

# Friends of the Pecatonica River Foundation

# THE CURRENT

August 2022



Here is another picture of the Wes Block canoe/kayak launch taken this week. The launch is back so the launch is parallel to the direction of the river flow. Not shown are the root balls and tree trunks that were a hazard before the rains came. There is some question about hidden hazards still lurking. So stay alert.

We are working to sort out priorities for what gets our attention and what can wait. The material dumped at Atten's Landing remains to find a suitable new home and is still of great concern and very high priority. Plans are developing for this issue, and we are in close contact with government agencies.

We are waiting for things to dry out, watching the weeds grow, and hoping to get some work done. We were preparing to attack the obstructions at Wes Block when the rains came. Since FPRF has an email and Facebook presence, we would like you to contact us as to the location and severity of such obstructions. Hopefully, we will be able to help with the mud issue at Tutty's Crossing. Plans are developing for the building of a kiosk at Wes Block and a bench swing.

Joe Ginger, president

## MEETINGS & EVENTS

Everyone is invited. Bring your ideas!

Aug. 18	RAFTERS 6:30 P.M.
Sept. 15	Next meeting.
	FPRF meetings are the third Thursday of the month. See "ALL IN. Stephenson County" for area events.
Sept. 17	Albertus Airport 815-519-3729 Northwest IL Airshow
	GRAND OPENING! WES BLOCK LAUNCH
Oct 2	Crop Walk 1 pm - 4 pm 815-233-5276
Sept 24th	Pretzel City Brewfest
	<a href="https://www.eventbrite.com/d/il--freeport/events/">https://www.eventbrite.com/d/il--freeport/events/</a>

## Other Events & Activities

Freeport/Stephenson County  
Visitors Center  
4596 U.S. 20 East  
Freeport, IL 61032  
1-815-233-1357

## FPRF Events

**Sept. 17 BIG "O's Fund Raiser**  
**Oct. 26 Culvers Freeport Fund Raiser**

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

[www.freeportparkdistrict.org](http://www.freeportparkdistrict.org)

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

[www.lenaparks.org](http://www.lenaparks.org)



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



Pecatonica River Scenes in Postcards \$12 +\$3 S&H  
[www.pecriver.org/projects](http://www.pecriver.org/projects)

*"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.*

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Part one on the Jane Addams Trail and Wes Block.

In 1990 Wesley Block, a member of the Stephenson County Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) Board of Directors and a leader of the Illinois Snowmobile Association, brought an idea for a recreational trail on the no longer used railroad Right of Way to a meeting of the CVB. As an avid snowmobiler, he knew that development of a recreational trail would have a lasting impact on our area. Through his dedication, persistence, and leadership, and after much work by a host of local individuals, his dream was realized when the Jane Addams Trail was opened in 2002. Unfortunately, Wes did not live to see it, but to honor his importance in making the trail a reality, the Jane Addams Trail Commission named the trailhead in his honor. The beginning of the story starts much earlier and is quiet interesting.

The Illinois Central Railroad Charter was signed by Governor Augustus French on February 10, 1851. The Charter Lines included a pair of routes. A main line from Cairo that would pass through Clinton and reach Freeport. It then turned west ending at Dunleith (East Dubuque). By July of 1877 the Illinois Central expanded its reach by linking Freeport and Chicago and acquiring the 111-mile Gilman to Springfield via Clinton. The IC developed various acquisitions in order to create new lines. By 1929 Illinois Central had reached its zenith with a network of 6,721 miles.

In 1887 the Illinois Central began a line north from Freeport to Madison, Wisconsin. The line followed Richland Creek and ran through Scioto Mills and Red Oak, where a junction station was built, and a junction to the northwest started. The main line continued thru Buena Vista, Orangeville, and on to Monroe, Wisconsin.

The Richland Waterway was ideal for early construction of mills, and several municipalities grew up around these mills. Between the Wisconsin and Illinois state border and Freeport, five mills and resultant towns were established on the banks of the Richland long before the coming of the rail line. The railroad established stations at four of these five towns.

The route closely followed Richland Creek, which has its headwaters just south of Monroe, Wisconsin. The route was chosen for three reasons. First, building a rail line on level ground made good economic sense. Second, the route is a fairly straight north-south path between Monroe and Freeport. Third, the railway was developed to make a profit from transporting passengers and freight. Building the line to connect the municipalities along the way was a sound economic decision.

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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.

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[www.illinoispadding.org](http://www.illinoispadding.org)  
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Mickie Dittmar – Vice President  
Lee Butler -- Secretary /Treasurer  
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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.

