



Horton's Clips

Phil Yehle, Editor

BRIDGES UPDATES

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEET WITH DNR

On Wednesday July 18th members from the Board of Directors, as well as other interested parties from the Friends of McGilvray Road, met with DNR representatives Tim Babros, Craig Thompson and Ron Lichtie.

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The plans that the FMR had been working on with the DNR for improving the parking lot as well as providing handicapped access were discussed. The DNR has now decided that these improvements cannot go forward. Reasons cited were concern for several endangered species found in the area as well as the fact it is the DNR's general policy that these kinds of improvements cannot occur on wild-life areas such as Van Loon.

Discussions were also held on having the DNR provide a bridge inspection. The FMR have been asking DNR wildlife property manager Ron Lichtie to arrange this. However, he has been waiting for a uniform bridge inspection template from Mr. Sanjay Olson so this could be accomplished. The FMR believe that the inspection needs to take into account the fact that as these are only pedestrian bridges and that using a vehicular standard would be unreasonable. The FMR are very adamant that these inspection be done so routine maintenance may be performed that could prevent major repairs in the future. The FMR did arrange to have an unofficial inspection done on several bridges. See following article.

The FMR also provided the DNR with \$3000 donation that will be used for improvement and maintenance of the Bridges and trail. This is what the annual interest from the endowment fund was intended to do. The DNR has also agreed to give us a statement of how this money has been spent.

ANNUAL MEETING

The FMR met for its annual meeting on Monday August 27th.

Ron Lichtie, property manager, requested that the FMR update their agreement with the DNR. He also recommended this be done every 5 or 6 years. He asked if we'd like to take on responsibility for being a friends group for the Van Loon Refuge as well. The group discussed this and decided that the FMR will continue to only be responsible for the Bridges and trail.

Bridge inspection was once again discussed. Ron said that the DNR expected bridge repairs to keep them up to code could run \$5 million dollars. The FMR thought this figure must have been calculated from pre-repair work done since 1992. We were in the process of fixing bridges and abutments of Bridges 1-4, purchasing and installing Bridge 5 and doing an extreme makeover of Bridge 6.

D.A. Ferguson nominated the a slate of officers for the coming year, was seconded by Jim Lakey and approved by those present. The current board consists of Nancy Hill-President, Phil Yehle-Vice President, Karla Pierson -Treasurer, and Rick Staszewski-Secretary.

BRIDGES POEM

To the Founders of the "Seven Bridges"
 And all who have lent a hand!
 The vision was clear...and there would reappear
 a continuous trail over water logged land

It took work, and many a brainstorm
 To accomplish what has been done...
 A patience so great.. as a dream was at stake-
 -now the final battle was won!

But there is more to this story...
 Though some may be never told-
 It has brought back a page of our history-
 -of travel in days of old.

Each bridge came to be...had its purpose.
 I pondered this thought as a child.
 Building, connecting, and repairing!-
 That just never goes out of style!

I think of the creaky old main-span,
 Called the McGilvray Bridge in it's day...
 How I'd look down at the meandering Black River
 below,
 And wonder if crossing was safe.

Horses' hooves would echo a rat-a tat-tat
 As they juggled the loose fitting boards.
 The horses seemed a bit nervous and uncertain.
 Dad reined them in...I was reassured.

Now, today, I have but sweet memories
 Of how dad smiled and took things in hand.
 And these 7 bridges will always serve to remind me
 How lucky that I am who I am.

So thanks to the vision, the efforts
 of all who took things to heart...
 A trail reappeared that had been lost for years!
 Thanks from the bottom of my heart.

A friend,

Marion

Vandals Strike

Sometime around July 7th, vandals pushed the kiosk in the parking lot over. They apparently put the bumper of their vehicle against the posts supporting the structure and pushed until they broke several of the posts toppling the structure backwards to the ground. Tire marks in the ground indicate that this is what occurred.

The DNR has repaired the damage.

Anyone with information concerning this senseless act, please report it to the Holmen Police Department. In the future, if you should see any such sign of vandalism please report it.

BRIDGE INSPECTION UPDATE

In early September Don Beaty, retired engineer and bridge inspector, went to tour several of the bridges with Nancy Hill and Jim Lakey. Nancy's report:

Today Don Beaty, Jim Lakey and I walked the Bridges through Bridge 4. After our last meeting with the DNR it seemed that it would be a while before an official inspection could be done. I've been uneasy about letting these Bridges, which we've put so much money and effort in, get to a point of disrepair that we could not afford to fix.

Don took along the draft of Ray's (Kyro) current brochure project, and the drawings of the various parts of the came in handy as well-at least for helping me understand what he was checking for.

Mr Beaty did have a question about the ratings of the Bridges and I could not find any paperwork for that. I do know that Joe Palzkill did do an initial analysis of the Bridges to determine what it was that needed repair. He also inspected the Bridges after the repair work was done. That paperwork has been located. Mr Beaty did get under and around the Bridges for a good

look and "kick the tires" inspection. He then reported that they appeared to be in good shape. The rattle that I was obsessing about (Bridge #4) is from railings and not structural member. Perhaps the rattle is music to some peoples ears.

He did offer a few suggestions that will help the Bridges: **Clear brush and woody materials from around the Bridges** so they don't retain debris during high water. This also helps with air flow so the bridges can dry out. **The pilings in the abutments should be capped** so they don't rot. Roofing valley tin would work well.

Thanks Mr. Beaty for your help!

BIRDING WITH BOB

While hiking the Seven Bridges in late August, I spotted a bird species that is endangered. It was a Bells Vireo. Bells Vireos nest in this area but are very rare. This area is the northern edge of their range. There were other birds in the small flock so I suspect it may have been a family of vireos.

Another bird I spotted the same day was a Wood Thrush. This bird is fairly common, nests in the large mature forests and are very secretive. The thrush family includes robins and

bluebirds. I'm always amazed how good bird watching is during August and September.

I'm sorry to report that many local songbirds perished as a result of the August rainstorms. Birds can lose the protective oil coating on their feathers and then cannot maintain their body temperature. In my neighborhood three sparrow species, house finches, cardinals and chickadees disappeared. However, I'm not really concerned as these are plentiful species.

The fall migration is a huge southward migration. Yet, for several species, this is their winter destination.

They are the dark eyed junco, tree sparrow, horned lark, red breasted nuthatch, brown creeper, pine siskin, northern shrike and many others. I hope you try to identify some of them. Bird watching is a year round activity.

Good birding,

Bob



Bells Vireo

TRAIL MIX

As I write this, the booming sound of shotguns let's me know that another duck season has begun in Black River Bottoms .

Local ducks common to this area are being hunted in the early fall as the southerly migrations from Canada have not yet occurred because of the mild weather.

A few of the local ducks we have are mallards, wood ducks, and blue-winged teal.

The mallard is the world's most numerous and best known duck. It is also the common ancestor from which most of our domesticated duck have come. Classified as a "puddle duck", they prefer marsh and river areas. They feed by dabbling and tipping not fully submerging. The mallard drake averages around 23 inches in length and 2 3/4 pounds. Many stay around the area all season long. They fly in "V" formations distances of up to 2000 miles almost non-stop and at speeds of up to 60 mph.

The blue winged teal is one of the speedsters of the autumn sky. It is considerable smaller than the mallard and the adult male may be identified by the white crescent shaped patch on its head as well as a white patch on either side of its tail. The blue winged teal is also a puddle duck so you will see it feeding on top or near the top surface of the water. In flight, these birds will not keep up to the mallard, but the gyrations of a large flock help do help identify them.

Wood ducks are frequent nesters to the bottoms. For many years the Brice Prairie Conservation Association have built nesting boxes for this colorful bird. Back in the 1930's this bird was so scarce it was given federal protection. This due to overshooting and destruction of its nesting sites. It is now quite common. The wood duck is a perching duck that walks well on land and can also perch easily on tree trunks and branches.

BLACK RIVER BOTTOM MEMORIES

From an article in the La Crosse Tribune and Leader Press dated May 25, 1930. Based on the recollections of Rankin McGilvray

Ferry Carried Soldiers Over

In speaking of the early days to old timers in Trempealeau, he was quoted as saying, "When the Civil War broke out we began to carry soldiers across the river. Hardly a day went by until the close of the war that we did not carry some

of the boys, and along at first they were all going one way, bound for La Crosse and from there to Madison and Milwaukee and the to the front.

After the battle of Bull Run the wounded solders began to return, and then we were carrying solders both ways until the war ended. You could always tell one of the wounded ones for they were bandaged and crippled; a great many others were walking with crutches had their

arms in slings while some had bandaged heads. I recollect one fellow who came back nearly shot to pieces. He was the most dilapidated looking soldier I ever saw. He was lame and his right arms was in a sling. He had been hit in the face and lost one eye, and couldn't see very well with the other, He was sour and cranky and rather discouraged. I didn't blame him. Father kept him all night, and had one of the boys drive him to Trempealeau the next day. Father never charged the soldiers

anything for carrying them across the ferry, or for board and lodging and, although he could not go to war he did his patriotic service for his country. My chances for going to war were spoiled on account of the ferry. I was on the file to go all right, but instead of going to the front and dying for my country I had to stay home and bail the water out of the ferry boat and help run it."



Friends Board of Directors 2007:

Nancy Hill 782 1753 or 386 6237
 D.A. Ferguson 784 7865
 Jim Lakey 526 4277
 Fred Pierson 608 269 6111
 Karla Pierson 608 269 6111
 Mark Hein 526 2200
 Mariel Carlisle 507 643 7090
 Rick Staszewski 788 3596
 Phil Yehle 399-1155



Friends of McGilvray Road Meetings

The FMR will meet at the Pizza Corral at 6:00PM on the following dates. All are welcome.

**October 29th, 2007
January 28th, 2008**

**Friends of McGilvray Road
P.O. Box 2976
La Crosse, Wi 54602-2976**

Address Service Requested

2007 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

___ Yes, you can count on me. I'd like to continue supporting the bridges and receive the newsletter and notices form time to time.

___ I would like to make a contribution to FMR for the endowment fund. (State if you wish it to be in honor of or I memory of someone else so we can respond appropriately.)

___ I may be interested in FMR as part of my estate planning.

- Corporate or business: \$100.00
- Lifetime: \$100.00
- Supporting: \$25.00
- Single/Planning \$15.00

Name_____

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