nets to capture the bugs volunteers use nets to kick up the stream bottom and scratch around on the submerged woody debris and rocks at their sites to capture the insects. Collected samples are preserved in ethyl alcohol and identifies later in the lab. BRWA technical advisor, Tracey Ledder assists volunteers in properly identifying samples and recording accurate data. She also quality checks each bug to ensure that data submitted by volunteers is accurate.



Bill Heart looking at bugs



Darienne McNamara checking her data

Asked for his reflections on his first experience with identifying macroinvertebrates, Bill Heart responded, "On a recent Marengo River work day, Bob (Rice) asked if I wanted to attend an evening of identifying macro-invertebrates. We met at the Northland College Biology Lab and it was really cool using a microscope to try to identify these critters. It was a little difficult at first and without Tracy Ledder's expert assistance it would have been a lot harder. It's really neat seeing the different kinds of mayflies, stoneflies, and caddisflies. I am already looking forward to spring to volunteer again."

If you or someone you know is interested in becoming a macroinvertebrate sampler for BRWA, please contact Bob Rice at 682-2003. ♦



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Contact BRWA!
715-682-2003 - phone
badriverwatershed.org

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
P.O. Box 875
Ashland, Wisconsin 54806

Thank you!



Thank You!

Thanks to our Water Quality Volunteers: Tracey Ledder, Dane Bonk, Joan Elias, Mike Klump, Kent Goeckermann, Andy Goyke, Ulli Kastens, Jack Wichita, Roland Wolff, Tana Turonie, Colleen Matula, Pam Roberts, Darienne McNamara, Andrea Haugo, Mike Stobbe, Gary Garfield, April Bebault, Bill Heart, Jerry Setzke, Rob Jones, and Stefania Strzalkowska.

Thanks to our Funders and Contributors: Xcel Energy Foundation, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Wisconsin Coastal Management Program, Wisconsin DNR, Laura Jane Musser Fund, River Alliance of Wisconsin, Diana and Kelly Randolph.

Special Thanks



Dane Bonk and his son Hayden fishing in Canada.

We'd like to give special acknowledgement and thanks to Dane Bonk, who has completed his monitoring of water chemistry and bacteria monitoring on the Long Lake Branch of the White River. Dane has monitored this site since May of 2003. Thanks to Dane's dependability, enthusiasm and ongoing commitment to consistent sampling, we have enough data to establish baseline conditions at that site. Dane's experience in BRWA's Water Monitoring Program will be put to use in his new role as a BRWA Board member, also serving on the Program Committee and Events Committee. Thanks Dane! ♦

Notes to Current and Future Volunteers

- ◆ If anyone is interested in doing bacteria and water chemistry monitoring, we have a few open spots and kits available. Two locations in the Potato River subwatershed are available immediately. Please contact Bob Rice or Michele Wheeler at 715 682-2003. It's fun, it's interesting, and it's how you can be a part of your watershed.
- ◆ The 2009/2010 Water Chemistry Quality Control Session will be held Wednesday, January 20, at the biology lab located on the first floor of the Larson-Juhl building at Northland College. The session will begin at 6:00 pm. If you are a current water chemistry volunteer please plan on attending this session. Quality control is a big part of what makes our data reliable and useful.

How About a Guided River Trip?

BRWA hosts presentations and events throughout the year to help local people learn about what's happening in our watershed. The BRWA Events Committee would like your ideas and suggestions for these presentations.

What kind of events are you interested in? How would you like to get involved in your watershed?

Complete our online survey—just 15 short questions—for an entry to win a canoe trip down the White River guided by river veterans Bill Heart and Jon Wheeler.

You'll find a link to the survey on our web site, or at <http://www.eSurveysPro.com/Survey.aspx?id=f0ad9f28-6da3-4250-889b-b0ff6bd53389>.

The first 20 people who complete the survey will receive a free BRWA bumper sticker. ♦



Culvert Program Monitoring Results

This summer Ian Johnson helped monitor fish populations as a part of BRWA and the USFWS's monitoring program for culvert replacements.

"We're working to figure out how fish populations are changing with these replacements," says Ian.

Through a capstone course at Northland College, Ian is continuing work on this project. He is summarizing and analyzing this summer's field data. Part of his capstone project included presenting his findings to the public, which he did on December 10 at the Larson-Juhl Center for Science and the Environment at Northland College.



Ian Johnson at work

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Winter 2010 Watershed Waves

Get your Watershed Waves via email

We now have 87 people signed up to receive the newsletter via email. If you would prefer to get this newsletter in electronic format, please send a message with that request to: brwa_wi@yahoo.com



FIRST PERSON LOCAL

BRWA will be hosting our annual First Person Local event again this year. Come join us to hear long-time residents tell their stories about growing up in the area and the changes they have seen. This years speakers include Dan Valliancourt, Ken Lindquist and Mike Wiggins. The event will be held at the Ashland Senior Center at 400 Chapple Avenue in Ashland on Saturday January 16 from 2:00-3:00 p.m. Light refreshments will be provided.



The health of our watershed comes down to what's in the water. Look inside to learn more about our water quality monitoring efforts.

Answering only 15 questions can get me a guided river trip?

Complete our online survey for an entry to win a canoe trip down the White River with river veterans Bill Heart and Jon Wheeler.

Details inside!

