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Two Local Preserves Protect Rare Resources

The Sauk Creek Nature Preserve and Lion's Den Gorge Natural Area harbor vanishing resources along Ozaukee County's Lake Michigan coast. The two preserves are examples of how land can serve as a "life preserver" for water resources, and flora and fauna now rare in this rapidly developing area.

As part of a program series called "Watershed Protection in the Spotlight," sponsored by the Sheboygan River Basin partnership (SRBP), representatives from the Ozaukee Washington Land Trust (OWLT) and Ozaukee County will lead a field trip to the two nature preserves on Saturday, October 6 from 9:00 – 11:30 a.m.

Andy Holschbach from Ozaukee County says, "The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission has identified the best of the best natural areas to be protected and preserved. We need to pool the resources of our conservation partners, like the OWLT, to protect these vanishing areas like Sauk Creek and the Lion's Den."

The Sauk Creek Nature Preserve is located in the heart of the city of Port Washington. This 20+ acre natural area offers hiking trails, bird-watching, and fishing. The rapids here are rated class I – III for whitewater kayaking, depending on the time of year and amount of rainfall. This is a truly rare find. The Preserve aids in protecting the water quality of Sauk Creek, and thus water flowing into Lake Michigan.

Lion's Den Gorge Natural Area is located on the Lake Michigan shoreline between Port Washington and Grafton. Wedged between these two quickly growing urban areas, the property represents the last stretch of private, undeveloped bluff land between Illinois and areas well north of Ozaukee County.

Lion's Den is dominated by white cedar and hardwood forest. It harbors diverse wildlife, rare plant life, and springs along the gorge walls. The bluffs and gorge offer an excellent "outdoor laboratory" to learn about the unique geological history of Southeastern Wisconsin.

Those interested in participating in the October 6 field trip should contact Laurie Paulin at (920) 388-8584 at least five days in advance to register. Field trippers will meet at the Ozaukee County Administrative Building Parking Lot, 121 West Main Street in Port Washington.

Participation is free. Additional information is also available on the SRBP website at www.sheboyganrivers.org.

The "Spotlight" series is funded by a grant from the Wisconsin Environmental Education Board, administered by SRBP in partnership with the UWEX Basin Education Initiative. The "Spotlight" series focuses on individuals, groups, government agencies and others making water protection and preservation a priority in the Sheboygan River Basin.