

A River's Life

By Elizabeth Sproehlich

The Milwaukee River, like all rivers, has a life and purpose of its own.

No repetitive lapping, but a mindful sense of purpose, heading in one direction.

An unwavering motion of twisting and turning to get to its destination and become part of something bigger, a Great Lake.

Along this journey you can bask on the surface, experiencing the gentle serenity as the colorful dragon flies lite on tiny islands of green. In moments of trust or curiosity they touchdown on your sleeve, as you watch in awe.

The heron flies overhead, waits for you to catch up, then flies ahead again, wings outstretched to glide. Painted turtles sun themselves on the fallen logs letting you glimpse their ease until you get too close. They lazily drop into the water saying, "Show's over."

Tucked beneath the surface, all is not calm. The juxtaposition of tranquil and galvanizing. Down below, the tiniest of minnows swim in synchronized schools. Portly, amorous carp thrash about wildly. Sleek, nimble ducks dive into the water, submerging before your eyes only to reappear far upstream. From miniature clawed crustaceans to majestic snapping turtles, the wonders down under are vast.

Unlike the rivers movement to the lake, my life has taken me from the lake to the river.

The trip has not disappointed me for one moment.