



## *Citizen Based Water Quality Monitoring Upper Rock River Watershed*

The Fond du Lac County Land and Water Conservation Department (LWCD) began the Upper Rock River Watershed Water Quality Improvement Project in southwest Fond du Lac County in July, 2006. This project is as a result of an agreement between the Fond du Lac County LWCD and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at the Horicon Marsh. Prior to July, 2006, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service had completed their Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment for the Horicon Marsh. Goal #4 of that Comprehensive Conservation Plan is to "provide increased conservation projects with landowners in the Upper Rock River Watershed to encourage understanding and action with these landowners on the critical issue of soil erosion and contaminants impacting the Horicon Marsh".



*Left to Right: Erin Railsback, Wendy Woyczik and Patty Meyers; Horicon National Wildlife Refuge staff, meet with the Citizen Based Monitoring volunteers at site #3 for September 2007 monitoring and sampling*

This water quality improvement project's goal is to provide the education and planning with watershed landowners for overall reduction of sediment and related pollutants that could reach the surface waters, and thus be transported to waters entering the Horicon Marsh from Fond du Lac County land ownership.

The agreement between the Fond du Lac County LWCD and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provided monies for staff time to carry out this project. The main surface water areas targeted are the West and South Branches of the Rock River in Fond du Lac County.



*Laura De Galier, Park Watch Volunteer checks Dissolved Oxygen at Site #3 utilizing the VSI550A DO Meter.*

The Fond du Lac County LWCD began a Level 3 "Citizen Based Stream Monitoring" program, utilizing an approved grant from that very source in September, 2007. Monitoring is done at three critical sites along the West Branch and South Branch of the Rock River in Fond du Lac County. The sites selected provide evaluation of the installation of sites and water quality where practices (buffers and nutrient management plans) are being planned and installed. Three months of sampling (monitoring) were completed in 2007. Initial plans to begin monitoring in March, 2008 and continue through June, 2008, were changed due to difficulty of access to all three sites until July, 2008. Present monitoring will continue to the end of calendar year, 2008 when detail of the results will be completed. Each site's monitoring will compare flow, temperature, phosphorus, pH, transparency, DO, and No<sub>3</sub>, NH<sub>4</sub>, Chloride, and TSS.

The Rock River Coalition (Ed Gruden-Citizen Monitoring Director) has proposed an additional site for monitoring in the Upper Rock River Watershed area in Fond du Lac County on another watershed that enters the Horicon Marsh.

From initial discussions on this project, to the present, the Fond du Lac County Land and Water Conservation Department, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service were looking to begin a water quality monitoring process to complement the efforts made by landowners in the watershed to improve water quality.

The Citizen Based Water Quality Monitoring (WAV) program fit hand-in-glove to what was being searched for. Discussions with Central Wisconsin Trout Unlimited, and Park Watch 2010 (Fond du Lac) provided the access and availability to trained water quality citizen volunteers to complete the in-field sampling of the quality parameters. Water Quality analysis of the samples at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point provided the availability to detailed final results of the sampling/monitoring process.



*Laura De Galier, Park Watch Volunteer assists Richard Pollack and James Humphrey (Trout Unlimited Volunteers) and Dave Beck, Park Water Volunteer in checking flow at site #2.*