



Spring 2017

Mother Nature Awakens!

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER
OF THE FRIENDS OF
MCGILVRAY ROAD
PO Box 2976
La Crosse, WI 54602-2976

President's Message

Winter has left us, and with a few false starts, spring is at hand.

There has been a burn of the big brush piles by the WDNR. Several efforts were required to clean up wind and flood damage. Pat Caffrey has filled holes along the trail, dealt with many tree issues, and been a stalwart super volunteer. All that, and handling our treasurer's job and membership!

Our endowment is important and growing. Pat Caffrey, D.A. Ferguson and Jay Fernholz guide that very important aspect of our group.

Bob Cottrell carefully removes debris from the trail and keeps an eye on the property. (continued)

Who's Who in the Friends of McGilvray Road

Board of Directors

Nancy Hill	Mike Howe
D.A. Ferguson	Pat Caffrey
Linda McMullin	Jay Fernholz
Herbert Grimek	Ruth Scholze

Officers

President - Nancy Hill
Vice President - Mike Howe
Treasurer - Pat Caffrey
Secretary - Ruth Scholze
Media - Linda McMullin

Check out our website and connect with us at <http://www.7bridgesrd.org>

Join us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofMcGilvrayRd>

We have a new member, Roger Ziegler, who is out on the trail daily with his dog, and helps keep us aware of what is going on.

Linda Mc Mullin has updated the National Geographic GeoTourism site, and the website. She keeps track of Facebook and does the newsletter. We really appreciate articles sent to her, and, of course, her devotion to our outreach.

We continue to await good weather and a better time to install the ford at Bridge 1 and to work on the trail between Bridges 4 and 5. September's flood was the 6th greatest in history, and kept us from doing the work we wished to complete in late autumn. Anna Jahns, our DNR liaison tells us that the permits are still in place. Let's hope we can do this job soon. When we can get heavier equipment further into the property, Bridge 3 will get a new deck and the exposed culvert between Bridges 3 and 4 will be removed and the trail repaired.

It's time for a good walk on the trail!

Our annual Historic Preservation Walk will be held on June 4 this year. We will have members guiding the walk between Bridges 1 and 4.

National Geographic Geotourism

National Geographic has established a website to serve as a travel guide to the places most respected and recommended by locals. It provides extensive information on: Places to Go, Things to Do and Where to Stay in several regions of the United States.

Last year, The Friends of McGilvray Road as an organization submitted two separate pages for inclusion on this website. We constructed two web pages about McGilvray Road. One is entitled "7 Bridges-McGilvray Rd Hiking Trail" and is included in the Things to Do/Outdoor Adventure category. The second is entitled "McGilvray Road Truss Bridge Group" and is found under Places to Go/Historic Site.

Our submissions are included in the Mississippi River Regional website found here:

<http://mississippiriver.natgeotourism.com/>

Use the above link and check out the hundreds of fun and interesting travel and educational ideas presented!

Information specifically about the Mississippi River Area from the home page.

"Welcome to this grand tour of the Mississippi River corridor. Whether you are looking for a great day trip or the sojourn of a lifetime, you'll find it here. Choose a region that intrigues you and click on the interactive map to reveal all that it offers. Follow the links to make your reservations now or wish, dream and save it to your My Trip Ideas folder, then create a Trip Plan. You just might find that planning your Mississippi River adventure is almost as much fun as taking it!"

If you are interested only in viewing the two pages about McGilvray Road, the links are below.

Hiking Trail <http://mississippiriver.natgeotourism.com/content/7-bridges-mcgilvray-rd-hiking-trail/mspef9414dab582c98da>

Historic Bridges <http://mississippiriver.natgeotourism.com/content/mcgilvray-road-truss-bridge-group/mspd16282db2e95d97f9>

The following is information is taken from the Geotourism site.

<http://mississippiriver.natgeotourism.com/>

"Geotourism is a content marketing program that provides a platform for destinations to inventory and promote the places that locals most respect and recommend, in partnership with National Geographic.

It brings local people and organizations together to define what's special about their destination and produce user-generated content about unique attractions, businesses, and events to provide a comprehensive digital and/or printed MapGuide for travelers and a forum for sustainability discussions and actions.

The Geotourism MapGuide platform activates local people to create and publish content and stories that would otherwise be undiscovered and draws visitors to locally owned businesses and attractions for the benefit of local economies."

In recognition of our participation in the program we were awarded the following two certificates



Can you help?



Do you have an hour or several days available? The Friends of McGilvray Road is an all volunteer group which is always ready to welcome additional hands for anywhere from long term help to a one shot hour of your time. Any time you can give us would be MOST appreciated.

Volunteer Opportunities

Adopt a Rack!

Throughout the area, businesses, hotels, and public facilities have tourist information racks available to visitors. We have need of a person or two (or more) to add our McGilvray Road brochures to the offerings. Some places need a supply once a season, others twice. If you drive by one or two of the places in need of brochures, simply stopping once a year to slip a bunch in the rack could really help.

A vertical poster with a pink background. At the top, it says "Hiking and Recreation" in bold. Below that, "7 Bridges" McGilvray Road. In the center is a photograph of a dirt path through a wooded area with several large, old wooden bridges. Below the photo, it says "Visit the Rare Historic Bridges of McGilvray Road in the Van Loon Wildlife Area". Underneath that, "A Unique Experience". At the bottom, it says "Restoration and Maintenance by Friends of McGilvray Road and WI Dept of Natural Resources" and the website "www.7bridgesrd.org".

Horton's Clips

This newsletter can always use an article for publication. Send us something you would like to share that would be of interest to the members. (See the submission below) If you are somewhat proficient with MS Word or Publisher (or the like) be our editor once, or on a regular basis!

Education Outreach

Contact teachers in the area to make them aware of the Bridges and Trail. Many educational opportunities are possible related to McGilvray Road from its history, to studies of the flora and fauna of the area. Teachers might find McGilvray Road to be an interesting unit of study or a topic for a student project. Help get the word out.

Clean up

Visitors are not always neat or considerate. Take along a trash bag when you walk the trail and "Help Keep McGilvray Clean!"

Trail Work



If you have been out on the trail within the last couple of years, you have seen the culvert area between Bridge 3 and Bridge 4 where most of the trail has been washed out multiple times. It has been hazardous to get through, especially with ice and snow, making the "safe" way around it less visible; and subsequent floods may make it more difficult or risky to use this section of trail. The DNR signed this hazard to warn the public. Individuals who walk past the culvert section need to understand that they

do so at their own risk.

Portions of the trail have flooded nine times since last spring (high enough to flood the access road parking lot on Hwy 35), but we believe that just three floods, April & September of 2016, and then February of 2017 were high enough to wash out the culvert. Steve Gilbertson regraded it after the April flood with his bobcat, and Pat Caffrey regraded it with hand tools after the September flood.



When the water gets down low enough, construction will begin on a ford south (downstream) of Bridge One. That is what the pile of rock is for. The ford will enable us to get equipment back to the culvert area. The culvert cannot be removed and the area cannot be re-graded and repaired until after the ford is installed since the historic bridges can only accommodate pedestrian loads.

When construction begins on that segment, it will be cordoned off, so that individuals CANNOT enter the construction site. We will try to keep you apprised of the situation before construction is started. Let's keep our fingers crossed that we can get the project done this spring and can take all the signs down!!

OH MY!

1958 Dave Zimmer's Birthday Party.



Submitted by Dennis Grokowsky

The boys jumped in to swim from the 4th bridge: Left to Right: Martin Hanson, Dennis Grokowsky, Dave Zimmer, Skip Zimmer, Jack Haug, Gerome Grokowsky. On Bridge: Mr. and Mrs. Zimmer, daughter Sue, and unknown.

[Editor's note: If anyone else has early memories of McGilvray Road and the bridges, they are encouraged to please share. They will be published in a later newsletter. Please email them to me at mcmullinda@gmail.com or mail a copy to our address on page one.]

National Historic Preservation Month Celebration

***You are invited to walk with us on the McGilvray (7 Bridges) Road
Sunday June 4, 2017 1-3+ PM***

Enjoy informative talks at the bridges and as you walk the trail.
[\[below is a list of previous walk offerings - we are hoping to schedule similar activities this year.\]](#)



- 🌳 History of the Bridges and of the Friends of McGilvray road, Bridge 1, by Friends Members.
- 🌳 Details of bridge construction and information about the ongoing maintenance of the bridges and trail - Pat Caffrey volunteer and engineer, Bridge 2.
- 🌳 Area birds and waterfowl - Bob Cottrell, nature lover, along the trail
- 🌳 Trees and herbaceous plants - Jay Fernholz, along the trail
- 🌳 Van Loon Wildlife Area - a 4000 acre treasure - Anna Jahns, DNR, at 1:30 and 2:30, Bridge 4
- 🌳 History of the wooden Kingpost bridge and its replacement - Gile (Mac) McWain, at Bridge 5

Bridge related books, visors, and note Cards will be for sale at the trailhead