

Friends of the Pecatonica River Foundation

THE CURRENT

June 2022



After about eight years of use, the floating dock at McConnell needed repair. The boards at the lower structure, on four sides, were recently replaced. Lee Butler stands next to floatation added to the Wes Block floating dock.

We are working on McConnell, Wes Block, and at Atten's Landing. We are repairing an old launch, preparing a new launch, and cleaning a mess at a future launch site. Our Cat 966 loader is close to being ready. Our John Deere excavator needs repair work on the hydraulic hoses. We discovered this while working on the Atten's Landing rubble. This year will be very interesting. Please call 1-815-353-2852 to volunteer. FPRF needs you.



Joe Ginger, president

MEETINGS & EVENTS

Everyone is invited. Bring your ideas!

Jun. 16	RAFTERS 6:30 P.M.
Jul. 21	Next meeting.
	FPRF meetings are the third Thursday of the month. See "ALL IN. Stephenson County" for area events.
PM	Trivia Nights Monday, Big O's Wednesday, Logan's
	GRAND OPENING! WES BLOCK LAUNCH
Aug 13	Cruise Night Begins 4 P.M. 815-233-6301
Sept 24th	Pretzel City Brewfest
	https://www.eventbrite.com/d/il--freeport/events/

Other Events & Activities

Freeport/Stephenson County
Visitors Center
4596 U.S. 20 East
Freeport, IL 61032

FPRF Events

Vaccinate and Boost!
Coming soon Wes Block Launch!

Freeport Park District
1122 S. Burchard Ave.
Freeport, IL 61032
1-815-235-6114

www.freeportparkdistrict.org

Lena Community Park District
609 N. Schuler St.
Lena, IL 61048
1-815-369-5351

www.lenaparks.org



Pecatonica River Scenes in Postcards \$12 +\$3 S&H
www.peccriver.org/projects



Watch Tom Lindblade's "Illinois' Friendliest Paddle"
<http://bit.ly/paddlethepec>

"Pecatonica River Scenes in Postcard - Book 2" \$12 + \$3 S&H

Available at: Convention & Visitors Bureau, 9 East and through the mail.

A limited number of "Pecatonica River Scenes in Postcard" are available at \$12 + \$3 S&H.

In the early years of our county, the Pecatonica River was navigated, at times, to secure better transportation to market. In 1836, Lewis M. Grigsby helped bring a boatload of lead weighing 100,000 lbs. down the river for Col. Wm. Hamilton from his diggings at Wyota, Wisconsin. In the 1840's he rafted lumber down the river. Johnson's 1854 history pokes fun at Ransomburg's steamboat pictures that were placed on some maps. He mentioned steamboats operating on the Pecatonica River, but he gave no details. 1854 was the first year of the cordwood cutting industry along the river bottoms in Harlem and Waddams Township. This supplied railroad locomotives with fuel and firewood for rapidly growing Freeport. Tradition has always stated that, "Much wood was hauled to Freeport on barges towed by small river steamboats." The river was much wider, carried more water, and was less muddy. The marshland acted as a filter and, like a sponge, released the water slowly during the summer making it more navigable. Also, in 1847, the dam was built at Freeport providing a wide and deep channel for boats. A dam was maintained at the old Goddard Mill site until it finally washed out in April 1932, ending most of the boating.

The river was Freeport's beach. Powerboats below the Goddard Dam could travel down the river as far as Brown's Mill. Coming upstream near what is called Three Rivers on the north bank was Anchor's Cottage, used by C.P. Guenther, Emil Molter, Ward Yount, F. Hermsmeier, Ernie Hermsmeier, Ben Hermsmeier, and Charles Thomas. Forest Park was on the same side, more accessible by interurban. There were some cottages for rent by the week with natural spring waters free to tenants. Next was the N.S. (meaning none such) Cottage just a few feet west of Forest Park built by a group from the Y.M.C.A. on the former Young property. On the south side of the river were the pasture and timber known as "Smokey Hollow". The Zymo Club, Buffalo Ranch, and Maple Grove were more locations, and on the south bank were the former Riverside Camp meeting Grounds (V.F.W. Club site) at the end of Shawnee St.

By the 1920s, the automobile and all-weather roads spelled the doom of river boating. Then in April 1931, the old dam washed out ending what boating remained. The river continued to silt up and get more muddy ending navigation except for rowboats and small outboards.

This information is from an article by Arthur M. Saltzer and Leslie T. Fargher. I'm not sure about the location of "Smokey Hollow", The Zymo Club, Buffalo Ranch, and Maple Grove. Any information would be appreciated.

If you are interested in improving river stewardship, promoting paddling, organizing river events, the history of the Pecatonica River and communities along the river, check our website and contact us.

Friends of the Pecatonica River Foundation
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1-815-353-2852

www.pecriver.org
www.illinoispadding.org
email: pec@pecriver.org

*We will not share or sell your email address.

Joe Ginger – President
Mickie Dittmar – Vice President
Lee Butler -- Secretary /Treasurer
Roger Schamberger – Governmental Liaison
Mickie Dittmar & John Fritz – Fundraising Chairs
Joe Green – Site Development Manager
Betty Butler -Membership



Friends of the Pecatonica River Foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization.
Dues are due in February. If you joined in July or later, you are good for 2021.
All donations are tax deductible and should be made payable to:
Friends of the Pecatonica River Foundation.