



Ozark Waters

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Measuring Effectiveness in Impacting Water Quality

By John E. Moore, Jr.
Upper White River Basin Foundation

Having been an educator for most of my career, I have followed with interest the continuing debate about whether schools teach students effectively. In the public schools, tests of various sorts have been devised and implemented only to prompt debates about the relative importance of what is being tested compared to other goals of education. In higher education, accreditation puts the stamp of approval on institutions, although the emphasis in accreditation reviews is often on things other than what students are learning. As a general observation about education, however, there is more attention to what students are actually getting from their school experience than there has been in the past.

The issue of effectiveness was a topic of discussion in a meeting of the Foundation's board at the end of last week. Our mission is to promote water quality in the upper White River watershed through bi-state collaboration on research, education, public policy and action projects. The vision which inspired the

Foundation's establishment at the beginning of this century was having the four major reservoirs in the watershed recognized as the cleanest manmade lakes in North America. An ambitious mission and vision! The bottom line for us has been what impact we are actually having on water quality. This question has been a staple on our board agendas.



Lake Taneycomo near Forsyth, Missouri

Photo: Jim Welch

How do we answer such a question? There are many ways to respond, ranging from summaries of the projects, activities and programs we sponsor to anecdotal and periodic research reports about trends in water quality. Likewise, when we are appropriately asked "how is the water?" we can provide a running discussion of what we observe and what we are doing in our work.

The nexus between our work and water quality is inferred, and that is likely the case with other organizations as well. The answer to the question is not invalid, just not as precise as we would like.

The question sometimes arises as to how our Foundation operates. Unlike some other groups with similar missions, the Upper White River Basin Foundation is not supported by public money or by public memberships. Although the Founda-

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Measuring Effectiveness

Continued from Page 1

tion has received some foundation and government grant support, our (modest) operating cost is underwritten annually by the corporate and personal commitments of Foundation trustees. Uniquely, the Foundation has a bi-state focus, recognizing that the larger watershed begins in Arkansas, drains into Missouri and then returns to Arkansas. Impacts on water quality thus require a bi-state focus prompting us recently to propose a bi-state compact to the two governors for cooperation and communication about water quality concerns in the basin watershed.

But to return to the question of overall effectiveness and impact on water quality, there is clearly a need for more precision in the way we and other groups respond to the question. First, it is important to note that there is good work going on; programs to raise awareness, to prompt the public to think about water quality, to take measures at home and work to lower adverse impacts on the watershed, to conduct research studies to identify problems and to propose solutions, and to undertake action projects to clean up and stabilize streams. It is also important to acknowledge that the direct connection between the specific projects we undertake and the precise amount of improvement in water quality can be subtle and difficult to pin down. The assessment therefore needs to be done in the aggregate, evaluating what the overall effect of our efforts has been.

Toward this end, the Foundation is undertaking several significant projects to respond more precisely to impacts on water quality. The first is a basin-wide water quality monitoring program as the basis for an annual state of the watershed report. Now underway, the intention is to provide a scientifically sound, systematic and continuing measure of overall water quality in the upper White River basin and to report this to the public in answer to the question "how is the water?". Another prospective project involves surveys of public opinion, concerns and knowledge about water quality issues giving some measure to efforts to raise awareness and commitment to the cause.

Is our work effective? Are the things we are doing having an impact on water quality? Are

we fulfilling our mission and helping realize our vision in a reasonable way? The answer to these questions is a resounding yes. Still these are important questions for our Foundation and for every other organization regardless of its purpose. Reliably, these questions will continue to be a regular staple on our meeting agendas, and should be on the agendas of other organizations as well.

Upcoming Events



May 22, 2008
ONSITE WASTEWATER TRAINING CENTER GRAND OPENING

Watershed Committee of the Ozarks

5:00 pm, Open to Public

Watershed Center at Valley Water Mill
Springfield, MO

Experts will be on hand to answer questions and the first 75 attendees will receive a \$100 septic tank pump-out coupon.

For more info call 417-866-1127 or visit www.watershedcommittee.org.

May 24, 2008
BULL SHOALS FIELD STATION WATER FESTIVAL & OPEN HOUSE

11 am — 4 pm

Join the Bull Shoals Field Station for fun family activities to learn about water resources! Visit: <http://www.bullshoals.missouristate.edu/>

May 31, 2008
KINGS RIVER CLEAN-UP

8:00 am, Public Welcome!

Grandview Bridge, Hwy. 143 (5 miles north of Hwy. 62 between Eureka Springs and Berryville) Arkansas

The KRWP will be cleaning up a stretch of the Kings River from the bridge down to the Romp Hole Access. Other events include an annual cookout, door prizes, volleyball and a live bluegrass band.

For more information, call 870-654-4134.

CONTEST!

Have artistic ability?
Help the Watershed Committee of the Ozarks design a bicycle rack for the Watershed Center and win a nifty prize! Details at:

<http://www.watershedcommittee.org/wordpress/?cat=3>



May 31-June 8, 2008
NATIONAL RIVER CLEAN UP WEEK

Join the Watershed Committee as they spruce up a section of the Little Sac River north of Springfield.

To help, call 417-866-1127 or visit www.watershedcommittee.org

May 6, 2008
WATERSHED COMMITTEE OF THE OZARKS MONTHLY MEETING

7:30 am, Open to Public

Midtown Carnegie Library, 397 E. Central
Springfield, MO

Topic: *Can we afford not to protect our streams? A cost-analysis approach.*

Eric Dove, P.E., Olsson Associates

For more information, call 417-866-1127 or visit www.watershedcommittee.org



May 7, 2008
RIVER RESCUE 2008

9 am, Registration: 8 am

James and Finley Rivers near Ozark, MO

Join the James River Basin Partnership for River Rescue 2008. River clean-up during the day, brats & bluegrass concert at night.

Canoes provided for participants needing one; t-shirts and lunch provided.

For more information and to register, call 417-836-4847 or visit www.jamesriverbasin.com

BASIN NEWS

Quiet work behind the scenes killed Village Law

Missourinet

<http://www.missourinet.com/gestalt/go.cfm?objectid=F7EE838E-A5F2-5F30-33ADFFDDB0DBB431>

Rep. Jay Wasson (R-Nixa), who worked behind-the-scenes during the last week of the legislative session to guide the Village Law repeal through the House, gives credit to the other chamber for the success.

County officials relieved by controversial law's repeal

Springfield News-Leader

<http://www.news-leader.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2008805170353>

County commissioners across the state were relieved --some even "elated" -- to learn a controversial law affecting their counties will be repealed with the governor's signature. Franklin County Presiding Commissioner Ed Hillhouse said he was happy with the outcome, but critical. "In my opinion, it has taken days, weeks, months to deal with something that probably should never have been passed in the first place. And look at the positive legislation and the other things that our legislators ... could have been working on for the state of Missouri," he said.

Landowners with plans to form their own villages

Springfield News-Leader

<http://www.news-leader.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2008805170354>

A list of the main efforts so far that have been filed or are under way to use the controversial 2007 village law to establish autonomous, incorporated villages in Missouri.

FAYETTEVILLE : New lake advisers meet

Arkansas Democrat-Gazette

<http://www.nwanews.com/adg/News/225839/>

Fifteen members of the Beaver Lake Policy Advisory Group held an orientation meeting in downtown Fayetteville, with the eventual goal to make recommendations on how to protect Beaver Lake. The Northwest Arkansas Council, a nonprofit agency that pushes economic development projects for the region, is behind the creation of the advisory group. The council, which selected the 20 members of the advisory group, raised \$ 500, 000 to hire a consulting firm to complete the management plan.

Appreciating The War Eagle

The Morning News

<http://www.nwaonline.net/articles/2008/05/15/outdoors/051508war.txt>

Drifting down the creek had a purpose Saturday on the War Eagle River during War Eagle Appreciation Day, designed to heighten awareness of the stream and its watershed. What happens on the War Eagle doesn't stay on the War Eagle. It ends up in Beaver Lake. That point was driven home during a float trip and education program focusing on the War Eagle, a major tributary of Beaver Lake.

Pump-out program extended to help more homeowners

Branson Daily News

<http://www.bransondailynews.com/story.php?storyID=7491>

The septic tank pump-out \$50 rebate program has been extended for the Table Rock Lake community, thanks to funding from the Missouri Department of Conservation.

WATER NEWS

U.S. Coastal Waters Less Toxic Than 20 Years Ago

ENS Newswire

<http://www.ens-newswire.com/ens/may2008/2008-05-12-02.asp>

U.S. environmental laws enacted in the 1970s are reducing overall contaminant levels in coastal waters of the United States, finds a 20 year study released today by scientists with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, NOAA.

Corn-Fed Chickens Losing Out to Corn-Fed Cars

Bloomberg

[http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?](http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601039&refer=columnist_skrzycki&sid=agL7VZlF3kwUH)

[pid=20601039&refer=columnist_skrzycki&sid=agL7VZlF3kwUH](http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601039&refer=columnist_skrzycki&sid=agL7VZlF3kwUH)

The \$40 billion chicken industry, along with livestock producers, oil interests, grocers and some environmental and anti-hunger groups are hoping to put up a regulatory blockade to stop the diversion of corn stocks into the brewing of billions of gallons of ethanol for vehicles this year.

Reader says ethanol mix cuts mileage

Arkansas Democrat-Gazette

<http://www.nwanews.com/adg/News/225835/>

Ethanol is surely percolating through most car engines these days, but some folks fret about corn gas. Lora Bradford of Rogers said corn gas is giving her bad mileage, and other readers have given The Guru similar accounts of reduced mileage due to ethanol.

Sewer to Spigot: Recycled Water

Wall Street Journal

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB121081371900793887.html>

In an effort to replenish its groundwater supply, Los Angeles is slated to announce Thursday a plan that will recycle 4.9 billion gallons of treated wastewater to drinking standards by 2019. In San Diego, the city council voted in favor of a pilot project that would pump recycled sewage water into a drinking-water reservoir, despite a veto from the mayor over the system's cost. Miami-Dade County, Fla., is planning a system that would pump 23 million gallons a day of purified wastewater into the ground; the water will eventually travel to a supply well and be reclaimed for drinking use.

CAFOs in conflict: Huge farms increase efficiency but create environmental concerns

Kalamazoo Gazette

http://www.mlive.com/news/index.ssf/2008/05/cafos_in_conflict_huge_farms_i.html

Opponents of huge livestock operations complain they cram animals together like sardines, threaten the environment with massive quantities of waste and generate smells that could peel paint off the walls. Supporters call them technological models of efficiency and energy conservation that protect animals from predators and disease, manage manure wastes that were once scattered across fields and streams, and create cheap food and full-time employment.

OPINIONS

Times Editorial : Living smarter

Northwest Arkansas Times

<http://www.nwanews.com/nwat/Editorial/65148/>