



## A Full Year of Programming Ahead

Spring is sprung, and we are moving forward with a full year of programming ahead! Between volunteer events, water quality sampling, field trips, Science on Tap, workshops, our annual membership gathering, and more, there is something available for everybody. You can find out more about these events, sign up, or see the latest information at [www.superiorrivers.org/events](http://www.superiorrivers.org/events)

### Volunteering Macroinvertebrate Monitoring

Every spring and fall volunteers venture out into local streams and rivers to collect macroinvertebrates. Collecting and identifying these small creatures over time helps us assess the water quality of a given stream. Macroinvertebrate volunteers are trained in our sampling procedures then, once within a two week window, spend 4-6 hours in a stream making observations of the physical environment and collecting specimen. This is a really neat way to connect to local waterways.

We not only need volunteers to collect specimen, but also volunteers to help us identify them. We're able to use lab space and microscopes from Northland College for identification and will be joined by our identification experts!



The Spring Macroinvertebrate Monitoring Season is May 5th-19th.

- **Online Training:** Thursday May 2nd 4-6 pm. Google meet link will be emailed when you sign up
- **In-person Training:** Saturday May 4th 2-4 pm. Meet in the parking lot of the Whittlesey Creek National Wildlife Refuge (70640 Wickstrom Rd., Ashland WI)
- **Identification Session:** Saturday May 25th, 10am to noon. Lab 125 in the Center for Science and the Environment on Northland College Campus
- **Identification Session:** Thursday May 30th, 6-8 pm. Lab 125 in the Center for Science and the Environment on Northland College Campus

### Field Trips

Thanks to the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin, we have an exciting field trip series in the works. We are constantly seeking different and unique ways to connect people, land, and water, and we are looking for field trip leaders! Some upcoming programs include:

- **20 Mile Creek: A Case Study in Watershed Restoration** with Tom Doolittle: May 18th, 10-12 am. Meet at the Junction of Old Grade and Wisco Rd. (46.30062 N, 91.01578 W)
- **Paddle Through the History of the Fish Creek Sloughs** with Cathy Techtmann: June 22nd, time TBD. Participants will need to bring their own boats

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## Mission

The mission of the Superior Rivers Watershed Association is to promote and protect clean water resources in Wisconsin's Lake Superior basin.

## Vision

We envision a future where citizens are stewards of their watershed.

## Values

Our work is guided by our belief in and commitment to:

- Expanding Scientific Understanding
- Engaging Citizens
- Informed Decision-making
- Collaborative Efforts

## Programs

We enact these through our main programs:

- Water Quality Monitoring
- Watershed Action Planning
- Watershed Restoration
- Education and Outreach


## Message from the Executive Director

There is a concept called The Flywheel Effect developed by Jim Collins in his book *Good to Great*. "No matter how dramatic the end result, good-to-great transformations never happen in one fell swoop. In building a great company or social sector enterprise, there is no single defining action, no grand program, no one killer innovation, no solitary lucky break, no miracle moment. Rather, the process resembles relentlessly pushing a giant, heavy flywheel, turn upon turn, building momentum until a point of breakthrough, and beyond."\* To me, it feels like



our flywheel is rolling. We pushed that wheel and each weight has been building, each force has been turning, and now it has its own momentum. We've reached that point of breakthrough and we have found our stride.

This is clear to me in so many ways. In December, we broke 200 active members for the first time since I've been here, and now we're on to 232. Our programming calendar has never been more full with talks, field trips, volunteer events, and other ways to interact with your land and water. Our meeting calendar with our partners to help them achieve their restoration goals and communicate these to the public is jam packed. And our list of pending grant proposals and desired projects on the horizon is blossoming. Very soon, all the years of hard work and feeding the stream are going to turn from a steady trickle into a regular, roaring current.

I encourage you to help us keep the momentum going! Join us in our upcoming slew of events, from volunteer days to field trips to workshops to Science on Tap — there is something for everyone, and inviting friends and family is always encouraged! Renew your membership, and consider opting in to our new monthly giving plan which will be available soon (see page 6). If you want to make your money make an impact, consider Adopting a Site (see page 7)! And if you want to become involved deeper in making this organization thrive, join our Fundraising Committee, Program Committee, or the Board of Directors. We are looking for folks willing to commit several hours per month towards investing in watershed stewardship. Join us. 

[\\*https://www.jimcollins.com/concepts/the-flywheel.html](https://www.jimcollins.com/concepts/the-flywheel.html)

**Save the Date: Annual Membership Gathering on Sunday, August 18th**





## Partners Move Forward with Lake Superior Basin Efforts

A number of large-scale federal and state habitat restoration and conservation project funding initiatives are on the horizon in the Lake Superior basin. During the last year, Superior Rives and our local partners have been in various stages of project planning to take full advantage of these programs and funding, focusing heavily on climate change resilience, restoration, and community engagement in the Lake Superior Basin.

### Headwaters to Coast Initiative

A jointly-led project by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, this initiative engages all stakeholder agencies, organizations, and governmental units in the region to identify shared values and maximize comprehensive delivery across the landscape.

Over the next several years, partners are developing a Conservation Blueprint around shared goals and conservation areas, terrestrial, aquatic, stream, nearshore Lake Superior habitat, and infrastructure flooding/hydraulic energy resilience, and more. The initiative (referred to as H2C) provides a peer-driven way to fund and deliver strategic projects which are important to all of us working in the Lake Superior Basin towards common conservation and resiliency goals.

### Natural Flood Management in the Lake Superior Basin

Building off previous work by the Wisconsin Wetlands Association (WWA), Superior Rivers will join WWA, the Northwest Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, and others in proposed work to continue Natural Flood Management in the Lake Superior Basin. WWA established work in the Marengo River with Fluvial Erosion Hazards to identify problem areas and reduce flooding in the watershed. A grant proposal with NOAA has been submitted. Fingers crossed that we continue this work across Fish Creek, the White River, the Montreal River, and the Nemadji!

### The Fish Creek Sloughs

Fish Creek receives a lot of attention and work in the natural resources world, and we are engaging with our partners to help improve the watershed! Several potential projects are out to bid or have grant proposals pending, but we hope to be assisting with creation of a 9-Key Element Action Plan, cattail removal, habitat improvement, and re-seeding with local plant species (priority given to manoomin) and using the *Ganawenindiwag* as reference with the project. Time will tell if we receive these projects, but our community has significant energy and momentum to make them happen in one form or another!

### Water Quality Monitoring in the Proposed Line 5 Reroute Corridor

Thanks to a grant from the James E Dutton Foundation and Freshwater Future, we are working with Mashkiiziibii Natural Resources Department to monitor in the proposed corridor drainage area. We intend to establish pre-construction water quality status, identify sensitive habitat, and detect potential water quality changes caused by construction activities or pipeline leakage.

## Board of Directors

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# Activating a Community of Lake Superior Educators through Rivers2Lake

by Emma Holtan

I'm so grateful to be hearing the sounds of spring. I love hearing the birdsong, choruses of Peepers, and rushing streams. A symphony of sound I'm most looking forward to are the yells and laughter of students splashing through a stream. Every spring I get to connect with classes to explore macroinvertebrate communities in local streams and rivers. Whether it be a group of third graders or a class of high schoolers, I'm always amazed at the curiosity and playfulness that arises when the boots and waders go on, the nets are distributed, and the invitation to explore is offered. I remember having similar feelings the first time I was invited to romp around in a stream with my friends. It was during an aquatic biology class at my high school. I don't think I would've ended up in this work, or in this place, if it hadn't been for that time laughing our way downstream.

Research shows that outdoor learning benefits students' mental and emotional health as well as their academic performance. Place-based learning fosters deeper connections between a student and the place they live and garners a deep enthusiasm for learning for both the student and the educator. These benefits, among others, make my work with the Rivers2Lake program mean so much to me. I'm a little over half of a year into working with this program and I'm continuously amazed by the creativity and excitement of both current and alumni Rivers2Lake teachers.

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Rivers2Lake is a program run out of the Lake Superior National Estuarine Research Reserve in Superior, Wisconsin. The program provides support, mentorship, and professional development for educators to implement place-based and outdoor learning with their classrooms. River2Lake uses the Lake Superior watershed as a foundation to create and use interdisciplinary, inquiry-based experiences. Every year teachers from across the South Shore of Lake Superior, from the Twin Ports to the Chequamegon Bay are accepted into the program. During the year teachers receive resources, field trip opportunities, and monthly support and classroom engagement from Rivers2Lake staff. Rivers2Lake meets teachers where they are, working with them to meet their learning goals in ways that support their growth and respect their limits.



Looking at which macroinvertebrates in Fish Creek and what they might tell us about the water quality. Photo by Scott Roush

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Rivers2Lake has existed for 12 years and has supported over 120 teachers. The Superior Rivers Watershed Association has partnered with Rivers2Lake multiple times throughout the years since its inception. This past year we received a Bay Watershed Education and Training (B-WET) grant through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in partnership with the Lake Superior Reserve. This grant provides us an opportunity to better support more educators in the Chequamegon Bay region.

This year I've gotten the chance to work with two wonderful teachers in Ashland. It's exciting to be able to work with students in the place I live, on the waterways I work with. Their curiosity and wonderings remind me that there's always room to be curious about the places I know. It has been fun to get to wonder about what the storm drain on the beach does and where the water in it comes from, to see how far a stick will slide across the ice at Maslowski beach on a windy day, and to realize how many tiny creatures live under the long-bridge on Fish Creek.

The grant also provides support to the Rivers2Lake program to research, design, and implement ways for alumni to re-engage with the program. The Rivers2Lake program provides amazing benefits, but currently



many of these benefits are only accessible during an educator's year the cohort. We're interested in ways to build community among and provide benefits to alumni of the program into the future. Throughout the fall and winter of 2023, we were able to reconnect virtually and in-person with alumni from different years across the South Shore regions. We solicited feedback on their time in the program and what they miss most and created space to dream about what a community of practice of Rivers2Lake alumni could look like. I was sold on the magic of the program before engaging with alumni, but their memories, feedback, and ideas really left me in awe.

One of my favorite stories from alumni was from someone who had done the program years ago as a fifth-grade teacher. Her fifth graders graduated high school last year and she shared with us that she had never gotten so many graduation party invites or visits from seniors. Her story spoke to the deep connections that grow between the student and educator through the types of experiences Rivers2Lake supports. Among other wonderful stories and ideas shared four big themes emerged to shape alumni experiences moving forward: community connections, mentorship, resources, and collaboration.

We're piloting different ideas to create experiences that hit on these themes, including an offer for alumni four years or more out of the program to apply again to join us in our 2024/2025 school year cohort. Alumni teachers re-applying need to apply with a building partner who would be new to the program to provide opportunities for collaboration. If you're a Rivers2Lake alumni and are interested in learning more about this and other opportunities, check your email! There should be a message detailing how to re-apply and other ways to re-engage.




An Ashland Middle School class exploring Maslowski beach on a windy winter day as part of their "Phenology Friday" series. Photo by Luciana Ranelli



2023/2024 cohort of Rivers2Lake teachers at Wisconsin Point during the Summer Institute hearing from local municipal and Reserve staff. Photo by Ryan Felbrugge

The applications to be in the 2024/2025-year cohort are open until May 3rd . If you are an educator, consider applying! If you know an educator, consider sharing this opportunity with them! All teachers applying the program need to attend the Summer Institute August 6-9 where they'll receive training, gain connections, and have their own inquiry-based outdoor learning experiences. You can learn more and apply at [rivers2lake.org](http://rivers2lake.org).

I'm forever changed for the better by my place-based and outdoor learning experiences and desire for more students in our region to have access to these opportunities. It can be very hard for teachers to offer these sorts of experiences to their classes on their own due to time constraints, lack of support staffing, standards requirements, etc. This program provides the support and incentives to make these opportunities possible, accessible, and replicable. Please share this opportunity. Apply by May 3rd ! 

## Programming Continued

### Restoration Workshops

Restoration work is not just for the professionals; we are working with our friends, partners, and sponsors to bring you hands-on workshops to learn how to implement restoration practices in your everyday life. We hope to expand these workshops in the future! Upcoming workshops include:

- **Composting for Water Health** with Big Lake Organics. August 8th, 5pm-7pm. Registration coming soon.
- **Slow the Flow: Rain Gardens** with Chequamegon Environmental. September.

### Science on Tap

Science on Tap is an opportunity for the community to hear about regional and relevant science from scientists themselves while enjoying a beer, food, and good company at the Alley restaurant in Ashland, Wisconsin. This event is the third Tuesday of each month at 6:30pm. Free and open to the public, these events are often packed and standing-room only! Each presentation is about 30-45 minutes, followed by questions, answers, and discussion.



Our May presentation is Elle Lozinski, Ornithology Specialist with the Mashkiizibii Natural Resources Department. She'll give a presentation about the Piping Plover, title TBD: May 21st, 6:30 PM.



### Upgrading Membership Software: Changes are Coming!

The way we process memberships is changing! We have adopted Little Green Light as our new membership software. This software is going to make major improvements for our staff regarding bookkeeping, donation records, and volunteer management.

What does this mean for you?

This means that the online form that you fill out to renew your membership with a credit card will look a little different. You'll be directed to a website called [secure.lglforms.com](http://secure.lglforms.com) for payment processing. This is all as intended and should be easier to use on your end!

This also means that **you can now become a monthly sustaining member!** We now count a membership as \$40 paid annually **or** \$5 per month. You may make a one-time payment or choose to have your membership automatically paid annually, quarterly, or monthly. We would love to count you as part of our monthly sustaining members! Look for the information coming soon in a Monthly Snapshot email.

### Yes! I want to make a difference and become a member/renew my membership.

Use this form and mail to: Superior Rivers, P.O. Box 875, Ashland, WI 54806  
Or donate online at [www.superiorrivers.org/support-superior-rivers/](http://www.superiorrivers.org/support-superior-rivers/)

\$40 annual membership     \$500 adopt a site  
Additional Gift:  \$15     \$50     \$100     \$250     500     Other \_\_\_\_\_

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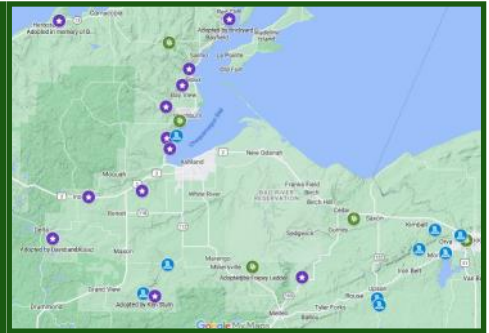
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- Check payable to Superior Rivers.
- Please keep my donation anonymous.
- I am also interested in being a volunteer.

## We are launching a new Adopt a Site program!

Collecting ongoing and consistent water quality data is vital to knowing and maintaining the health of our streams and Lake Superior, but it is often difficult to find sustained grant funding for this vital task. **You can now support your choice of water quality monitoring site for the 2024 calendar year for \$500!** Your donation will support the year of chemicals, supplies, equipment for volunteers, and the staff time to manage them.



## Thank you Donors, Volunteers, and Funders

**Donors, new members, and renewed members since our last newsletter:** Leah Walentosky, Chequamegon Environmental Consulting, Linda Jorgenson and Jack Gunderson, Irene Blakely Family, Jim and Ginny Pedersen, Laura and Mike Scotford Fedora, David and Terri Bahe, Earth Sense Landscaping, Apostle Islands Cruises, Tom Hollenhorst, Mathew Horning and Monica Lee, Diane Littel and Norton Thomas, Black Cat Coffee House, Jenise Swartley, Iron County Land and Water Conservation Dept, Mark and Chris James, Katherine Jenkins, Book Across the Bay, Troy Provost, Craig Shanks and Elizabeth Lexau, Kip and Marya Tyler, Alex Faber, Emma Holtan, Bodin Fisheries, Sara and George Schultz, Beta Bodin, Drost Marengo Family Irrevocable Living Trust, Diane Daulton, Ulf Gafvert, Kurt and Laurie Schmude, Ellie Williams and Kevin Schram, John Simonson, Berman Family, Melissa Kummerow, Sue Radtke and Paul Norris, Bob Durfey, anonymous donors, and anonymous Facebook Fundraiser contributors!

**Volunteers:** Melis Arik, Sam Atkins, Dave Awtrey, Terri Bahe, Dave Bahe, Jen Banowitz, George Beck, Michael Blount, Chris Blowers, Will Blowers, Kevin Brewster, Mariana Brewster, Erin Burkett, Allie Carl, Michelle Carlisle, Diane Daulton, Suzanne Dillon, Tom Doolittle, Mark Dryer, Pam Dryer, Jonas Eklund, Joan Elias, Alex Faber, Mike Fedora, Abi Fergus, Mike Fetter, Ulf Gafvert, Clare Hintz, Eric Houle, Matt Hudson, John Ipsen, Jessica Jacobson, Spunki Janson, Riley Jay Clare, Diane Ketring, Richard Ketring, Joyce Kiel, Roland Kiel, Karin Kozie, Dorothy Lagaroos, Doug Lowthian, Skyeli Malo, Ellary Marano, Jeff Musselman, Ilia Nichols, Ann Pelsue, Davyd Pelsue, Axel Peterman, Kayla Priesler, Jason Reichel, Linda Rise, Bill Route, Kurt Schmude, Sue Schreiner, Laura Scottford-Fedora, John Simonson, Brandi Shapland, Owen Stamp, Abby Stasko, April Stone, Kim Sturm, Allissa, Stutte, Maija Sulerud, Jenise Swartely, Bob Traczyk, Molly Vail, Deb Vemhof, Leah Walentosky, Jane Weber, Kris Wegerson, Kathy Wendling, Mark Wendling, Dawn White.

**Funders:** James E Dutton Foundation, Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin, Freshwater Future, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association B-WET subaward from the Lake Superior National Estuarine Research Reserve.

A large graphic titled "BUSINESS SPONSORS" listing various sponsors under categories: RIVER SPONSOR, CREEK SPONSORS, SPRING SPONSORS, and \$ONE FOR THE WATER SPONSORS. The graphic features logos for Big Lake Organics, Blue Water Realty, Brickyard Creek, Chequamegon Environmental Consulting, Stone House Weavers, VHS Commercial Services, Edmunds &amp; Company Log Home Restorations, Chequamegon Food Co-op, Honest Dog Books, Hermit, Tom's Cakes, Heart Graphics, Earth Sense Landscaping, Apostle Islands Cruises, Solstice Outdoors, Velo Cafe, Anglers All, and Delta Diner.





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## Superior Rivers Watershed Waves Spring 2024 Edition

### Volunteer Macroinvertebrate Monitoring May 5th—19th

Help us collect aquatic macroinvertebrates (bugs) from our streams and perform site assessments! This is a fun, 4 hour field experience, best performed in pairs or groups.

Training is required. Choose one session:

- Thursday, May 2nd, 6-8 pm—online training
- Saturday, May 4th, 2-4 pm at the Whittlesey Creek Wildlife Refuge

Sign up at [www.superiorrivers.org/events](http://www.superiorrivers.org/events)



Connecting People, Land, and Water