



Welcome to the **Second Edition** of the Fox-Wisconsin Heritage Parkway Newsletter! The goal of this newsletter is to inform you of the Fox-Wisconsin Heritage Parkway, and to update you of the work that is progressing on this exciting project!

Fox-Wisconsin Heritage Parkway Update

The FWHP Executive Committee has been meeting monthly and is working diligently to increase the partners we have on this project. Two sub-committees were formed, one to tackle the management structure and the preliminary three year budget, and another to work on the main marketing message. It was decided to create the organization as a non-profit 501c3 structure with plans to investigate pros and cons of requesting a federal or state appointed commission as the organization grows. The non-profit board will oversee the entire length of the Parkway on signage and website development and maintenance, marketing, community relations, fundraising, grant-seeking, stewardship, staff management, project guidance, grant-making, and coordination with FRNSA. The board will also coordinate with local groups who will work on specific historic interpretation and preservation, trail development, environmental/resource preservation and education, as well as local project fundraising and friendraising. This will keep the projects relevant to their individual river segments and will encourage local ownership of the Heritage Parkway concept. The preliminary budget and marketing message have been formulated and are being fine tuned.

Our partners have expanded to include Willems Marketing, Lower Wisconsin Riverway Board, and South West Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. Additionally, a history gathering session was held with Lower Fox historical societies. This event served to highlight the rich and unique history of the area. In other news, Monica Rico, a professor at Lawrence University has agreed to dedicate a spring course to compile the history of the Lower Fox and present it in such a way that will be used for both informational signage and National Park Service designation submittal. Also, Jim Buchholz, a professor at UW Stevens Point has agreed to dedicate a spring class on Planning and Site design to look at the former Army Corps properties along the Upper Fox and create a comprehensive plan for public access and usage. Community municipal meetings continue to showcase the Parkway project and to gather views of each area's future riverfront and how they can best fit into the Parkway. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service staff have been contacted and an Environmental Assessment will be done in conjunction with the DNR. Mapping of cultural and historic sites along the rivers and how they correspond with existing and planned trail systems is underway and will result in a multi-tiered user-focused map.

Helen Young joins the Fox-Wisconsin Heritage Parkway

The Fox-Wisconsin Heritage Parkway is excited to welcome Ms. Helen Young as its first dedicated staff member! Helen was hired by Friends of the Fox to assist in the writing of the National Heritage Area Feasibility Study to be submitted to the National Park Service. Ms. Young is a recent graduate of the University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire where she majored in Public History and Geography. She comes to our organization with experience with the National Park Service, and other local planning efforts. Ms. Young's talents and skill set will be important in insuring that the Feasibility Study is submitted by June 15th, 2009.

Stories from the Fox-Wisconsin Heritage Parkway:

John Muir: "Wisconsin's Foster Son"

The homestead of John Muir can be found on the east side of county highway F about eight miles south of Montello,

eleven miles north of Portage and one half mile east of the Fox River. This gem of Wisconsin history is situated on a beautiful little spring fed body of water named Ennis Lake. The lake is often referred by its original name, Fountain Lake.

At age eleven, John Muir, his father and two siblings settled in the Town of Buffalo, Marquette County after arriving from Scotland in 1849. John spent his youth tramping about the forests and meadows surrounding Fountain Lake and along the shores of the Fox River. After many years of travel, exploration and writing, he became best known as America's greatest naturalist, the founder of our national park system and the Sierra Club.

"Marquette County people are proud of the memory of John Muir, who by his many and persistent articles and letters persuaded Congress to pass the National Park Act in 1890, the beginning of a formal national park movement. It was in this sandy country that he began his love of wild animals, flowers, trees and waters. Later of course, he became nationally famous and became father of our national parks."¹

A granite marker can be found on the north side of the entrance drive to Muir Park on County Highway F and the "John Muir Country" Wisconsin historical marker can be viewed in a wayside on State Highway 22, just north of the Marquette-Columbia county line. These words of wisdom are engraved on the granite marker found in Muir Park:

"Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and places to pray in, where nature may heal and cheer, and give strength to body and soul alike." -- John Muir

The next time you are planning a drive, paddle or bike ride along our Fox-Wisconsin River Way, take the time to visit the site of the Muir homestead at beautiful Fountain Lake. You will surely gain a greater appreciation for the earliest inspiration in this great naturalist's life.

¹Excerpt from *The Trail of the Serpent* by Robert E. Gard, Elaine Reetz and Edgar G. Mueller Copyright 1973.

Focus on Community

Portage - Where the Fox and the Wisconsin Rivers Meet

Just as the famous Marquette and Joliet exploration of 1673 began at the mouth of the Lower Fox River in Green Bay and continued through Lake Winnebago and on the Upper Fox River to Portage which ultimately led them to the confluence with the great Mississippi River; so to, the work of the Fox-Wisconsin Heritage Parkway steering committee to establish the parkway began on the Lower Fox, and has grown to include the Upper Fox and City of Portage, and now continues to focus our efforts on the Southwestern part of the State involving three organizations active on the Lower Wisconsin waterway.

The City of Portage has long been actively embracing their river related history. The current location of the City of Portage was the overland "portage" where voyagers had to transport their canoes and supplies between the Fox River and the Wisconsin River. After nearly two centuries of fur trading, Fort Winnebago was built here by the French in 1828 to protect their interests. Today the Surgeon's Quarters, restored and operated by the Daughters of the American Revolution, is a historic site building which is the only surviving remnant of the French Colonial Fort Winnebago presence. As such it provides a unique window into the early military life of those times. This historic site provides several "hands on" history days and workshops throughout the season. For an events calendar please visit <http://www.wsdar.com/surgeons/events.html>.

This same area also hosts the Indian Agency House another National Register site which is maintained and operated by the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America, Wisconsin Chapter. This home was built by the U.S. government to house the US agent, Mr. John Kinzie and his wife Juliette, who interacted with the Native Americans of this region, a sovereign nation. Their daughter Juliette Gordon Low was the founder of the Girl Scouts of the United States of America. The house built in 1832 has been carefully restored and is open from May 15th-October 15th, from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm (Sunday 11:00 am – 4:00 pm)

An active group of civic minded citizens and public officials working with their legislators have succeeded in securing a substantial grant totaling about \$3.1 million from a combination of local, state and federal sources which will be used to restore the Portage lock and canal system and encourage new redevelopment of the community's waterfront. Phase I work has included restoring the first lock, repairing canal walls, and creating the popular Portage Pathways recreation trail.

Mayor Jahn and other Portage community leaders, including representatives of the Surgeon's Quarters and Indian Agency House historic attractions, attended a meeting with representatives of the Fox-Wisconsin Heritage Parkway project to discuss our common interests and how our partnership could enhance our efforts to secure a National Heritage Area designation for the parkway project. This national recognition would help to attract visitors to Portage, reinforce waterfront redevelopment efforts, and strengthen future applications for federal funding for the City of

Portage project. The City of Portage will host the February meeting with our partners on the Lower Wisconsin River.

WHO ARE WE, AND WHY ARE WE INVOLVED?

Friends of the Fox

Friends of the Fox (FOF) is not-for-profit advocacy group established to work toward preservation and development of the environmental, cultural, historic, economic, and quality of life assets offered by the Fox River.

The Fox-Wisconsin Heritage Parkway was a founding vision of FOF and embodies each piece of our mission. Refurbishing and reopening the historic lock system was seen as the first step in repairing the infrastructure, the base on which the Parkway would build. Now that so much progress has been made toward reopening the waterway we have the opportunity to broaden our efforts to the support of historic and recreational sites along the corridor.

FOF looks forward to partnering with the residents of our corridor to preserve, commemorate and most especially celebrate the unique story of our Fox-Wisconsin Rivers. It is a multi-layered story which has yet to be told; one that is rich, interesting, and brings with it more pride and understanding of our home.

East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

The East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (ECWRPC) is comprised of planning and technical specialists that are responsible for intergovernmental planning and coordination for the physical, social and economic development of the East Central region. ECWRPC supports and is actively involved in the Fox-Wisconsin Heritage Parkway for the following:

- The Heritage Parkway will provide increased public access and recreational opportunities along the river for local residents.
- The Heritage Parkway will add to the quality of life that will make it easier for businesses to attract quality professionals and personnel.
- Establishing a Fox-Wisconsin Heritage Parkway will provide an opportunity to draw in more people to expand our tourism economy.

Coming Events

Saturday, February 21 - Fremont, WI 7 - 9:30 PM
Tri-County Powerboat Alliance Wine & Beer Tasting Fundraiser

Tuesday, March 24 - Berlin, WI 6 - 8 PM
Fox-Wisconsin Heritage Parkway Historical Listening Session

Friday, April 17 - Grand Chute, WI 6 PM
Friends of the Fox Annual Meeting

Mid May 2009
Open Navigation on Portions of the Lower Fox River

If you have comments or questions, or river related coming events that you would like to include in this newsletter please e-mail;

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