FOX RIVER CURRENT

May/June 2003 Vol. 6, No. 3 Update from the Lower Fox River Intergovernmental Partnership

Fish Consumption Advisory Group Meets

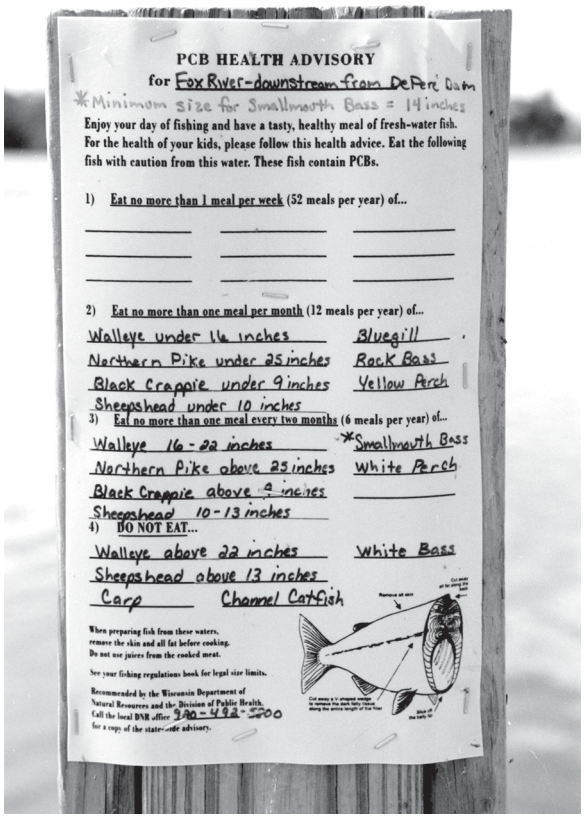
By Bill Borzon, Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services

The newly created Fish Consumption Advisory Group began developing strategies and activities regarding fish advisories for the Lower Fox River and Green Bay at its first meeting in Oneida on May 22.

Organized by the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services, the group plans to raise public awareness about the advisories which have been in place since the late 1970s. Representatives from Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin, city of Menasha, Outagamie and Brown counties and Clean Water Action Council were in attendance. Their goal is to join forces to enhance efforts in educating people about fish and health advisories in the Fox Valley region.

Despite a lower-than-expected turnout, those who attended believe they made progress in identifying important issues and pledged to continue to work hard to involve minority communities. The group acknowledged that having minority representation is critical since it is those populations that often catch and eat fish from the river. Members also recognized the importance of broader representation and will continue to welcome input from all areas along the Lower Fox River.

Group members also discussed the need for programs and activities that will meet the goal of better educating the public, however, they recognized the challenges that lie ahead. They said some of the challenges include how to get the word out; how to handle language, cultural and ethnic barriers; how to reach people other than anglers; and how to determine which outreach methods will work best.



Fish advisory signs like the one above are posted along the Lower Fox River.

Tom Nelson, representing the Oneida tribe, expressed the tribe's concern over the loss of an important cultural aspect. "We need to address a whole generation that doesn't know how to catch and eat fish on reservation waters," he stated. "The tribe is upset culturally because it can't use fish caught on the reservation."

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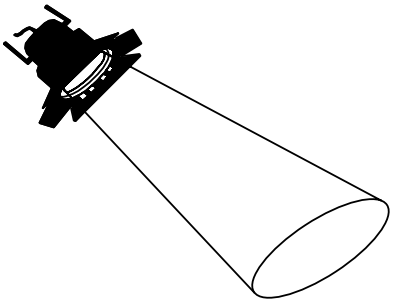
Cleanup Decision Update

At press time, progress on the second record of decision was proceeding. A public meeting to discuss the decision with Department of Natural Resources and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency staff will be held in the Green Bay area. Details on the meeting will be provided as they become available.

The Fox River Current is featuring promising natural resource damage assessment projects in and near the Lower Fox River.

Spotlight On:



Developing Community Partnerships

By Tom Nelson, Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin

The Fox River/Green Bay Natural Resource Trustees are developing partnerships with local organizations and governments to assist with projects that have high ecological value or unique natural resource benefits for a restoration area that encompasses watersheds for the Fox, Wolf and Manitowoc Rivers.

Community partnerships could help protect plants such as these.

Members of the Resource Technical Restoration Team, a sub group of the trustees, toured parts of the restoration area in April and May to evaluate the suitability of some project ideas for protection and restoration using Natural Resource Damage Assessment funds. Some of the funds for projects would come from a $40 million settlement reached in 2001 with Appleton Papers Inc. and NCR Corp. for such projects. The money is to be split evenly between cleanup and restoration work.

"The cooperation and good faith efforts of Appleton Papers and NCR in providing funds before a final settlement has allowed the trustees the opportunity to protect critical habitat that is under pressure from developers and others," said Pat Pelky, assistant to the government services director of the Oneida tribe.

Project ideas under consideration include the protection of properties that provide natural homes for a variety of typical Wisconsin fish and wildlife including walleye, mallards, scaup (a diving duck) and other waterfowl, otters and mink. Plants such as the Dwarf Lake Iris, rare insects like the Hines Emerald Dragonfly, and rare birds like the western grebe could also be protected.

The team also looked at projects, which focus on properties that are existing natural areas or are areas that contribute to the overall environmental health of the restoration area which may be important in restoring the river and bay ecosystem.

Properties could be purchased and managed to protect native wildlife and improve the Fox River/Green Bay ecosystem. In some cases, more rare species including the bald eagle and spotted musky could be involved in those efforts. Because tributaries that empty into the Fox River and Green Bay are crucial to water quality, in some cases simply buying one prime piece of property along a tributary may help protect the entire sub-watershed and the river or bay ecosystem.

By working with a variety of partners, restoration activities could build off the efforts of others to compliment the restoration activities of the trustees.

Trustee Meeting Details Projects, Processes

By Greg Swanson, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

The final joint restoration plan and environmental assessment, planned restoration projects, and the process for proposing projects for future consideration were among the topics discussed at a June 3 meeting in Oneida of the Fox River/Green Bay Natural Resource Trustee Council.

The restoration plan, which was finalized by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service the day of the meeting, outlines the project categories in which restoration projects must fit and the geographic area the plan covers:

- wetland reestablishment or preservation to provide habitat (homes) for fish and wildlife;
- aquatic quality improvement projects to restore and enhance habitat and recreational services; and
- direct resource restoration projects, such as those designed to improve fish reproduction and improvements to outdoor recreational facilities associated with the river banks or coastal habitat recreation, appreciation or education.

Approximately $9 million from an interim settlement with Appleton Papers Inc. and NCR Corp. has been dedicated to 17 projects, so far. Many of the projects selected were first proposed in the Green Bay Remedial Action Plan more than a decade ago. Others have come from plans developed by the trustees or other public or private organizations. Another significant aspect of many of the projects is that they use settlement funds to match funds from other sources to create a bigger project with a more significant effect.

"The trustees are especially pleased that we were able to take about $125,000 in settlement funds and match it to another $375,000 in federal Conservation and Reinvestment Act funds for the West Shore Habitat Acquisition project," said Greg Hill, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Natural Resource Damage Assessment coordinator. "Providing funding for the local cost share of the Cat Island Chain Restoration project is another example of how the trustees can use settlement funds to leverage a larger project."

Two other projects have cultural significance to the trustees. The Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin will receive funding to design a 40-acre lake within reservation boundaries. The Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin will receive funds to examine the suitability

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Out and About...

By Susan Pastor, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

The Fox River Intergovernmental Partnership, made up of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin and Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin, regularly provides speakers to organizations in the Fox Valley area. The following partners recently made presentations:

April

- *Tom Nelson*, Oneida: Earth Day celebration, Oneida; general restoration.
- *Kelly O'Connor*, DNR: Earth Day celebration, Green Bay; Fox River cleanup.

May

- *Jim Hahnenberg*, EPA: Ames Middle School, Chicago; general PCBs, fish advisories and cleanup options.
- *Greg Hill*, DNR: Federation of Environmental Technologists, Milwaukee; general Lower Fox River update.
- *Jim Hahnenberg*, EPA: Kalamazoo River Protection Association, Kalamazoo, Mich.; Lower Fox River Operable Unit 1 and 2 record of decision.

Profile On . . . Jim Chapman

From Peace Corps Volunteer to Prison Instructor–EPA Ecologist Has Been There, Done That

By Susan Pastor, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

When Jim Chapman, an ecologist with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency who was recently assigned to the Lower Fox River, set out to see the world after graduating from college in the mid 1970s, he never dreamed of how that trip would affect his future.

"We passed through India where there were starving people," he said. "There wasn't a Peace Corps program there at that time, but there was one in Nepal. When we got there, I went straight to the Peace Corps office to sign up. My motive was to help starving people."

Although it was almost a year before the Peace Corps called and assigned him to Nepal, Chapman was able to use his biology education as well as his experience at a New York fish hatchery and community extension service when he finally arrived. And, other interesting jobs followed.

After teaching botany, environmental science, and biology in community colleges for seven years in the Syracuse, N.Y. area, Chapman moved on. "I taught environmental science in prisons for three years," he explained. "The prisoners were allowed to earn associate's degrees in liberal arts. It was sort of like their 9 to 5 job."

Biological studies usually involve lab work, however, his students were only allowed to take lecture courses. Chapman said, "They weren't allowed to have scalpels or glass slides because they could be used as weapons."

While Chapman's classes were limited to lectures, he said the prisoners considered them a welcome break from normal prison life. "One prisoner told me my classes were like an oasis," he continued.

In addition to a bachelor's degree in biology from State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry at Syracuse, Chapman earned a master's degree in engineering and public policy at Washington University in St. Louis, and a Ph.D. in resources management, back again, in Syracuse. Even though he has a doctorate, he doesn't insist on being referred to as a doctor. "But my parents like it when people call me doctor," he confessed.

Jim Chapman

For the past eight years, Chapman, who is "50 something," has worked on PCB sites in Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana and Michigan as well as on DDT and Mirex sediment sites in Michigan and Ohio. He was recently assigned to the Lower Fox River, replacing Brenda Jones who has a new assignment at EPA.

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In Wisconsin, he worked on the Sheboygan River and Harbor Superfund site. "I was involved in the planning and review of the aquatic risk assessment for which NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) took the lead," said Chapman. "I wrote the terrestrial (land) ecological risk assessment."

Chapman, who lives in Chicago with his wife Patricia, said his work on other PCB sites should help him fit in with the Lower Fox River team, which is comprised of many state and federal agencies and Indian tribes. "Most of the sites I've worked on involved a large number of people, so I'm used to working with a multitude of agencies and stakeholders," Chapman stated.

When he isn't working with lots of people, he and his wife like to get away by themselves to hike, camp, bird watch and backpack, often in Wisconsin.

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Discussions also focused on other immediate issues such as increasing the number of warning signs posted along the river and developing a comprehensive list of educational materials and promotional items. The group agreed that it would also like to do more outreach and education in DePere as well as in Brown and Outagamie counties as these areas seem to have many popular fishing locations.

The group's next meeting is being planned for this fall. In the meantime, new members are being accepted. For additional information, contact Chuck Warzecha at (608) 267-3732 or at warzecj@dhfs.state.wi.us.

Trustee Meeting *from Page 3*

of reservation waters for the reintroduction of wild rice. Two other habitat preservation projects in Door County were developed in cooperation with organizations outside the trustee group.

A Web site for the restoration process was also announced at the meeting. The Web site, which will be available in July, will be accessible from the DNR Lower Fox River Web site at www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/wm/lowerfox. It will contain information on the restoration plan, ongoing projects and those under consideration, instructions on how local governments and other organizations can propose projects, and trustee contact information.

The agencies and tribes that make up the council are FWS, representing the federal agencies; DNR; Michigan Attorney General, representing the state of Michigan co-trustees; Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin; and Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin.

Check out these Web sites:

http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/wm/lowerfox/

http://www.epa.gov/region5/foxriver/

http://www.fws.gov/r9dec/nrdar/nrdamain.html

http://www.fws.gov/r3pao/nrda/

Information Available at Local Libraries

The Intergovernmental Partners invite the public to review technical reports, fact sheets and other documents related to the Lower Fox River cleanup at information repositories set up in the reference sections of the following local libraries. Information repositories at the public libraries in DePere, Kaukauna, Little Chute, Neenah and Wrightstown have been discontinued. However, binders containing fact sheets will be mailed to and maintained at these locations as well as at the repositories listed below.

- **Appleton Public Library**, 225 N. Oneida St., Appleton, Wis.; (920) 832-6170
- **Brown County Library**, 515 Pine St., Green Bay, Wis.; (920) 448-4381, Ext. 394
- **Door County Library**, 107 S. Fourth Ave., Sturgeon Bay, Wis.; (920) 743-6578
- **Oneida Community Library**, 201 Elm St., Oneida, Wis.; (920) 869-2210
- **Oshkosh Public Library**, 106 Washington Ave., Oshkosh, Wis.; (920) 236-5200

An administrative record, which contains detailed information upon which the selection of the final site cleanup plan will be based, is also available for review at two DNR offices: 801 E. Walnut St., Green Bay, Wis. and 101 S. Webster St., 3rd Floor, Madison, Wis. An administrative record is also available at the EPA Record Center, 77 W. Jackson Blvd., 7th Floor, Chicago, Ill.

Prepared by the Fox River Intergovernmental Partnership: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin, Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Supporting agencies include the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services, the U.S. Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in these articles are solely those of the authors and are not necessarily shared by all members of the Fox River Intergovernmental Partnership.

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Office of Public Affairs (P-19J)
United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region 5
77 W. Jackson Blvd.
Chicago, IL 60604-3590

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