



Making Waves



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Fishers & Farmers Receive Governor's Award

By Heidi Keuler



On June 27, the Fishers & Farmers Partnership (FFP) for the Upper Mississippi River Basin received one of the 2013 Governor's Environmental Excellence Awards at the Wallace Building Auditorium in Des Moines, Iowa.



to a variety of fish including the Topeka shiner, a federal-listed endangered species.



Topeka shiners use oxbows as primary spawning grounds and nursery areas

Amphibians, birds, mammals, reptiles and aquatic invertebrates also use oxbows to sustain or complete portions of their life history. Restored oxbows likewise help restore the natural hydrologic regime by connecting streams with their floodplains where sediment is trapped, providing a natural "filter" to improve water quality.



Partners here include private landowners, IDNR, ISA, USFWS, The Nature Conservancy, Iowa State University, and the Wright and Hamilton County Soil & Water Conservation Districts.

Iowa Governor Terry Branstad and Lieutenant-Governor Kim Reynolds presented FFP members Chris Jones (Iowa Soybean Association - ISA), Martin Konrad (Iowa Department of Natural Resources - IDNR), and Heidi Keuler (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - USFWS) with Special Recognition in Habitat Restoration.

The Partnership, consisting of federal, state, and local agencies, as well as non-government organizations, received the award for their leadership and innovation in the Boone River watershed.

Located in central Iowa, more than 83% of this watershed is tilled for agricultural production.

The Fishers and Farmers Fish Habitat Partnership Program recently received special recognition in habitat restoration from Iowa Governor Terry Branstad

The Boone River is popular for recreation and flows into the Des Moines River, which is a secondary source of drinking water for the City of Des Moines.

Although this watershed is among the healthiest in Iowa, landscape alterations are changing water quality, stream flow, and physical habitat here which in turn are threatening the watershed's residents, plants, and animals.

In response, Fishers & Farmers partners are working together with landowners to restore river oxbows here that provide critical habitat to

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Tales of Two Treasure Hunts

By Mark Steingraeber



The request for help from Nathan Eckert, mussel biologist at the Genoa National Fish Hatchery (NFH), came to the La Crosse FWCO later than usual this year.

Above normal rainfall in June kept water levels in many regional rivers bank-full well into July. Levels now were dropping and the seasonal opportunity we eagerly awaited was here: spending a hot summer day in the cool Chippewa River to snorkel in search of hidden biological treasures ... freshwater mussels!



But on July 12, as we prepared to wade across the braided river to mussel beds on the opposite side of the channel, something seemed to be missing here from similar efforts in past years.

Q: Where's that old sandbar?

A: Under a foot and a half of water!

Demand for electricity caused the hydro-power dam miles upstream to release more water, increasing the river discharge nearly 50% overnight. As a result, we placed a greater than normal emphasis on keeping our heads above water to be sure our cross-channel treks remained an aerobic form of exercise.



July 12
USFWS
Heads up!

Once having safely reached the opposite shore, we donned our masks and snorkels and began to search for mussels in shallow water near the bank. When this proved unsuccessful, we expanded the search area into deeper waters.

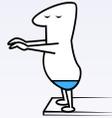


Despite brilliant sunshine, bottom visibility while snorkeling in arms-length deep, tea-colored water was poor and maintaining position while snorkeling was all but impossible in the swift current.

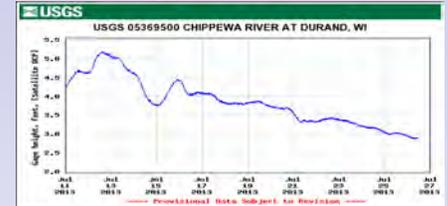
Faced with the prospect of coming up empty handed, one by one we began to discard our snorkels, take large breaths of air, and repeatedly dive to the river bottom for a better view. Although more physically demanding, this collection method proved to be effective under the challenging conditions. A total of 13 gravid (pregnant) mussels (11 sheepsnose, 2 black sandshell) were brought to the Genoa NFH that day for propagation activities, as well as 16 hickorynut taken for research purposes.



USFWS
Black sandshell



Two weeks later on July 25, we received another request from Nathan for help; this time things would be different.



River stage dropped by two feet and discharge was half what it had been



Crossing the river was no longer the physical chore it had been and snorkeling conditions were ideal. A total of 19 species were found in little more than one hour. These included the creeper, pink heelsplitter, white heelsplitter, pimpleback, monkeyface, three horned wartyback, pistolgrip, fatmucket, plain pocketbook, giant floater, wabash pigtoe, black sandshell, elktoe, deertoe, fawnsfoot, fragile papershell, and threeridge. More than 60 hickorynut were recovered for research purposes and a fraction of the 26 gravid sheepsnose were transported to Genoa NFH for propagation of this federal-listed endangered species. What a difference snorkeling in a little less water makes!



July 25

Follow the leader
USFWS

Welcome Aboard!



by Mark Steingraeber



Trevor Cyphers joined the La Crosse FWCO staff this month as a biological science technician. A native of Chatfield, Minnesota, he earned a bachelor's degree in Biology at Winona State University. As an undergraduate here, he also participated in a summer research program at the University of Minnesota studying reproductive behaviors of fathead minnows.



Trevor Cypher joins the La Crosse FWCO

Trevor is now enrolled in a master's degree program (Aquatic Science) at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. For a thesis project, he is evaluating the bioavailability and toxicity of lead to fish after exposure to sediments from the La Crosse River Marsh, an area contaminated with lead shot.

With classroom work now done, Trevor will play a key role in upcoming efforts by the La Crosse FWCO and several of its partners to monitor the upstream advance of Asian carp in the Upper Mississippi River and many of its major tributaries.



WELCOME ABOARD!

After graduation, Trevor worked briefly as a fisheries intern for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources conducting fish population assessments for use in determining fishing regulations for lakes near International Falls.

Upcoming Event



Mark Your Calendars Now!

Aug 17 - Medication Drop Off
9 am - 12 pm
County HHM - Hwy 16 La Crosse
Details on Page 3

Hope to See You!

Medication Drop Off



**Saturday,
August 17, 2013
9:00AM—12:00PM**

**Accepting ALL Medications
Including Controlled Substances**

La Crosse County HHM

6500 State Road 16, La Crosse

ONE SITE ONLY

YOU CAN BRING:

- Prescription Medications
- Over-the-Counter Medications
- Tablets and Capsules
- Liquids
- Creams
- Ointments
- Inhalers, Patches
- Needles/Sharps

Also Accepting Household Hazardous Waste

- Mercury Thermometers
- Fluorescent Lamps and Electronics
- Paint, Pesticides, Solvents, etc.
- Oil, Antifreeze, Oil Filters
- Aerosols

Next Drop Off Day in 2013

- **Fall date to be announced**
Watch for times and
locations.

**Businesses Call 785-9999 for
details regarding disposal of
business wastes.**

**Available to all La Crosse
County Residents**

**Check www.co.la-crosse.wi.us/solidwaste/HHM/ or call 785-9999
for more information and for future drop off dates.**

Drop-off Sponsored by:



What's in *My* Driveway Sealant?

Recent studies by the U.S. Geological Survey indicate that asphalt-paved parking lots, driveways, and playgrounds



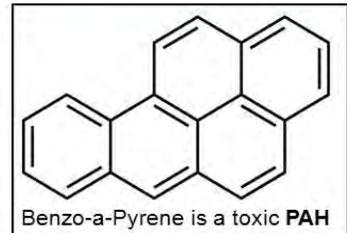
covered with **coal-tar** based seal coatings can be major sources of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon (PAH) runoff into urban/suburban streams, lakes, and ponds in many Midwestern states. Meanwhile, PAH runoff from surfaces sealed with **asphalt** based coatings is much lower.

Why Should *I* Care?

PAHs are toxic to mammals (including humans), birds, fish, amphibians, invertebrates, and plants.



Aquatic invertebrates (the insects and other small animals living in streams and lakes) are particularly susceptible to PAH contamination, especially bottom dwellers that live in the sediment where PAHs tend to accumulate.



These creatures are important links in the aquatic food chain and are often monitored as indicators of environmental health, similar to a “canary in the coal mine”.



What Can *I* Do?

If you plan to seal-coat an asphalt surface

- **Read product labels**
- **Ask contractors what product they plan to use**
- **Insist on an *asphalt-based* product (low in PAHs)**

