

# KinniKeeper

A publication of the Kinnickinnic River Land Trust

## Downstream and Upstream!

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**Dave Fodroczi**  
Executive Director

**Kim Davis**  
Office Manager



The river we care about so passionately is only about 22 miles long. Compared to the St. Croix River, the Kinnickinnic is not very large. In the context of the Mississippi watershed, it is miniscule. But, there is a very important distinction: we live in the Kinni watershed. It is our most valuable local natural resource with unique characteristics that have made a lasting impression among those who have spent time downstream and upstream. **"Downstream and upstream" is an appropriate metaphor as we consider the past five years of the KRLT and our future in conserving and protecting this valuable resource.**



During the fall of 2011 the KRLT recruited a new **Executive Director, Dave Fodroczi (1)**, while in the throes of what is now referred to as the "Great Recession." Individual, foundation and government support of a little watershed land trust was falling into the category of "nice but hard to justify" given scarce cash for donations. Conservation is a long-term game that, like a river, often just rolls along. Transitions with past Executive Directors, and the resulting change in culture and operational priorities, hit our organization like a storm hits the water in our river.

Dave began during one of these transitions and worked hard to develop a culture that is capable of truly addressing the mission of the Trust. He, like the river, has been tireless in his effort to keep moving forward; this has been no small feat during a time of scarce resources. He has been forced to reduce staff and yet complete the work necessary to keep the organization afloat. He has overseen the largely thankless job of reducing, and soon eliminating, crushing debt incurred just before and during the early years of the recession and successfully conserve key properties along our resource. He was successful in gaining recertification for the KRLT from the national organization, The Land Trust Alliance. He led efforts to complete a "Watershed Strategic

Plan," and an annual river cleanup event for the community held each April. He has been the public "face" of the Land Trust and has inspired many to conserve our precious resource.

Now, it's time for Dave to move downstream and he enters a well-deserved retirement. Fortunately, for all of us, he plans to continue to volunteer his time and talent in a variety of roles, including serving as a representative of the KRLT on both the Corridor Planning Process and our collaborative efforts with other Land Trusts. Hopefully, Dave can now sit along the bank of the river and think, "This is good." He leaves us with a positive image of what can be done and the effort it takes.



**Also moving downstream is Kim Davis (2), our tireless and reliable office manager.** There is not enough that can be said about the unsung. She represents the quiet water of the stretches of the river we often forget

as we wander along the bank looking for the riffles and gurgling rapids. We forget it is the quiet water that makes the exciting stuff possible. Kim is moving on to another opportunity in mid-August but will not be far away. We hope her current vocation will become her avocation and her passion will allow her to keep us from becoming high and dry.

After looking downstream and at what is moving away, hopefully without too much detritus and silt, the upstream view becomes clear. **While your Trust is in transition, Dave Drewiske (photo on last page) will be stepping in both as a new Board member and as an Interim Executive Director.** Needless to say, Dave F. was instrumental in recruiting him. Dave brings a new energy akin to Kelly Creek and a skill set as deep as the St. Croix where it meets our delta. He has grown up and lived on either side of the watershed or within its borders most of his life. Additionally, Dave has extensive real estate experience and a passion for the river. Look for him along the river taking notes from Dave and working to protect what is valued.

# Random Casts

by Chris Bye with Ben Torrison

*Ben Torrison is a hydrologic technician with U.S. Geological Survey at the Wisconsin Water Science Center in Middleton. He was instrumental in getting the KinniCams installed and operational! Ben has worked for the USGS for 7 years and originally comes from Manitowoc, Wisconsin. He currently lives in Middleton with his wife and daughter and his hobbies include Nordic skiing, cycling, fishing and hunting.*

**We are very excited (as you know) about the “KinniCams.” Are these cameras common throughout Wisconsin waterways, or are the KinniCams unique?**

The USGS started integrating cameras into our stream gage network over the last two years to help us operate them more effectively. The cameras have been very popular with our cooperators and the public. When the Kinnickinnic River Land Trust and Kent Johnson approached me about monitoring water clarity as a means of assessing the “fishability” of the river, I figured there had to be a way to do that using cameras. A secchi disk is a simple device used to measure water clarity most commonly in lakes, and I thought, “Why couldn’t we mount one underwater and point a camera at it?” The combination of the secchi camera, river view camera, and stream flow record provide a more complete understanding of what’s happening in the river on a near real-time basis in a way that’s truly unique.

**For those of us (me included) not familiar with your line of work, would you illuminate what a hydrologic technician with USGS does?**

Hydrologic technicians, or as we say “hydro techs”, generally have a very diverse skill set and love working outside. Hydro techs are usually the people you see operating stream gages. Tasks common to most hydro techs include measuring streamflow, operating water-quality equipment, and computing streamflow and water-quality records – the behind the scenes process that ensures data you download or see on the USGS NWIS website are corrected for the ever-changing conditions of rivers and streams!

**Located in far Western Wisconsin, we tend to get connected with Minnesota more than Wisconsin. As a hydrologic**

**technician based in the Madison area, do you have any history or connection with the Kinni or the area?**

During my first five years with the USGS I worked out of the northwest Wisconsin field office in Rice Lake. During that time, I developed a great fondness for the rivers in that area of the state. From 2012 to 2015, the USGS worked with a number of cooperators, including the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WI DNR) and the St. Croix River Interagency Basin Team, on a project investigating nutrient and sediment loading from the Apple, Willow and Kinnickinnic Rivers to the lower St. Croix River. Through this project I spent a lot of time in these watersheds and learned a tremendous amount about how streamflow relates to nutrient and sediment transport.

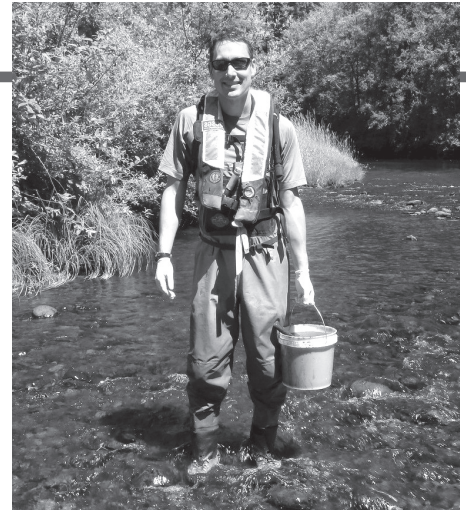
**Whether it’s a large river or a small stream, they are all interesting to me. I do have personal favorites though...**

**You obviously have knowledge of many waterways. Do you have a favorite type of river - large working river like the Wisconsin or a spring creek? Does the Kinni stand out compared to other waterways?**

Whether it’s a large river or a small stream, they are all interesting to me. I do have personal favorites though, which include the St. Croix, Namekagon, Brule, Willow and Kinnickinnic River. What stands out to me about the Kinnickinnic watershed is that it’s a fabulous resource, and people really care about and value the river. It makes my job much more rewarding when I see the passion people have for the river. My continual regret is while my job gives me opportunities to work on rivers like the Kinnickinnic, I never have time to stop and fish!

**How does the USGS (and your role as a hydrologic technician) connect with the Wisconsin DNR? Does one organization have ultimate jurisdiction over the Kinni, or does it depend on the circumstance?**

The USGS has many on-going cooperative projects with the DNR throughout the State of Wisconsin. Our agencies have partnerships to operate stream gages,



*Ben Torrison. Mohawk River, Oregon, June 23, 2015*

peak streamflow networks, groundwater wells and to conduct water-quality sampling or biological assessments. An important difference between the USGS and the DNR is that the USGS is not a regulatory agency. One of the missions of the USGS is to monitor the nation’s rivers and provide high quality, unbiased data to support management and policy decisions.

**As the USGS looks to the future, is there an overriding theme or goal that will direct your efforts over the next 3-5 years?**

This is quite a broad question given the many different things the USGS does. In addition to the core monitoring programs we maintain, the USGS Wisconsin Water Science Center conducts studies based on local partner and cooperator’s needs. Our center is always trying to be innovative in surface water and ground water programs. Some of the issues that we are currently involved in relate to effects of high-capacity well pumping, pathogens in drinking water, phosphorus runoff issues and farm field best management practices. Pumping of high capacity wells can reduce streamflow which could impact trout streams like the Kinnickinnic.

**Finally – If you had a bullhorn that could reach everyone that uses the Kinni (it’s a really loud bullhorn), what would you say? Is there anything we need to know before it’s “too late”?**

I wouldn’t say it’s too late by any means in regards to the Kinnickinnic. I would encourage people to stay active in taking care of the Kinnickinnic watershed and remember that the land and river are inextricably linked together.



# A Message from the President . . .

## On Collaborations

Over the past year the KRLT has been actively involved in discussions with two other area land trusts to explore opportunities to strategically move forward together which would allow conservation efforts in NW Wisconsin to thrive. The history of the KRLT, now almost 25 years strong, is a legacy of working to keep the Kinni cold, clean and free . . . forever. The KRLT is a small organization, but even small organizations need to file tax forms, maintain donor relations, be active in the community, effect conservation projects and programs, and keep the lights on. So, how can we best manage scarce resources and also go from fighting to survive to thriving and succeeding; not only fulfilling our mission, but also benefiting our neighboring watersheds, partnering landowners and governments?



**Your Board of Directors has recently voted to continue discussions with the West Wisconsin Land Trust and the Bayfield Regional Conservancy, effectively moving us into the “Planning Phase” of an effort that could lead to the merger of the three organizations. While the three land trusts have differences, they clearly share similar conservation missions.**

This collaborative effort is predicated on the need to use our scarce resources more effectively. A merger of the three land trusts could allow us to streamline our administrative functions, maintain essential professional staff and, most importantly, achieve our conservation priorities. Larger organizations are also more likely to gain financial support from national foundations and corporate donors.

This topic will be addressed in detail at the KRLT Annual Meeting held on June 15 in the new First National Bank addition. We strongly encourage you to attend this meeting to hear more and share your questions, ideas and concerns.

## On Cascades

**In the interest of “cold, clean and free . . . forever,” the KRLT continues to be involved in the development of the City of River Falls Corridor Plan for the Kinnickinnic.** The concept of a river restored to a series of cascades right through the heart of the community was a quietly held dream five years ago. The current (pun intended) process of Tech Talks, to be followed by a community planning meeting in October, will lead to a decision on the future of the dams by the City Council on February 18, 2018.



The process is really a community negotiation and the city council will take note of all comments (whether inspired by data or personal values), actions and efforts. Because this is a corridor planning process, it has included those who live outside the city and area but still value the Kinni. Both the City and our community are to be commended for keeping the process civil and respectful; but, this is a negotiation which needs to conclude in a win for the Kinni and the community. The next meeting exploring Dam Removal Alternatives will be on July 20, 2017. See you there.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Peter H. Dahm'.

Peter H. Dahm  
President



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# MEETING NOTICE

**Thursday, June 15 • 7:00 pm**

**KRLT Annual Meeting**

**First National Bank Community Room**

Please join us for a very important Annual Meeting at 7:00 pm on Thursday, June 15 in the First National Bank Community Room. The Annual Meeting of the Kinnickinnic River Land Trust (KRLT) will include the business meeting with annual reports, the election of new Board Members (only current KRLT members can vote), and a program on Land Trust Collaboration, led by KRLT President Peter Dahm. We will allow plenty of time for member questions and discussion. Refreshments and snacks will be served.

Please register online at  
<http://bit.ly/2qcgwRK> by Monday, June 12  
if you plan on attending the meeting.

1



2



David Drewiske (1) and Dr. Charles Rader (2) have been nominated to the Board of Directors by the board for approval by the membership at the annual meeting.

For more details about Dave and Charlie, please see  
[www.kinniriver.org/news-events/upcoming-events/](http://www.kinniriver.org/news-events/upcoming-events/)

*Please Join Us!*