

The Otter's Tale

Newsletter of the Friends of Pool 9

December, 2022

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PRESIDENT'S VIEW

As we celebrate Thanksgiving, I would like to express my thankfulness to the members and donors of the FOP9 organization. It is the membership that makes this organization so successful. Through the efforts of our members, we are able to make the upper Mississippi River Refuge and Pool 9 a better place. For that I THANK YOU ALL! As we look forward to the new year, I would like to challenge the membership of FOP9 to be even more involved in the activities of the organization. Look in this issue of the Otter's Tale and note the upcoming Calendar of Events on the last page. Mark your calendar for an event or project you may be able to participate in, or assist with. Please remember that as members we can make the Refuge a better place every time we visit. If there's trash at a landing or a beach, we can clean it up. We can participate in the voluntary avoidance of waterfowl resting on closed areas during migration. If it doesn't work for you to participate in the MRAD event or one of the kid's fishing events sponsored by FOP9, take a young person fishing, hunting, canoeing, or exploring the Refuge. With all of us working together we can make Pool 9 and the Upper Mississippi an even more special place to visit. It is truly a blessing to live here and have this magnificent place literally 'at our door-step' for all of us to enjoy. Enjoy the winter ice and I'll see you in the spring.

Alex Galema, President

MEMORIAL FUNDS AND ESTATE PROCEEDS

The Friends of Pool 9 are honored and appreciative of people remembering loved ones with gifts and donations of funds. We are especially extending a thank you to families that have decided to pass on memorial funds to us in memory of their loved ones. This year memorial funds were received from family and friends for the following people: Pauli Schmadeke, Fritz Schubert, John Schild, Ken Kartman, and proceeds from the Pat Sandry Memorial Fishing Tournament. Funds were also received from the Rose M. Johnson Estate and from the Margaret Kerndt Estate.

MESSAGE FROM FOP9 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

On behalf of the Board of Directors of FOP9 we would like to thank you for your generous donation. Our annual meeting serves as a time to gather together socially, to recognize the altruistic accomplishments and contributions of the members and to raise operating funds for the coming year. This annual meeting serves as our primary fundraising effort, thanks to your contribution, our night was a resounding success.

We are grateful to your support, and I hope you will remember us again next year. In the meantime, rest assured, we will continue our efforts to preserve and protect the wildlife, the quality of life within the pool 9 section of the Mississippi River, and also to educate people of all ages on the beauty, importance and majesty of the river. Your donations help us make this possible and we could not do it without you. With sincere appreciation.

Christa Hall

FOP9 BUYS BINOCULARS



Friends of Pool 9 recently purchased ten pair of binoculars from River N Ridge in Lansing. They will be used to enhance the birding experience for MRAD (Mississippi River Adventure Day) students during the spring outing for Lansing Eastern Allamakee and De Soto students. The annual event is organized by Kee teacher

Lisa Welsh and De Soto teacher Evan Wick, as well as Ross Geerdes at the Driftless Center, and is scheduled for May 15, 2023.

MRAD students and others will enjoy birding with the new binoculars recently purchased by FOP9. They will be stored at the Driftless Center for all to use and enjoy.

2022 ANNUAL REQUEST FOR MEMBER SUPPORT

As the year 2022 winds down we review our goals and begin to make plans for 2023 on the Mississippi and Pool 9. Your support is always essential to the success of Friends of Pool 9 and what we can get done to make Pool 9 the "best on the Upper Miss". Many of you have given a great deal this past year, both in terms of your volunteerism and in your pocketbook, and we appreciate all of you. Our accomplishments are many, all because of you and your willingness to serve. If you have not had the opportunity to give this year, we would ask that you consider making a one-time gift to Friends of Pool 9 before the year is over.

Please place your end of the year donation in the envelope provided. We cannot survive without your volunteer efforts and your continued financial support. At this time of year, we often receive memorials in memory of loved ones as well. If your check is a Memorial, please indicate who it is in memory of in the memo space. We thank you in advance for your generosity and have included a donation envelope in this newsletter for your convenience. FOP9 is a 501 (c) 3 organization and your donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by the law. We thank you for your continued support and involvement in the mission and work of Friends of Pool 9.

FRIENDS OF POOL 9 ANNUAL MEETING September 24, 2022

Just over one hundred twenty FOP9 members gathered at the New Albin Community Center for a celebration of the year's activities, with a neat evening of fellowship and good will. Judy Schild and Mary Twaites had the check-in well organized, as did Christa Hall, Kelly Hutchinson, Denise Becker, Sue English, Betty Zarwell, and Lisa Welsh with the nice collection of Silent Auction items; and we all appreciated their willingness to do those duties for FOP9. Jerry Boardman had once again filled the FOP9/Tim Loose Scholarship raffle-bin with willing donations, and the 52-card raffle by Tom Limbach and Alex was a success as bidders took a chance on the kayak.

MC Larry Quamme did a "masterful" job as did President Alex Galema to get the business meeting started. Larry introduced the Board members in attendance and gave special tribute to each of them for their service. He also thanked our partners including Genoa National Fish Hatchery, the US Army Corps of Engineers, the Wisconsin and Iowa DNR's, Vernon County and Allamakee County Solid Waste, and the Allamakee County Driftless Area Education and Visitor Center. He also thanked the major corporate donors this year including Kerndt Brothers Savings Bank, New Albin Savings Bank, Dairyland Power Cooperative, and the Great River Roadhouse. He paid tribute to the late John Schild and shared condolences with family members present and thanked them for the memorials donated in John's name. Minutes from the 2021 meeting were reviewed by all members and were approved as written. The financial report was given and reviewed by Treasurer Larry Quamme, it shows that FOP9 had an income of \$29,840.61 and expenses of \$27,949.53 for the year, just the way a non-profit should be. Total cash funds held by Friends of Pool 9 as of 9/1/2022 were \$65,840.77. On a motion by Bob Henkel and a second by Don Walsh, the report was approved.

Nominations for election to the Board of Directors for the 2022 to 2025 term were offered by the Nominations Committee (Kevin Quillin, Tim Becker, and Larry Quamme) and included Alex Galema, John Mitchell, and Bob Henkel running for re-election. The fourth nominee was Ric Zarwell who will be replacing Darrin Thran who resigned. Larry extended appreciation to Darrin for his years of service and explained that his employment prevents his attendance at the Board meetings. Larry asked for nominations from the floor three times (as required in the By-Laws) and hearing none asked for a motion to proceed. John Verdon moved that a unanimous ballot be cast and on a second by Sue English, members voted to approve the four directors.

USFWS McGregor District Manager Kendra Pednault was introduced and presented Volunteer Hourly Awards to: Alex Galema (100 hr.), Blake Schoh (100 hr.), and Susan Cantine - Maxson (100 hr.), Kevin Quillin (250 hr.), Sue English (500 hr.), Bob Henkel (1000 hr.), and Larry Quamme (1000 hr.). President Galema reviewed the volunteerism offered by a member this year and presented The Friends of Pool 9 Volunteer of the Year award for 2022 to Sue English for her diligence and commitment to the activities of FOP9.



Kevin Quillin receives a 250 Hour Service Award from USFWS McGregor District Manager Kendra Pednault. Award given at a FOP9 Board meeting in November.



Tom Limbach and Alex Galema 'work the crowd' selling chances on a kayak drawing, at the 2022 FOP9 Annual meeting.

With the business portion of the meeting being completed it was time for the Invocation and Blessing for the meal. And the prize of the evening went to Father Ed Lechtenberg (96 years young) as he presented his baritone voice in song and prayer of the

Sue English holds the Friends of Pool 9 Volunteer of the Year award she received at the 2022 FOP9 Banquet in September, 2022



virtues of the Mississippi River and our little corner of the world, sung to the tune of This Land is Your Land by Woody Guthrie and he ended with "this land was made for you and me". Amen. Thank You Father Ed, we'll remember that evening prayer for a long time.

Copy below printed with permission from Father Ed.

Father Ed Lechtenberg, relaxing at his comfortable home on Diagonal Street in Lansing, Iowa following the Friends of Pool 9 banquet where he presented the following:

Prayer sung to- *This Land Was Made for You and Me (Woody Guthrie)*

By Father Edward W. Lechtenberg for Friends of Pool 9 Annual Meeting



As I went boating on the beautiful Mississippi River from Lynxville to Genoa, I saw before me this magnificent span of water. I saw fishermen casting their lines, I saw commercial fishermen lowering their nets, I saw a soaring eagle. I saw egrets and blue herons patiently waiting, I saw a large flock of white pelicans, I saw a towboat with its many barges, I saw a large cruiser plowing the waters. And I said to myself, "thanks God, for giving this great river to you and me."

I looked around me at the beautiful bluffs; the limestone cliffs on the Wisconsin side. I saw the many villages and towns that grace the sides of the river, with their own historical backgrounds, and I prayed again, "Oh God, thank you for giving this creative beauty to you and me."

I saw the Power Plant, I saw the great addition of the Driftless Museum and Learning Center, I saw the historic Blackhawk Bridge, I saw the famous Mt. Hosmer; and my home town, Lansing. And I said, "this river was made for you and me."

Tonight, here in New Albin in this wonderful community center, I look around me and see these distinguished men and women, these boys and girls who fly under the banner "Friends of Pool 9" and I thank God for them and this events arrangements.

They give of themselves to maintain and beautify this God-given treasure. So, God Bless You for continuing to keep this Pool 9 attractive for all who come here, to explore this beauty, so that all together we can sing and shout: "This unique part of God's creation Was Made for You and Me!" Amen.

Friends of Pool 9 activities for the year included the FOP9 Annual meeting, Ice-fishing winter days for students, Scholarships to Kee and De Soto High Schools, Mississippi River Clean-Up Day where 100 volunteers collected 5,800 pounds (2.9 tons), an average of 58 pounds for each of the 100 volunteers. This brings the total poundage of trash removed from Pool 9 since 2006 to 168,800 pounds (84.40 tons). Other activities included a Kids Fishing Day at Black Hawk Park and a Kids Fishing Day at Lansing Fish Days (organized by the VFW), Mississippi River Adventure Day (MRAD) for Kee and De Soto students, compiling Bald Eagle nest data in Pool 9, where the group recorded 189 active nests (adult at the nest) out of the 262 nests check (72% active). Eight nests and trees were blown down and the group expects this to happen more often in the coming years since there are so many dead trees on the Refuge.

Other Friends of Pool 9 activities for 2022 included placing portable toilets at five landing sites in Pool 9, cleaning

USFWS UPDATE

Kendra Pednault, McGregor District Manager

The US Fish & Wildlife District staff have had a busy and productive summer. They've worked on mapping invasive species and their removal, forest inventory and rusty patch bumble-bee surveys. They've deployed acoustic bat monitors on the Refuge (near the Upper Iowa River) and will deploy more in the future. Receivers are left in the field to record bat calls that are then analyzed by computer software.

Staff has also been working on the Habitat Restoration and Enhancement Projects (HREP) in Pool 9, such as the Conway HREP project. The Harpers HREP Repair was evaluated by staff on a September visit and appears to be faring well. The willows have had an excellent growing season with some reaching six feet in height in one growing season. The average water levels and timely rains have helped the plantings catch hold. The Reno Bottoms HREP planning continues and a feasibility study will be made available to the public in the near future.

Many hours have been spent posting the closed areas in lower Pool 9 by staff, as we gear up for the fall migration. These areas are closed to waterfowl hunting, and USFWS is asking boaters to voluntarily avoid navigating these waters and disturbing resting migrating waterfowl. From mid-October through mid-November, thousands of migrating birds stop-over on the Mississippi River to rest and refuel in our nearby nature. Recreational boaters and sport fisherman should avoid entering the **Voluntary Waterfowl Avoidance Area**, plainly marked with signs and buoys. Join your fellow boaters in giving these tired travelers the space they need by staying outside the marked area. Making this change for one month of our lives helps ensure the wonders of the wild world are still here for our children and grandchildren to enjoy. Thanks for your commitment to conservation and Pool 9.

On another note, folks have been commenting about the **expansion of wild rice in Pool 9**. Wild rice, an emergent plant, has been on the Upper Mississippi River for a long time. The first known refuge records are from 1939-1940 showing rice occurring in Pools 5, 8, and 10. In general, aquatic vegetation has been increasing in abundance and coverage from Pool 4 down to Pools 13/14. For more data, readers should review the wealth of information on aquatic vegetation in the article on the Ecological Status and Trends on the Upper Mississippi and Illinois Rivers at <https://pubs.er.usgs.gov/publication/ofr20221039>.

Why has aquatic vegetation and diversity been increasing? There are likely many factors, and the Status report lists the following: increased water clarity, decreased external and internal nutrient loading, reduced disturbance of sediment from decreasing abundance of common carp), and moderately low discharge for several consecutive years in the 2000s. It's also possible that recent high-water events have further distributed the seeds. Whatever the cause for the increase, this is good news for the river. Emergent vegetation (plants rooted in the river bottom but leaves and stems extend out of the water) provide energy and habitat for aquatic invertebrates, fish, and water birds, as well as trapping and stabilizing sediments.

area beaches and fire-rings weekly, members working at Genoa National Fish Hatchery tagging sturgeon, placing Lansing No-Wake Buoys and Genoa Wing-Dam marker buoys, tree planting on re-established Pool 9 islands, planning for the 100 Year Refuge Anniversary event, promoting Friends of Pool 9 during the RAGBRAI (Des Moines Register's great bike ride across Iowa) event that ended at Lansing, and an informational booth and fish and mussel display at Lansing Fish Days in August.

The annual acorn harvest from river-land forests took place in September and October with 57,000 acorns being collected from Pools 8,9,10. Of the total approximately 30,000 went to the USFWS nursery and 27,000 to the USACOE. It was a busy year for all and our activities totaled more than 1,600 volunteer hours for Friends of Pool 9 members.

Thanks to the committee for everything that went into the Annual meeting evening; especially the folks from Milty's Restaurant (Mike Conway) in Lansing. The food was super delicious, and the New Albin Community Center is truly a wonderful gem-stone that makes everything better. Winning raffle tickets went to Louise Cutsforth (\$500), Jody Pennel (\$500), Pat Vosberg (\$300), and Gabriel Benzing (\$200). All profits from the raffle will go toward De Soto and Lansing graduating seniors for FOP9/Tim Loose Scholarships. Tim was the key USFWS employee involved in the formation of FOP9 in 2006 and we are forever grateful to him, now deceased.

The silent auction filled the east and west rooms and offered a wide variety of items of interest to bidders, including tasty treats, wine packages, walking sticks and other items too interesting to pass up. The live auction was led by Mike Monroe and generous bidders quarreled over candy treats, beer signs, fire rings, and even a three-foot brass propeller as well as meat certificates from City Meat Market. Larry thanked everyone for their attendance, their generosity, and their commitment to Friends of Pool 9 and to the river itself. He ended with the statement that "none of this would be possible without the effort of volunteers that give thousands of hours annually and support FOP9 financially to make Pool 9 one of the best on the Upper Mississippi River.

Friends of Pool 9, Upper Miss Refuge, Inc. is a Non-Profit 501 © 3 organization whose goal is the wise use of the river resource of Pool 9, and the awareness and appreciation of all users. It's truly a great organization to be part of, thanks to all our 800 members. See you on the river.

FRIENDS OF POOL 9 LANSING FISH DAYS STAND

Just two weeks after a very successful RAGBRAI event the gang of Sue English, Alex and Shelly Galema, Jerry Boardman, and several others set up and manned the FOP9 stand in the fest grounds below the ball diamond. Arrangements had been made to have the Iowa DNR Fish Truck at the fest grounds as well. This was another popular offering for the Lansing Fish Days attendees, and our appreciation to the IDNR for spending the Saturday in Lansing to the delight of children and adults as well. And thanks to Jerry Boardman for once again securing the mounted fish specimens and the mussel display from Genoa National Fish Hatchery.

The group sold FOP9 clothing items, and handed out maps and information about the Mississippi River, as well as the purpose and goal of Friends of Pool 9. FOP9 had also financially supported the Lansing VFW effort financially to organize a Kids Fishing event along their riverfront shoreline. It was a busy but rewarding two weeks for FOP9 with all the local activity and celebrations. Thanks to all the workers that volunteer their time and energy for FOP9.



Friends of Pool 9
P.O. Box 455
Lansing, IA 52151



HOLIDAY SHOPPING WITH FOP9 BY SUE

Struggling with ideas for gifts for the upcoming holiday? Is there a birthday around the corner? Friends of Pool 9 can help with the shopping stress. During November and in time for Christmas, Friends of Pool 9 will be offering merchandise for sale. Hooded, zip and crew neck sweatshirts, long and short sleeve adult tees, children's t shirts and hats will be available for purchase. Sizes range from S-3XL in a variety of colors.

Just go to our facebook page to view the inventory and make your selections: www.facebook.com/friendsofpool9organization.

For more information about purchasing items, email Sue English at rivergirl59@gmail.com.

FOP9 RAGBRAI STAND

Sue English and her band of workers did a great job enlightening all that passed their way at the final stop on the 2022 RAGBRAI circuit across Iowa. Lansing was the end point and received thousands of bikers anxious to "dip their tires" in the Mississippi. All that approached the FOP9 stand on Main Street were offered a free can-cover with our FOP9 logo. The group sold shirts, hats, and other items to the enthusiastic travelers, and handed out lots of brochures and membership applications as well. Sue commented that *it was very successful*. Thanks to all the staffers for working the event.

Calendar of Events For 2023

Ferryville Eagle Day.....Mar. 4
River Clean-up.....April 22
Pool 9 Eagle Survey.....April/May
EACS/De Soto MRAD.....May 15
Scholarships De Soto/Lansing.....May
No-Wake-Buoys Placed.....April/May
Beach Work.....Summer
Clean Fire Rings.....Monthly by Volunteers
Black Hawk Park kids fishing.....August 5
Lansing Fish Days Booth.....August 12 (Fish Display)
Sturgeon Tagging @ GNFH.....Aug. - Sept.
100 Year Refuge Anniversary 2024
FOP9 Annual Mtg.....September 23

**Board meetings 2023 at Driftless Center 7:00 PM.
March 13, May 8, July 10, Oct. 9, Nov. 13**

The Friends of Pool 9, Upper Miss Refuge, Inc. is a grassroots citizen action group, whose sole purpose is the protection, restoration, and preservation of our natural resources. The 800 member organization has no dues requirements, and pays for its activities through donations and grants. It is a 501c3 federally tax exempt organization, all donations are tax deductible. The communities that border Pool 9 are its primary contributors and supporters.