

# Clean Water Action Council

OF NORTHEAST WISCONSIN

CELEBRATING 35 YEARS OF WORKING TO PROTECT PUBLIC HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT IN NORTHEAST WISCONSIN

WINTER 2019-2020



## The Impact of Federal Environmental Policies on Northeast Wisconsin

### Introduction by

Board Member Carol Pearson

Federal environmental policies created by the executive and legislative branches, and interpreted by the courts, have a direct impact on life here in northeast Wisconsin.

The Trump Administration has made rolling back EPA regulations a top priority. The administration believes that over 80 rules and regulations are too taxing on businesses and industries. The administration's focus is on short-term monetary gain over long-term public health impacts from degradation to the environment. Their deregulation efforts are focused on rollbacks to air pollution and emissions, drilling and extraction, infrastructure, endangered species, and water pollution regulations.

The Trump Administration has been sued by states more than any administration since Ronald Reagan's. The lawsuit that involved the greatest number of state attorneys general is *New York v. EPA*. It involves 23 AGs, including the attorney general for the District of Columbia. The suit seeks to block the administration from rolling back the Obama Administration's Clean Power Plan.

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The air rollbacks will increase greenhouse gases and will result in reduced air quality. Trump's Affordable Clean Energy plan would reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 0.7% compared to 16% reduction under Obama's plan over the next decade. A recent report published by the National Bureau of Economic Research shows that since 2016, air pollution rates—which had been declining since 2009—have increased by as much as 5.5 percent, in the case of fine particulate pollution.

The revocation of Obama's Executive Order focused on preserving the Great Lakes could have lasting negative environmental impacts. In its place, Trump's Executive Order is focused on economic growth and energy production.

Wisconsin's wildlife also faces reduced protections. One order eliminates the restriction of lead in fishing tackle and ammunition used on federal lands. We do not want to increase lead in these food chains. Taking on the Trump Administration to protect wildlife is the Center for Biological Diversity, which has filed 175 lawsuits.

We take pride in all the rivers, streams, and wetlands that we have in our region of Wisconsin. They are now in peril with the repeal of clean water regulations that place limits on polluting chemicals near streams, wetlands and bodies of water.

While the recent farm bill passed by Congress provides some improved funding for managed grazing tools, it lacks comprehensive solutions to major problems. A band-aid bill will not bring back the 7,000 dairy farms that have been lost nationally since the last farm bill, nor will it reverse this trend.

As dismal as this may seem, the federal courts are providing some hope. The *Washington Post* reports that federal judges have ruled against the Trump administration at least 63 times, and these rulings have held back portions of the president's agenda, including those weakening environmental protections. "In case after case, judges have rebuked Trump officials for failing to follow the most basic rules of governance for shifting policy, including providing legitimate explanations supported by facts and, where required, public input."

**As Martin Luther King said, "We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope!"**

## Bring the Paris Agreement to Your Community

By Jim Wagner

Well, it's official. Earlier this month, the Trump administration made good on its intention to withdraw from the Paris Agreement, an agreement accepted by literally every other country on the planet pledging climate action to keep global temperature rise below 2 degrees Celsius. Even North Korea signed onto the agreement.



Courtesy of Statista, which can be found at <https://www.statista.com/chart/9656/the-state-of-the-paris-agreement/>

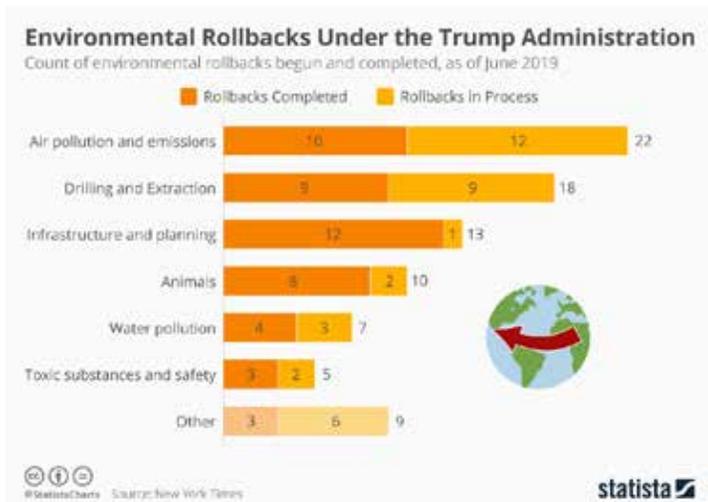
The United States is set to officially leave the Paris Agreement Nov. 4, 2020—the day after the presidential elections.

In truth, the Paris Agreement does not get us anywhere close to reaching that two-degree threshold. According to the *2018 United Nations Environment Programme Emissions Gap Report*, the current Nationally Determined Contributions by global parties to emissions reductions will still result in more than a three-degree temperature increase. And the Paris Agreement has no enforcement mechanism to get countries to increase reductions.

The 2016 election results signaled the end of the United States' commitment to the global treaty by withdrawing from the agreement. The U.S. lost not only its status as a global leader in the environmental debate, but also lost its ability and moral authority to even have a conversation about the threats posed by global climate change.

Fortunately, while the federal government has, for the time being, abdicated its responsibility to protect its citizens from the catastrophe that uninhibited emissions will bring, individual states & cities, especially here in Wisconsin, are continuing with plans to reduce dependence on fossil fuels. That is where citizens come in, to lend a hand supporting those efforts to accomplish Paris Agreement changes in local communities.

When Gov. Tony Evers took office, he almost immediately made environmental protections a cornerstone of his policy



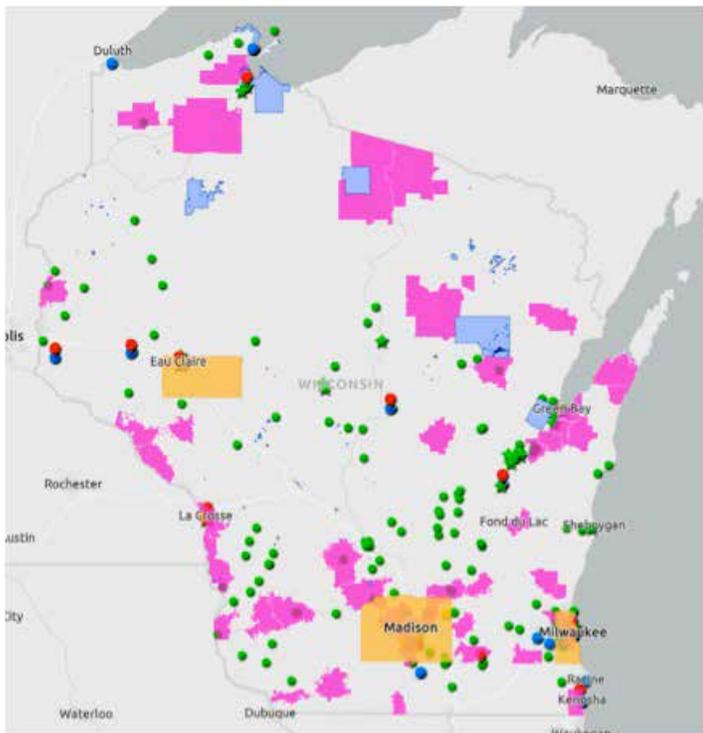
agenda. In addition to making 2019 “The Year of Clean Water,” in August he signed an executive order pledging to eliminate the use of carbon-based fuel by 2050 and creating the Office of Sustainability and Clean Energy. This was followed up in September with an executive order establishing a task force on climate change to develop a strategy to mitigate and adapt to the effects of global warming.

Unfortunately, executive orders don’t have allocated funds attached to them—the Republican-led Wisconsin legislature shut down budget proposals for the above earlier this year. However, it does send a clear message to Wisconsin residents that the environment is once again an important issue in the state.

In February, Governor Evers joined the U.S. Climate Alliance, a coalition of 24 governors with the stated intention of implementing policies that advance the goals of the Paris Agreement. This includes reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 26-28 percent below 2005 levels by 2025.

At the city level, four cities—Milwaukee, Racine, Wisconsin Rapids, and Ashland—are members of the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy. The international association seeks to incorporate innovation, technical assistance, and city-level intelligence (data) to look for ways to reduce carbon emissions.

In La Crosse, the city committed to 100% carbon-free electricity by 2050; it joins Milwaukee, Monona, Madison, and Eau Claire in setting city- or county-wide targets by at least 2050. Fitchburg set a goal of carbon-free municipal buildings by 2030, according to a report by Clean Wisconsin this summer.



Courtesy of Clean Wisconsin. You can find the interactive map and see specific locality actions at <https://arcg.is/0K9mXK>

## What You Can Do:

Closer to home, there haven’t yet been any emissions pledges, but sustainability or city government committees routinely have public meetings. This is where your participation and actions will have an immediate effect—go to the meetings, demonstrate that environmental improvements are needed, and lend support to the alderman, city council members, and residents looking to make Northeast Wisconsin more sustainable.

Green Bay Sustainability Commission (<https://greenbaywi.gov/961/Sustainability-Commission>)

Appleton Sustainability Commission (<https://www.appleton.org/government/facilities-construction-management/sustainability>)

Sturgeon Bay Committees (<https://www.sturgeonbaywi.org/government/committees-and-commissions/>)

Marinette County Natural Resources Conservation Committee (<https://www.marinettecounty.com/committees/?committee=14c08b17d56f>)

De Pere Sustainability Commission (<https://www.de-pere.org/department/board.php?structureid=75>)

Manitowoc Sustainability Committee (<https://www.manitowoc.org/597/Sustainable-Manitowoc-Committee>)

This list is by no means exhaustive, so check out your city or county’s government website, look for a committee that will work on climate change, and lend your support. In many cases, the committee you’re looking for is buried deep inside the website so look for anything that states commissions, local boards or committees.

While there is no turning back from our country’s withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, rejoining is relatively simple. Any signatory can apply for readmission to the U.N. and be back in within 30 days. After readmission, reratification through Congress would be required. That makes this upcoming election just as important, if not more, than 2016 to turn back the clock on turning our backs from the global community on emissions reductions.

## Dig deeper into the issue:

UN Emissions Gap Report 2018  
[https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/26879/EGR2018\\_ESEN.pdf?sequence=10](https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/26879/EGR2018_ESEN.pdf?sequence=10)

The Paris Agreement  
<https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement>

U.S. Officially Withdraws From Paris Agreement  
<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-50297029>

Potential Implications of U.S. Withdrawal From Paris Agreement  
<https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/IF10668.pdf>

Wisconsin Communities Are Committing to Clean Energy  
<https://www.cleanwisconsin.org/wisconsin-communities-are-committing-to-clean-energy/>

# Toxic Substance Rollbacks Under Trump Administration

By Rebecka Eichhorn

The Trump Administration has aggressively prioritized rolling back regulations that were put in place to protect our air, water, land, and public health with the purpose of boosting economic growth by benefiting large, high-pollution industries. President Trump signed onto a “two-for-one” executive order forcing federal agencies to identify two regulations to eliminate for each new rule that they want to enforce.



Trump has cut or delayed an alarming number of federal rules and regulations directly linked to nearly all facets of daily life. These include regulations on air pollution and emissions, drilling and extraction, infrastructure, animals, toxic substances and water pollution. These rollbacks could significantly increase greenhouse gas

emissions and have irreversible consequences on our already suffering environment. Regarding toxic substances, there are two major rollbacks brought by Trump.

In July 2019, the regulation of toxic chemicals was weakened when the EPA under the Trump Administration rejected a proposed ban on chlorpyrifos, despite its own experts linking this toxin to serious health problems in children. In 2000, this substance was banned for household use. However, it is still a widely used pesticide in the farming community.

Farmers have long applied this pesticide to almonds, citrus, cotton, grapes, walnuts and other major crops in the United States. Efforts to get chlorpyrifos off the market have been going on for years. In 2016, the EPA under President Obama acknowledged the danger of this chemical and proposed to ban it after scientific studies produced by the EPA showed the pesticide had the potential to damage brain development in children.

This course of action was reversed under the current administration, allowing farmers to continue to spray millions of pounds of this toxic substance on fruit and vegetable crops each year. In support of this decision, the EPA stated that the data supporting objections to the use of chlorpyrifos was “not sufficiently valid, complete, or reliable” and that they would continue to monitor the safety through 2022. This is a win for the chemical industry and farmers who support use of this pesticide, but a loss for the health and well-being of our youth.

So far, California and Hawaii have placed their own state-level ban on the chlorpyrifos. Hopefully, more states will do the same including Wisconsin.



Another big score for the chemical industry took place in June 2018 when the Trump administration announced their plan to narrow the way the federal government conducts health and safety risks associated with some of the most harmful chemicals on the market. In 2016, under the Obama administration, the Toxic Substances Control Act was strengthened when the EPA was required to review hundreds of possibly toxic chemicals for safety.

The EPA would then determine if new restrictions need to be put into place or if some chemicals need to be banned altogether. Some of the chemicals included are ones often used on a day-to-day basis, such as dry-cleaning solvents, paint strippers, and materials used in health and beauty products.

Due to the new lowered standard, the chemicals’ potential effects on air, soil, and water will not be taken into consideration. Instead, the focus is on potential harm caused by direct contact with the chemical. Unfortunately, with this practice, important factors such as the improper disposal of chemicals will not always be considered when deciding whether to restrict or ban certain chemicals, which can lead to drinking water contamination.

In defense of this narrowed regulation, an EPA spokesman pointed out that the Clean Air Act and other laws provide the agency with authority to regulate chemicals found in the air, rivers, and drinking water. There was therefore not a reason to revisit them under the 2016 law, which updated the Toxic Substances Control Act in 1976.

Former EPA agency officials believe that the EPA is no longer doing a thorough risk evaluation, which will result in a flawed analysis of the true threat presented by these chemicals. The outcome will be lower risk levels assigned to these chemicals. This will result in reduced restrictions creating a higher risk to citizens and environment.

## WI Impacted by Trump Administration Retraction of WOTUS Rule

By Cassi Fricke, CWAC Intern

The term “waters of the United States” has undergone a number of changes in its definition throughout the course of environmental history. Largely, these waters are rivers, lakes, and streams that fall under federal jurisdiction. This term was introduced in the Clean Water Act (CWA) in 1972, although Congress conveniently did not provide a precise meaning for the phrase.

That was left for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Army Corps of Engineers (ACoE) to decide. Since the passage of the CWA, the main controversy has been determining what constitutes a body of water to be eligible for CWA protection. Specifically, there has been indecision as to whether wetlands and ephemeral streams qualify for protection under the CWA. This has caused numerous legal conflicts, requiring a case-by-case determination in court.

In the 2006 major court case, *Rapanos v. United States*, a split decision did not help to bring clarity to the matter. On one end, Justice Kennedy argued that the CWA protections are

applicable to wetlands that “significantly affect the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of other covered waters.” However, Justice Scalia discussed that these protections are only applicable to wetlands “with a continuous surface connection” to navigable water. This second definition offers protection to far fewer areas.



Wisconsin Wetlands Landscape  
<https://www.maxpixel.net/Stream-Wetland-Wisconsin-Landscape-Lake-Scenic-114340>

During President Obama’s administration, the EPA published the final Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS) Rule, with the intent of clarifying the phrase’s definition. This rule streamlined the process by outlining which bodies were automatically covered by the CWA, so that fewer needed to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

After its announcement, there was a growing outcry from farmers and ranchers across the country. How would it impact their day-to-day practices? Would there be large costs induced to replace pipe systems? Would fertilizer use be more heavily regulated? These concerns took on a life of their own and were used for President Trump’s benefit on the campaign trail in 2016. However, a 2016 study shows that WOTUS actually decreased the size of the EPA’s jurisdiction over agricultural land.

Under the Trump administration, Obama’s WOTUS rule has been retracted and is in the process of being replaced. This new definition will cut the number of waterways that fall under federal regulation, leaving them open to being polluted. According to Vox Media, it will exclude ephemeral streams, which make up 60% of streams in the U.S. It will also exclude up to 51% of all wetland ecosystems.

Aside from these dramatic reductions, a major problem here is that creating a new rule will require extensive scientific information to back it up. Obama’s WOTUS rule had this. Under his administration, the EPA and ACoE relied upon information from more than 1,200 scientific papers. If this process sounds time-consuming, that’s because it was.

The new rule will also very likely have to be defended in court once it is announced. The case-by-case system of analyzing whether waters are protected will return as well.

This retraction will also make it quite difficult for citizens to bring companies to court when they take advantage of

dumping pollutants into smaller bodies of water because it will be less clear which waterways are granted CWA protections.

### So how does this all impact Northeastern Wisconsin? Why should we care?

The DNR estimates that at one time, Wisconsin was home to around 10 million acres of wetlands. Today, this has been reduced by 47% to 5.3 million acres (and it is still declining). Part of the reason wetlands have struggled earning protection is that they take on many different appearances. Marshes, sedge meadows, swamps, and bogs are just a few of the distinctive types of wetlands.

Wetlands are immensely important ecosystems for many reasons. They operate as nurseries for fish, birds, and other wildlife. The Wisconsin Wetlands Association states that in our state, 75% of wildlife depends on wetland habitat during some portion of their lifetimes.

*The Journal Science* published a recent study finding that three billion birds (29%) have disappeared in North America since 1970. The number one reason for the declines—habitat loss and degradation. The study notes that investment in conservation pays off. There has been a 56% increase in waterfowl populations since 1970 because of an investment in wetland protection and restoration. With these findings, it is clear that we should not be cutting these protections; if anything, we should be increasing them!

In addition to providing habitat, wetlands serve as a natural purifier and work wonders filtering water that ends up back in our rivers, lakes, and aquifers (our drinking water!). Wetlands also act as a carbon sink. They store a large amount of carbon that would otherwise end up in the atmosphere and contribute to climate change.



Wisconsin Bog Landscape  
<https://www.maxpixel.net/Forest-Nature-Landscape-Wetland-Pond-Water-Lake-557175>

Furthermore, wetlands store water during heavy rains or snowmelts, which protects farm fields, roads, and basements from flooding. They also protect shorelines and banks from erosion. Lastly, wetlands offer great recreational opportunities,

whether it's bird watching, fishing, paddling, or other activities.

The benefits of these ecosystems are widespread, so it is important to protect them from industrial dumping, agricultural runoff, and other pollutants that may come their way.

### What can we do?

The Trump administration's new WOTUS rule was published to the Federal Register on October 22 and is accepting public comments until December 23 of this year. The proposed rule and instructions for commenting can be found here: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2019/10/22/2019-22437/clean-water-act-methods-update-rule-for-the-analysis-of-effluent>

**To learn more, visit:**

<https://www.epa.gov/wotus-rule>

<https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/wetlands/>

<https://wisconsinwetlands.org/learn/about-wetlands/>

<https://www.americanactionforum.org/insight/agencies-repeal-the-obama-wotus-rule/>

<https://www.vox.com/energy-and-environment/2017/2/28/14761236/wotus-waters-united-states-rule-trump>

## Rollbacks of Clean Air Act to Impact Wisconsin

Cassi Fricke and Carol Pearson

The Clean Air Act (CAA), passed in 1970, was created by Congress at the height of the national environmental movement. It was designed to “protect public health and welfare from different types of air pollution” from a “diverse array of pollution sources.” The CAA has undergone amendments in 1977 and 1990 to help better achieve this goal. The Act calls upon the states and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to implement solutions to air pollution based on the best available science and technology.

The current administration's EPA has reduced the efficacy of CAA through a number of agency rollbacks. Amongst others, the EPA has: cancelled their requirement for oil and gas companies to report methane emissions, loosened the Clinton-era rule limiting toxic emissions from major industries, stopped enforcing the prohibited use of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) in air conditioners and refrigerators, and lifted the banned use of E15 gasoline.



President Trump spoke on these rollbacks in July of this year. This was billed as a celebration of his environmental leadership, even though at around this same time, 62% of Americans were found to dislike the president's climate record,

according to *The Atlantic*. He discussed delisted Superfund sites and his support of solar energy but strategically failed to mention wind energy as another alternative source. He had previously alleged in April that wind turbines cause cancer. To whom? How? We may never know.

He also brought back his campaign promise to prioritize having “the very cleanest air and cleanest water on the planet.” EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler went on record stating that “we have the cleanest air on record” and “pollution is on the decline, and our focus is to accelerate its decline.” However, this directly contradicted the EPA's data released the same week, which showed pollutants like ozone and particulate matter to be more prevalent than before President Trump took office.

These administration's rollbacks will have harmful impacts on air quality across the nation, including Wisconsin. For example, allowing for increased methane emissions has about 25 times the warming potential of carbon dioxide. Additionally, the use of E15 in the heat of summer increases smog because of the high concentration of ethanol.

It doesn't stop there. The EPA has also announced that it will no longer enforce the “good neighbor” rule. This rule requires a state to address air pollution within their state that is transported to downwind states, affecting their ability to maintain good air quality. For instance, air pollution produced in Chicago and other large areas of industry throughout Illinois and Indiana can travel north along Wisconsin's lakeshore communities, impacting air quality there. Without enforcement of the “good neighbor” rule, Wisconsin's neighboring states have no pressure to consider air quality beyond their own emission limits.

On top of all of this, the EPA is currently battling California over the state's granted right to set its own emissions standards. While the state was originally authorized to set tougher standards 50 years ago based on the poor air quality in Los Angeles, the current administration has now changed their stance. According to EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler, “What we are talking about here is energy efficiency, and that is something that we don't believe the state of California or any other state should be setting for the entire country.” In response to the EPA's rollback attempts, Wisconsin is one of 22 states suing the agency.

Why do other states like Wisconsin care what happens in California? Well, many have adopted California's stricter standards themselves as the federal government has chosen to take a laissez-faire approach to regulating emissions. States also argue that it is a power grab by the federal government to try to lessen state power. Car manufacturers are siding with California as well because they already have lower-emission vehicles ready to hit the market.

If the EPA's rollback on California's emissions waiver is held up in court, it will have a domino effect on air quality nationwide. States will be more restricted to individually work to lower air pollution emissions. This would be especially problematic when tied together with the EPA's other deregulation efforts.

**More information is available at:**

<https://www.epa.gov/clean-air-act-overview>

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/climate/trump-environment-rollbacks.html>

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/autos/sns-auto-california-13-other-states-sue-trump-over-revoking-authority-to-set-car-emissions-standards-20190920-story.html>

## Endangered Species Rule Changes Are Endangering Species

By Justin Mulder, CWAC Intern

What do you do when a species is on the edge of extinction? Do you support the industries that are causing the endangerment or support the threatened animals and plants? Prior to 1973, President Richard Nixon encountered this growing problem and helped pass the Endangered Species Act (ESA) to protect the dwindling wildlife numbers and restore important habitats. Since then, the ESA has been a key piece of legislation for preventing species from going extinct.

Today's list includes more than 1,600 different species that are either threatened or endangered. The Northeast Wisconsin region alone has more than a dozen species on the endangered list including animals, insects, and plants. The gray wolf, Canadian lynx, whooping crane, rusty patch bumble bee, and dwarf lake iris are some of the species that are currently under protection by the Endangered Species Act in Northeast Wisconsin.

Recent changes by the Trump Administration to the Endangered Species Act are limiting the ability of the act to include new species onto the endangered list. The main change to the act is the idea that an economic study can now be done prior to accepting new members of the list to see if it is "worthwhile" to help preserve certain habitats and species. Previously, considering cost was prohibited in the decision of whether a species is on the way to extinction and whether to list them under the ESA. This new study requirement has the ability to impact whether or not a new member can be added to the protection list.

An example of this is in the case of a debate of a new mine or oil well. The debate whether or not to enlist the species will come down to which is economically more worthwhile; protecting and restoring critical habitat for the species living there, or creating a new mine, oil well, or other potential

environmentally harmful project. The concept of weighing costs and benefits is flawed to begin with because it is difficult to assign a dollar value to how much a species is worth.

In the case of the northern long-eared bat, a species currently under protection from the Endangered Species Act, there is not a direct economic benefit to having these creatures around, so any work to protect the habitat would show a large loss. Meanwhile, building a new mine would show a significant profit and it is relatively easy to calculate the total value in comparison to a species, resulting in an unfair disadvantage from the start for the species.

With this unbalanced concept, heavy polluters such as oil, coal, and the pesticide industries greatly benefit because the updated policies are weighted in their favor. Not having to worry about what lives on the land that a pollution-friendly industry is interested in makes the ability to destroy a habitat far easier. Overall, the benefits of these changes for endangered and threatened species are nonexistent. The updates go against everything the Endangered Species Act was intended for,

making a 99% success rate over nearly 50 years mean practically nothing. With the Environmental Protection Agency losing the ability to fight against heavy polluters because the economic impact is not "worthwhile," a lot more environmental damage, specifically with endangered species, can be expected in the coming future.

These hindering modifications are not being willingly accepted. Currently seventeen states are suing the Trump Administration over the blatant disregard of the importance of protecting

threatened species in order to help the industries that are heavily polluting the environment. In addition to some of the states filing suit against the changes, many environmental protection groups have also joined in the legal fight. The Trump Administration's idea of pursuing this deregulation will be fatal for some of the endangered species that now, more than ever, need help.



Northern long-eared bat. Courtesy of National Park Service



# Public Lands Under Attack

By Charlie Frisk

Writer Wallace Stegner once said, “National Parks are the best idea we ever had. Absolutely American, absolutely democratic, they reflect us at our best, rather than our worst.” America’s national parks, wilderness areas, national forests, and wildlife refuges not only protect America’s crown jewels, they also guarantee public access to all Americans, from the lower class through the upper class. This concept of publically owned land was a truly American concept; in Europe not only the crown jewels of land were owned and controlled by the wealthy, pretty much all land was off limits to the working class, unless they were needed to work on it. Today most other countries have seen the value in national parks, and have copied our system.

Public lands are also valuable as a storehouse for biological diversity. Over 70% of the big game mammals in the Western U.S. are found on public lands. Many of the species that are more specialized in their habitat requirements are found only on public lands. I think it would be safe to say that were it not for public lands, species such as gray wolves, bighorn sheep, grizzly bears, mountain lions, wolverines, and California condors would all have been extirpated from North America. Here in the Midwest the only reason why we have gray wolves in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan is because the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness in Minnesota provided a refuge area for wolves up until the Endangered Species Act was passed in 1973. They had been completely exterminated everywhere else in the Midwest.

But not everyone agrees with the value of public lands. The 2012 GOP Platform stated, “Experience has shown that in caring for the land and water, private ownership has been our best guarantee of conscientious stewardship, while the worst instances of environmental degradation have occurred

under government control. Congress should consider whether a part of the federal government’s enormous land holdings and control of water in the West could be better used for ranching, mining, or forestry through private ownership; the enduring truth is that people best protect what they own.” Under this bizarre logic a mining corporation practicing “mountain top removal coal mining” is doing a better job of protecting mountains than the National Park Service does of protecting Yellowstone National Park.

Under the Trump administration public lands are under an unprecedented attack. The Boundary Water Canoe Area (BWCA) is the largest federally designated wilderness in the Midwest, and provides recreation for thousands of Wisconsinites. Many young people received their first wilderness experience on canoe trips to the BWCA through Boy Scouts or Girls Scouts or church or YMCA camps.

The BWCA is currently facing threats from two copper/nickel mines, Twin Metals and Polymet. These mines would be constructed in the Superior National Forest and would be within 2-3 miles of the BWCA. Runoff from both mines would flow through both the BWCA and the Quetico, an even larger wilderness area just across the border in Canada.

The Obama administration determined that these mines presented an unacceptable level of risk to the BWCA and put a 20 year moratorium on any mining permits in the BWCA watershed. One of Trump’s first actions in office was to reinstate the mining permits and to fast-track the opening of the mines.

Both mines would be in sulfide deposits. There are currently no sulfide mines in existence that are not polluting the surrounding ground water. Every

time a new sulfide mine is proposed the mining corporations claim that this one will be different, and will not pollute. But Ely, Minnesota guide and outfitter Jason Zabortsky isn’t convinced. “When mining companies like Twin Metals, a Chilean mining giant, come to Ely and tell us that things are going to be different now and that they’re not going to pollute and they have new technology, it just rings hollow because that’s what these mining companies say every single time they come to a community.”

There are mines in the southeastern and western states that have been closed for over a century but are still leaching sulfuric acid and killing all life in nearby streams. This is the risk that these mines would present to the BWCA and the Quetico.

The Twin Metals and Polymet mines are just one small example of the antipathy of Trump and his allies in Congress toward our public lands. Their goal is to change the mission of our public lands from environmental protection to one of providing a resource base for mining, drilling, logging and livestock production. A short list of assaults on our public lands by the Trump administration:

- Fast-tracking the permit process for the Back Forty Mine that would be located just across the Menominee River in the U.P. of Michigan. Another sulfide deposit mine that presents a threat to life in the Menominee River and Green Bay.



John Hermanson, Dan Varland and Charlie Frisk on a recent fishing trip to the Boundary Waters.

- Obama had protected millions of acres when he designated Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante in Utah as National Monuments. Trump rescinded the National Monument protections and is now proposing strip-mining and drilling in both areas.

- Proposing opening of Utah's National Parks; Arches, Canyonlands, Bryce Canyon and more to off road vehicle use.

- Fast-tracking permits for the Pebble Mine in Bristol Bay, Alaska. This mine has the potential to destroy the largest sockeye salmon fishery in North America.

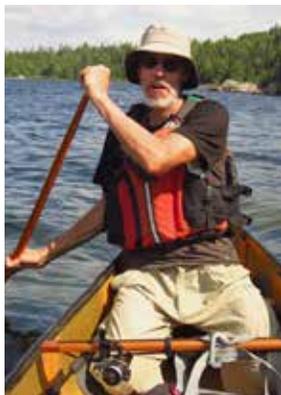
- Fast-tracking permits for oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska.

- Gutting the "Greater Sage Grouse Conservation Plan". This plan, a collaborative effort by the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, livestock owners, loggers, miners and conservationists would have protected sagebrush habitat on public lands important to over 350 species of wildlife. This plan was developed over ten years through both the Bush and Obama administrations and in one month Trump killed it.

However, there is one positive piece of news coming out of the Trump Administration. Trump signed legislation providing for long term renewal of the "Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund". The FLWCF was created 55 years ago under the Johnson administration and provides funding to purchase land for parks, wildlife refuges, and national trails as well as for maintenance for federal and state lands and trails. The Fund also provides grants to states for state-managed public lands. Throughout the history of the Fund it has given out \$3.9 billion in state grants, and has purchased over 2.37 million acres for state and federal public lands.

Public lands belong to all of us; they are places to recreate and interact with nature. I have backpacked, canoe camped, and played tourist in national forests, national wilderness areas, and national parks. Those have been the finest experiences of my life. Many of our best public lands I will never have the time to visit, but I hope I can go to my grave with the knowledge that the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is still a refuge for wildlife, and not an environmental wasteland despoiled by the oil industry.

In the upcoming election, find out where the candidates stand on the issue of public lands. Do they believe in keeping them open for the public and protecting the values that caused those lands to be set aside in the first place? Or do they want to sell them off to the highest bidder to be logged, mined, or drilled for oil. These are your lands, you have a right; no an obligation to future generations, to know where the candidates stand on public lands.



John Hermanson, out for a paddle.

## Improved Automobile Fuel Efficiency Threatened

By Lora Jorgensen



Almost all of the cars and trucks we drive run on fuels derived from oil, which is a non-renewable resource. It is unclear how long this resource will last, but we will eventually have to find new ways to power motor vehicles.

Researchers are hard at work exploring new fuels and vehicle technologies.

Hybrids, electric vehicles, plug-in hybrids, and hydrogen fuel cell vehicles are areas of intense research. Automakers are also using more efficient technologies in gasoline and diesel vehicles.

Renewable fuels such as ethanol and biodiesel can help offset petroleum use. Other fossil fuels such as coal, shale oil, tar sands, and natural gas may meet some of our energy needs. However, all with all of these, there are additional environmental concerns. For now, it makes sense to use fossil fuel resources, such as oil, more efficiently. This buys more time to develop cleaner energy sources. Conservation will also make the transition to these sources smoother and less expensive.

### History

Increasing efficiency standards for vehicles is an effort that has been underway for decades.

1975 - Congress enacted the Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE standards) in response to the 1973 oil embargo, setting minimum mpg (miles per gallon) standards for both passenger cars and cars/light trucks combined.

1978 - 18 mpg (cars)

1985 - 27.5 mpg (cars)/19.5 mpg (combined)

2002 - 2004 California Air Resources Board (CARB) developed global warming pollution standards light duty vehicles.

2007 - 27.5 mpg (cars)/22.2 mpg (combined)

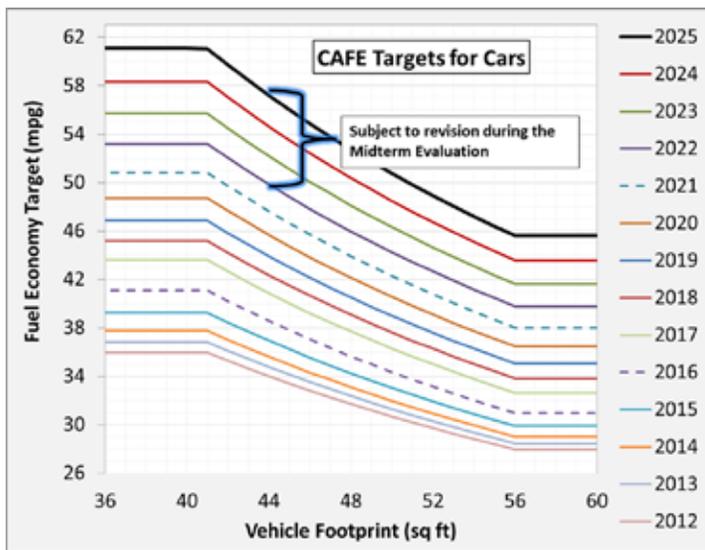
Energy Independence and Security Act passed by Congress.

2009 First ever global warming pollution standards for light-duty vehicles under the Clean Air Act.

2012 - 2016 Phase 1 of National Program implemented to increase fuel efficiency. This program was supported by automakers, state regulators and the United States Autoworkers and Environmental organizations.

2017 - 38.5 mpg (cars)/29.4 mpg (combined)

2017 - 2025 Phase 2 of National Program, gradually increasing standard to 45 mpg for the average car and 32 mpg for the average truck.



Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFÉ) as set for automakers' fleet of cars as directed by Congress.

### Benefits of Increased Fuel Efficiency

There are many benefits of increasing fuel efficiency. Doubling the average fuel efficiency of new cars and light trucks is the single biggest step our nation can take to reduce oil use.

With new fuel economy standards implemented, oil savings in 2030 will result in saving more than 3 million barrels per day. This is roughly equivalent to the U.S. imports from both the Persian Gulf and Venezuela combined.

The second round of standards alone will create an estimated 570,000 jobs (full-time equivalent) throughout the U.S. economy by 2030, including 50,000 in light-duty vehicle manufacturing (parts and vehicle assembly).

The two rounds of standards will reduce global warming pollution by as much as 570 million metric tons (MMT) in 2030. This is equivalent to shutting down 140 typical coal-fired power plants for an entire year.

When compared to a typical vehicle on the road today, a new car buyer will save more than \$8,000 over the lifetime of a new 2025 vehicle, even after paying for the more fuel-efficient technology.

### Current Trends

In recent years, as gasoline prices have fallen, more Americans have been opting to buy bigger cars and S.U.V.s. That trend has blunted the fuel savings originally projected under the Obama-era rules. Currently, S.U.V.s and light trucks make up a far larger proportion of new vehicle sales in the United States (45%) than they do in Europe (24%).

**The Trump administration is currently trying to freeze the federal standards for fuel efficiency and end California's ability to set their own requirements,** granted to the state by the Clean Air Act. California's protective standards currently serve as a template for other U.S. states' regulations. If the current U.S. administration significantly relaxes the fuel-economy rules, that could have ripple effects across the nation and around the world. Canada, for instance, has harmonized

its standards with the United States, while Mexico and Saudi Arabia essentially use the United States as a model for their own vehicle rules.

The United States has also become a leader in certain technologies to improve vehicle efficiency, such as using aluminum to reduce the weight of cars and trucks. Ford, for instance, has reduced the weight of its popular F-150 pickup truck by 700 pounds in recent years. If the United States greatly weakens its standards, some of that research could potentially slow down.

The European Union is currently considering a new round of even stricter standards that extend until 2030, while Australia has been exploring new vehicle rules modeled after the United States. However, if the U.S. weakens its rules, automakers elsewhere could use that to lobby European and Australian regulators to be less strict.

### How to Reduce Your Impact

There are many ways for individuals to do their part in helping to reduce oil use and carbon emissions:

- Choose a car with better gas mileage
- Get the best fuel economy out of your car through regular maintenance
- Use a low-carbon fuel, such as ethanol or CNG
- Purchasing green power for your electric vehicle or plug-in hybrid
- Walking, biking, or taking public transit more often
- Combining trips when possible (also saves time and money)

#### Sources:

<https://www.fueleconomy.gov/feg/oildep.shtml>

<https://www.ucsusa.org/resources/brief-history-us-fuel-efficiency>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate\\_average\\_fuel\\_economy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_average_fuel_economy)

## The Agriculture and Nutrition Act: Farm Bill or Band-Aid?

By Brenna Nicholson, CWAC Intern

The most recent farm bill (the Agriculture and Nutrition Act, passed in December of 2018) has been touted as a "safety net" for farmers and ranchers, offering dependability in a decidedly unpredictable industry. However, the legislation has introduced few changes for farmers across the nation; neither devastating nor significantly improving their current situations. Bobbi Wilson, a Government Relations Associate with the Wisconsin Farmers Union (WFOU), spoke out against the claim that this farm bill will help American farmers get back on their feet.

"Farmers are experiencing some major challenges right now. This is the weakest we have seen the farm economy in three decades," says Wilson, before noting some chilling statistics. There has been an increase in farmers' suicides and bankrupt farms, no doubt influenced by adverse weather, low commodity prices, and low net farm income. In 2018, that income was down to a negative \$1,500.

“Chronic oversupply has kept milk prices below the average cost of production for five straight years...the changes that were made to [the Dairy Margin Coverage program] were not enough to support farmers through this ongoing downturn.” Wilson also cites the 7,341 dairy farms that were lost in the U.S. between the 2014 and 2018 farm bills, illustrating the government’s lack of support and farmers’ need for change in the upcoming years. The WFU staff does not seem surprised about the lack of improvements, either; “It’s mostly business as usual during an unusually tumultuous time”.



Graph courtesy of Justin Mulder, UW-Green Bay

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) advertises that they have allocated over \$200 million to the Market Access Program and Foreign Market and Development Program. These changes were intended to improve foreign markets for Wisconsin agricultural products, but many producers still do not believe that enough is being done to remedy low commodity prices due to oversupply. Wilson also commented on foreign markets, calling them “the least lucrative and most volatile markets that we can sell into,” because farmers must “sell the most products at the lowest prices on the global market.” The U.S. currently displaces domestic markets in other countries, flooding their markets with cheap products and driving the prices down. Wilson believes that “these programs could be improved by placing greater emphasis on fair trade and prioritizing foreign markets that offer farmers a price that covers their cost of production.”

Another major portion of the federal farm bill deals with funds allocated to research and innovation in the fields of farming and conservation practices. Earlier this year, the National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and the Economic Research Service (ERS) were relocated to the Midwest. “The move completely gutted both agencies, and decades of expertise were lost in the process,” noted Wilson, regarding the 75% staff turnover resulting from the relocation. The change has since been regarded as an attack on agriculture and environmental research initiatives. Lack of publicly funded research leaves the practice to those “predominantly funded by the agribusiness industry,” meaning that America’s

only sources of information are unregulated and unprotected against possible bias.

Not all hope is lost, however. One area of the farm bill that pleasantly surprised many in the agriculture industry is the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Before the farm bill was passed, suggestions of consolidating the Conservation Stewardship Program within another branch of the USDA solicited backlash against reducing conservation efforts. The final bill, however, slightly increased funding for EQIP and preserved the conservation programs already in place.

These funds will further conservation practices such as rotational grazing, cover crops, forest stand improvement, and efficient irrigation strategies. Rotational grazing and cover crops both help to conserve soil health and use less land, while advanced irrigation strategies save water. Bobbi Wilson



Courtesy of <https://www.flickr.com/photos/usdagov/31678858498>

mentioned that this was especially welcome news for farmers “who practice rotational grazing [using] EQIP funds to install fences. This would otherwise be tens of thousands of dollars... and that can make or break the decision to switch to grazing.” These funds allow many producers to implement environmentally friendly practices where it may have otherwise been uneconomical to do so.

Overall, the federal farm bill missed many opportunities to improve the production and lives of farmers across the nation. As Wilson stated, there have been “some modest improvements to the farm safety net, but those changes were insufficient given the severity of the challenges farmers are facing.” EQIP has received a slight increase in funding, but commodity prices are still through the floor, the ERS and NIFA have lost decades of expertise, and over 7,000 dairy farms have been lost nationally since the last farm bill in 2014. America’s farmers asked for comprehensive solutions to major problems; the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018 only gave them a band-aid.

**Sources:**

- <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/news-room/news-releases/2019/usda-now-making-payments-for-new-dairy-margin-coverage-program>
- <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2018/12/11/congress-billion-farm-bill-is-out-heres-whats-it/>
- <https://www.farmers.gov/manage/farmbill>
- <https://www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com/news-events>



# Are you contaminating our water with microplastic pollution from clothing?

Brenna Nicholson, CWAC intern

## What are microplastics?

Plastic debris can be found in many forms, sizes, and shapes. Microbeads are polyethylene plastic pieces found in cleaning and beauty products, and have been banned in Wisconsin since 2015 (O'Brien 2015). However, plastic pieces smaller than 5mm in length are considered microfibers or microplastics. Longer, thinner strands of plastic are released when clothing items are washed. They are so small that they often make it past sewage treatment filtration systems and pollute waterways. If your wastewater is going to a municipal sewage treatment facility, you are likely contaminating surface waters with microplastics.

## Why are microplastics a problem for the environment?

Synthetic microfibers, including microplastics, can easily be consumed by fish and other wildlife due to their small size. Many microfibers have been shown to cause toxicological effects in individual organisms (UCSB). This means that any aquatic wildlife consuming these tiny fragments could be negatively impacted.

They may also pass the fibers up the food chain through biomagnification when they are consumed by larger animals. Biomagnification is the increase in concentration of the pollutant as it moves through organisms higher up in the food chain. Eventually, the largest fish and other wildlife in aquatic systems contain huge concentrations of these plastics, causing debilitating illnesses and deformations. Nanoplastic particles have also been found lodged in the brains of fish and were shown to affect their behavior.

digestive system, causing serious health issues. Evidence has also been found that nanoplastics could be toxic and may be able to travel through the intestinal wall during digestion. It remains unclear whether these particles will then enter the bloodstream.

## Where do microplastics come from?

Effluent from wastewater treatment plants has been found to be the main source of microplastic pollution in fresh waterways and oceans. Microfibers are released into the wastewater and travel to treatment plants. These fibers are so tiny that they bypass filtration systems and flow out from plants in “clean water” to the oceans. Most recent data from a study sponsored by Patagonia show that synthetic fleece jackets are releasing 1.7 grams of microfibers each time they are washed. The study, done by UC Santa Barbara researchers, also found that older jackets can shed about twice as many fibers as new jackets.

## Could clothes made from recycled plastic be the solution, or worsen the problem?

Some outdoor companies such as Patagonia and Polartec have implemented waste-reduction and conservation efforts in the form of using recycled plastic bottles in their clothing. The process of turning plastic bottles into clothes begins with breaking them down into tiny fibers so they can be made into fabric. The plastic fibers from recycled clothing are later released in the washing process just the same as other clothes. This pollutes waterways and oceans with more of the same plastics, just in smaller pieces. Microplastics are actually an even more problematic waste form for bodies of water than the original bottle because the tiny particles are more easily consumed by aquatic wildlife.

## What types of clothes contribute the worst?

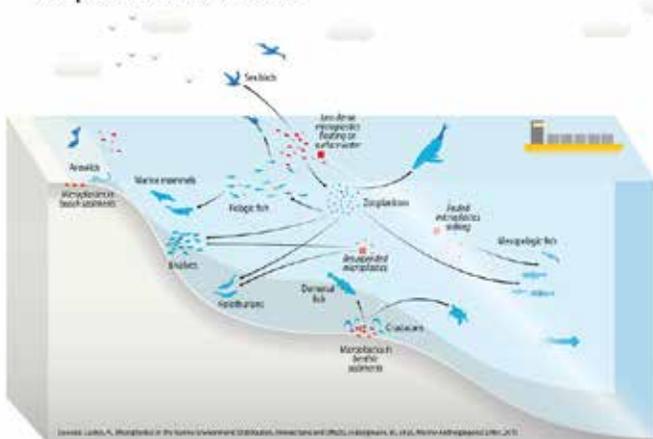
Synthetic fibers and recycled-plastic garments are the worst offenders when it comes to releasing microplastics during washing. Any synthetic fabric such as nylon, polyester, and spandex are made with some kind of man-made plastic that will be leached out when the garment is washed. Natural textiles are made from vegetable, animal, or mineral origin materials. These plastic-free fabrics like wool, silk, cotton, and linen are natural alternatives to synthetic textiles that do not release microplastic fibers when laundered.

## What can we do to help?

The biggest way that consumers can help reduce this problem is to avoid purchasing clothing made of synthetic fibers. Choose natural textiles such as cotton or linen and avoid recycled-plastic clothing when possible. If you already own clothing made from synthetic materials, try using these tips to reduce the amount of microplastic pollution coming from your washing machine:

- Use liquid laundry soap, as powdered ones release more microfibers
- Skip fabric conditioner or use vinegar instead
- Wash in cold water; heat damages fabrics and releases more fibers
- Reduce the rotation speed on the washing machine

How plastics enter the food web



[www.grida.no/resources/6904](http://www.grida.no/resources/6904)

## Why is this a problem for humans?

Because humans consume aquatic wildlife, we need to be aware of potential toxins from sea food. If toxins build up in fish, crabs, shrimp, and other seafood, those same toxins are then passed on to humans. Microplastics have been shown to absorb toxic chemicals and later release them into the

- Wash clothes less often and wait to do laundry until you have a full load

**Take action:** Tell corporations to help solve the problem of microplastic pollution here: <http://action.storyofstuff.org/sign/social-action/>

**Sources:**

- <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/jun/20/microfibers-plastic-pollution-oceans-patagonia-synthetic-clothes-microbeads>
- <https://brenmicroplastics.weebly.com/>
- <https://www.goclimateneutral.org/blog/plastic-clothing/>
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- <http://action.storyofstuff.org/sign/social-action/>
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*CWAC Editorial:*

## 'Just Say No' to Plastic Water Bottles

By Charlie Frisk

There are three kinds of people in this world; there are those who litter, there are those who don't litter but would not think of picking up someone else's litter, and there are those who don't litter but also pick up other people's litter whenever they encounter it. I am in that final category, so I think I am highly qualified to talk about what items are found most often in litter.

When I was a young kid the bulk of litter was made up of paper items; bags, cups, etc. When you purchased a soda it came in a returnable glass bottle that would be reused until it broke, an eminently sensible way to distribute liquids, and one I wish we still used, but that will have to be a separate article.

In my teen years came aluminum cans, in my home state of Iowa we had a can/bottle bill with a 5 cent deposit, so those cans rarely ended up in the ditch. Today, I live in a state with no deposit laws, and we now have both plastic bottles and aluminum cans, so the cans and bottles are everywhere.

As a young adult the most common types of litter I picked up were Mountain Dew cans, (why Mountain Dew I don't know, it must have had something to do with the cross-section of people it was marketed to), and light beer cans. Today plastic water bottles crush and destroy all other forms of litter in the quantity competition.

Purchasing your water in a plastic bottle is wrong for so many reasons that I can't list all of them, but here is a partial listing:

- Manufacturing plastic uses petroleum products. If you are purchasing plastic water bottles you are using petroleum for a product that you don't really need.
- Shipping plastic water bottles from the manufacturing site to the marketing site uses huge amounts of petroleum.
- Obtaining water to sell as "pure spring water" has eliminated the water source for local communities and has dewatered high grade trout streams. This nearly happened

in Wisconsin back in 2001, when Perrier tried to build a bottling plant to utilize the water from Big Spring in Adams County. Only a spirited resistance from the local citizenry prevented the Big Spring River, a trout stream, from being dried up.

- During shipping the plastic water bottles are frequently exposed to high temperatures. This encourages chemicals from the plastic to leach into your drinking water. The two worst may be BPA and its replacement chemical BHPF, both of which are associated with human hormone disruption problems.

- If enough fools can be convinced to buy their water in plastic bottles, local governments will lose a prime incentive to provide clean drinking water to their citizens. This has happened in some parts of the world.

- Purchasing bottled water encourages corruption between the corporations that market bottled water and the governmental agencies responsible for providing clean water. There are places in Africa where the Pepsi Corporation charges more for bottled water than for Pepsi. People don't need Pepsi to live, but they do need water, and Pepsi and other corporations are doing everything they can to discourage governments in developing countries from providing clean water supplies for their citizens.

- Most plastic water bottles are not recycled. Worldwide, 1 million plastic water bottles are manufactured a minute, 91% of which are not recycled. "Wait a minute", you say, "I always make sure my plastic water bottles make it into the recycling". That doesn't mean they get recycled, the value of the plastic in plastic water bottles is so low that most of them get sent to landfills, regardless of whether they were originally put in the recycle container or the garbage. When China would still take our plastic for recycling, much of the lower grade plastic ended up being dumped in Chinese rivers, which means that today your plastic water bottle might be floating in that giant plastic garbage patch in the Pacific Ocean.

- People sometimes buy water in plastic water bottles because they think it is safer than the water coming out of their tap. The purity of water from municipalities is regulated by the Federal "Safe Water Drinking Act", passed in 1974. Bottled water is under no regulation whatsoever; it is not a food, it is not a drug, so the U.S. Food and Drug Administration takes a hands-off approach to bottled water. In fact, much of the bottled water on the market came out of a tap somewhere.

If you live in a rural area and your well is contaminated what should you do? Many grocery stores have stations where you can refill large reusable water containers rather than buying hundreds of single use plastic water bottles. If you do have to buy water bottles, buy the larger size bottles.

Everyone should have on hand a number of quality reusable water bottles for everyday usage rather than



disposable single use bottles. The scourge of single use plastic water bottles is occurring because of effective marketing, and our laziness in regards to always looking for just a little more convenience.

## **The Action in Clean Water Action Council**

By Dean Hoegger

*Our membership drive for 2020 begins with this newsletter. Please renew your membership today!*

*Thank you to the many members who renewed their membership for 2019. If you forgot to do so, we still kept your membership active, so please consider including an additional donation for last year. To check your membership status, look at your mailed newsletter address label or the e-mail with the digital newsletter for your last renewal year. You can mail your membership donation with the enclosed form, or go online to <http://www.cleanwateractioncouncil.org/membership/>*

**Read below about actions we have taken in the last three months.** Be sure to contact us if an environmental issue arises in your community. CWAC is here to support citizen action.

### **LEGAL ACTIONS**

As a citizen organization, an important function of CWAC is to take legal actions on behalf of our members to protect human health and the environment. Because individual members may be reluctant or unfamiliar with how to file a legal action, the CWAC board of directors believes that taking legal action on behalf of our members is an important part of our mission. Here are some current legal actions and our efforts to improve environmental laws.

#### ***CWAC promotes ordinances to ban pavement sealants containing PAH***

CWAC continues to seek opportunities to give community presentations about the dangers of coal tar pavement sealants containing polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, or PAHs. We recently completed a grant application to help cover the cost of presenting to all Door County Town and Village Boards to help them decide if a ban is needed in their community. Children growing up near pavement treated with this sealant are thought to have a 14 times higher lifetime cancer risk. Contact us if you would like us to give a presentation in your community or to your elected officials.

#### ***CWAC promotes ordinances to ban manure spraying.***

CWAC continues to offer presentations to residents and town officials. Thus far, at least 17 northeast Wisconsin towns and cities have passed a ban. If your town has not passed an ordinance, contact us to help get a ban to protect your family from this health threat.

For more information on this concern, go to our website for Priority Issues: "Ban Manure Spraying" <http://www.cleanwateractioncouncil.org/issues/spray-irrigation/>

#### ***Update on Safe Drinking Water Act Petition for Emergency Action, filed with the EPA October, 2014.***

One result of the Petition was to revise the NR151 manure spreading rules in northeast Wisconsin karst regions. CWAC was a member of the DNR's Technical Advisory Group and all of CWAC's recommendations are in the new rules, with the exception of requiring a minimum of three feet of soil over karst bedrock for spreading liquid manure. However, we feel more is needed to protect our groundwater, and we welcome your reports regarding potential manure spreading violations.

We continued this fall to work with other state environmental groups to expand the NR151 enhanced protections to other areas of the state and to seek other strategies for protecting the groundwater, especially from nitrates.

#### ***Update on Citizen Petition for Corrective Action for the Clean Water Act, filed October, 2015.***

We previously reported that 68 of the 75 deficiencies have been resolved. There appears to be a need for a lawsuit to resolve the remaining issues. However, in the current political climate in the federal executive branch, waiting until after the next presidential election may provide more success. We will continue to follow the advice of our legal counsel provided by Midwest Environmental Advocates.

#### ***CWAC comments on water pollution permits and rule changes.***

We monitor for new permit notices and hearings and publish those in our Weekly Update and at times attend hearings and/or submit comments. We also make oral and/or written comment on administrative rule changes such as the hearings for the livestock siting ordinance rule changes. Please monitor the e-mailed Weekly Update for permit renewals, variances, and hearings for rule changes.

**Join the Clean Water Act Enforcement Network.** CWAC is sponsoring this group and providing training on how to monitor for pollution permit compliance. Group members monitor for pollution permit violations online and through on site observations. Midwest Environmental Advocates is providing technical and legal support for the group. Research work can be completed at home, shared with the group online, and then reviewed during a monthly meeting in person or by telephone. Contact us if you would like to work on this enforcement effort to protect the waters of northeast Wisconsin.

### **COMMUNITY ACTIONS AND OUTREACH**

#### ***Water Sampling at Baird's Creek was completed for 2019***

CWAC participated in the DNR's Lower Fox River water quality monitoring project with monthly sampling from May through October. We thank volunteer Mary Carlson and student interns for doing the sampling.

#### ***CWAC continues to monitor the PFAS Contamination in Marinette County and beyond.***

Perfluorinated chemical contamination from the Fire Training Center in Marinette is found at alarming levels in drainage ditches and creeks discharging to Green Bay and in

well water in Marinette County. Concern about agricultural field contamination from Marinette's sewage treatment plants' waste being land spread is also surfacing. CWAC continues to provide education, notices of hearings, and promotion of state legislation to protect citizens from this group of chemicals.

The Ever's Administration asked municipal sewage treatment plants to be testing for PFAS entering their facilities in order to learn more about sources of PFAs. However, all declined to test, CWAC urges members to tell their state representatives support the "Clear Act" as proposed by state Democrats. This bill is far more protective than the Republican bill and is similar to the one passed in Minnesota.

Watch for ongoing information in our e-mailed Weekly Updates.

### ***Efforts to Stop the Back 40 Mine***

We continue to monitor these efforts and lend support when requested. We publish the latest developments in the Weekly Update. Unfortunately, Aquila Resources has now obtained all of the permits needed to open the mine. However, they still lack a social license. We will need to work even harder to convince potential investors that the overwhelming opposition to this mine suggests a bad investment. We were a co-signer on letters sent to Orion Mine Finance Group, Hubday Minerals, Osisko Gold Royalties Ltd. and Ruffer, all potential investors.

## **EDUCATIONAL EFFORTS IN THE COMMUNITY**

### ***Coal tar pavement sealant education to protect human health and water ecosystems***

Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), found in coal tar pavement sealants, are found to be a serious cancer risk in humans, and a risk to aquatic wildlife. We offer presentations to government bodies and the public, and they can be tailored from as little as 10 minutes to a more in-depth 45 minute talk. We gave a presentation in Sturgeon Bay in July which led to the city banning coal tar pavement sealants on Dec. 3. We also were invited to present to the Town of Sturgeon Bay Board at their September meeting.

### ***Health Forums***

Contact us if you have suggestions for topics or speakers. We submitted a grant to help cover the cost of six health forums. If we do not receive the grant, we will be **seeking sponsors for individual health forums at the \$150 level**. Let us know if you will be a sponsor or can find a business sponsor. Past presentations included topics on indoor air quality, reducing breast cancer risk, toxic chemical exposures, diet and health, safe lawns, climate change, and more!

### ***Presentations and Exhibits***

Contact us to schedule a presentation for your group on a variety of environmental issues or exhibit at your event. Presentations include The Health and Environmental Threat from Coal Tar Pavement Sealants, The Hazards of Manure Spraying, Citizen Action to Protect the Waters of Northeast Wisconsin, The Hazards of Burn Barrels, Communities on the Road to Zero Waste, and more. The presentations can be

tailored to your group's age and available time. Also, contact us if you would like us to promote or co-sponsor your event or presentation.

Since the last newsletter we exhibited at the Farming and Clean Water Celebration and the Climate Crises presentation, both of which we sponsored.

### ***CWAC serves on Congressman Gallagher's Save the Bay committee for the Lower Fox River watershed.***

CWAC continues to serve on the committee's education and outreach subcommittee.

### ***Outreach through Newspaper and Radio***

CWAC President Dean Hoegger was interviewed by Door County Daily News about coal tar presentations to Door County municipalities. He also gave a more in depth talk on the topic while speaking on the Eddie Allen show on WDOR radio. He was also interviewed by Fox 11 News regarding the PCB clean up.

### ***Website Updates***

Articles and resources on our website continue to be updated as new information is available and can be found, along with past newsletter issues, at <https://www.cleanwateractioncouncil.org>

### ***CWAC provides interns with valuable experiences.***

We provide our interns with valuable experiences and strategies for managing a non-profit organization. We invite them to attend area conferences and meetings, providing them with networking opportunities in environmental fields, encourage them to research and write for our newsletter and website, invite them to attend board meetings, and provide them with training to run a nonprofit organization. Applications are being accepted for Spring and Summer Semesters.

### ***Get Our Weekly Update by e-mail.***

Each Tuesday we e-mail the CWAC Weekly Update with actions, alerts, events, and the latest information on topics of concern. Send your postings by Monday evening. If you are a member with an e-mail address and you are not getting the CWAC Weekly Update, check your spam folder before e-mailing us to request to be put on the mailing list. If you are reading this newsletter as a non-member, e-mail us at [contact@cleanwateractioncouncil.org](mailto:contact@cleanwateractioncouncil.org) to be placed on the free Weekly Update list. E-mails are sent via BCC to protect your privacy.

**Not receiving the Update? Send us an e-mail request. It is sent out once a week via BCC e-mail.**

### ***CWAC's Non-Profit Status***

To learn more about our non-profit status and financials go to the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions and then go to Credential Search for Clean Water Action Council: <https://www.wdfi.org/ice/berg/Registration/OrganizationCredentialSearch.aspx>



Please follow us on Facebook.

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# MARK YOUR CALENDAR! Meetings, Events and Happenings

## **January 9, February 27, March 26, April 30 at 6 PM** **CWAC Board Meetings**

Members are invited to attend monthly board meetings on the UW-Green Bay campus in Mary Ann Cofrin Hall, room MAC 301. Meetings are typically the last Thursday of the month.

Call us at 920-421-8885 to confirm the date and room number.

## **1st and 3rd Saturdays, November 2 – April 18** **9:00 AM – 2:00 PM**

### **Winter Market on Military**

Green Bay Plaza, 1481 W. Mason St.

Hand crafted, home-made and locally grown. Plus, seasonal specialties, TJ Maxx and BayCare bags! Fall and winter produce, organic foods, preserved foods, meat, eggs, honey, bakery, maple syrup products, pet treats, arts and crafts and more! Each week is unique!

<https://militaryave.org/news/market-on-military/>

## **Select Saturdays, December – February**

**8:00 AM – 12:00 PM**

### **Winter Farmer's Market presented by Bellin Health**

KI Convention Center, 333 Main St.

Local vendors offering meats, cheeses, bakery, prepared foods, vegetables, canned items, coffee, and handcrafted art pieces.

Free yoga at 9 a.m. in a private room next to the market. Bring your own mat for a low-impact exercise between shopping.

Live music by local performers while you shop.

Free parking is available in the Main Street Ramp with skywalk access to the KI Center. Gate arms are automatic, but still free on evenings and weekends. Keep your ticket given to you at entry, to scan upon exit.

EBT (Electronic Benefits Transfer) will be available on site.

### **Dates are listed below:**

December 14, 2019

January 11, 2020

January 25, 2020

February 8, 2020

February 22, 2020

<https://downtowngreenbay.com/explore/downtown-events/winter-farmers-market>

## **Wednesdays, December 18, January 15, and February 19** **Listening Session Regarding PFAs Contamination in the Marinette and Peshtigo Areas**

Community REC Center, 2501 Pierce Ave., Marinette

The Wisconsin DNR has scheduled a monthly series of listening sessions through mid-February 2020, to ensure that the public receives timely information about PFAs contamination in the Marinette and Peshtigo area. Community members are encouraged to attend to ask questions and discuss concerns with the DNR. Each listening session will begin with

a brief update and presentation, followed by public questions and comments. Questions about PFAs contamination in the Marinette and Peshtigo area may be submitted in advance by phone to 1-888-626-3244 or by e-mail to [DNRJCIPFAS@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DNRJCIPFAS@wisconsin.gov). Stay up to date about these listening sessions by subscribing to DNR's GovDelivery e-mail message service. Go to [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) and search "Marinette PFAS," then click the "Subscribe" button.

For more information and a complete list of DNR meetings, visit: <https://dnr.wi.gov/Calendar/Meetings/>

## **Saturday, December 21**

### **A 119-Year-Old Holiday Tradition:**

### **The Christmas Bird Count**

Oshkosh

The Oshkosh Christmas Bird Count (CBC) has been conducted every year since 1964. This year, the local count will take place on Saturday, December 21.

All participants must make arrangements in advance with the circle compiler within an established circle, although participation is open to anyone. Each count takes place in an established 15-mile diameter circle. There are 13 areas within the designated diameter where volunteers count every bird they see or hear all day.

If your home is within the boundaries of a CBC circle, then you can stay there and report birds that visit your feeder on count day as long as you have made prior arrangements.

You will be required to:

- Record the number of each species seen or heard
- Record time spent watching
- Record distance travelled
- Record names of all observers
- Document unusual species or numbers

For more information, or to be assigned to an area, contact circle compiler Tom Ziebell at [ctiebell@new.rr.com](mailto:ctiebell@new.rr.com) or 920-312-1976.

<https://www.audubon.org/conservation/science/christmas-bird-count>

## **Tuesday, January 14**

### **Notice of Public Hearing Proposed State Implementation Plan (SIP) Revision for Redesignation Request and Maintenance Plan for Door County 2015 8-Hour Ozone Nonattainment Area**

Door County Public Library-Sturgeon Bay Branch (Conference Room 2), 107 S. 4th Ave., Sturgeon Bay

The DNR is submitting this SIP revision to the U.S. EPA as required by the federal Clean Air Act (CAA). This SIP requests EPA to approve Wisconsin's redesignation request and maintenance plan for the Door County 2015 8-hour ozone

## Calendar continued...

nonattainment area. Ozone monitoring data for the most recent three years, 2017 through 2019, demonstrate that the air quality meets the 2015 ozone national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS) in the Door County nonattainment area.

For more information and a list of all DNR hearings, visit: <https://dnr.wi.gov/Calendar/Hearings/>

**Saturday, January 25**

### **Toward Harmony with Nature**

Oshkosh Convention Center, 2 N. Main St., Oshkosh

The 24th annual Toward Harmony with Nature conference will feature keynote speaker Stephen Packard, whose mission is to foster the building of human communities to support biodiversity conservation. His presentation will draw upon his many years of experience as a leader of volunteers in using garden-grown and wild-collected seeds to restore high-quality prairies, savannas, woodlands and wetlands.

Following the keynote presentation, breakout sessions will feature nine speakers with expertise in a wide range of native plants landscaping topics. During breaks between sessions, conference goers will have the opportunity to browse native plants-related items at a book table, silent auction, and a room of exhibitors and vendors. A buffet lunch is available for those who make reservations. Lunch items will also be available at a concession stand.

<https://www.towardharmonywithnature.org/>

**January 31-February 2**

### **Wisconsin Farmers Union 89th Annual State Convention**

Central Wisconsin Convention & Expo Center, 10101 Market St., Rothschild

The Wisconsin Farmer Union's annual convention gives the opportunity to gather the Wisconsin Farmers Union community. There will be workshops, speakers, and the opportunity to participate in our grassroots policy discussions. More details and registration information is available on their website at:

<https://www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com/convention>

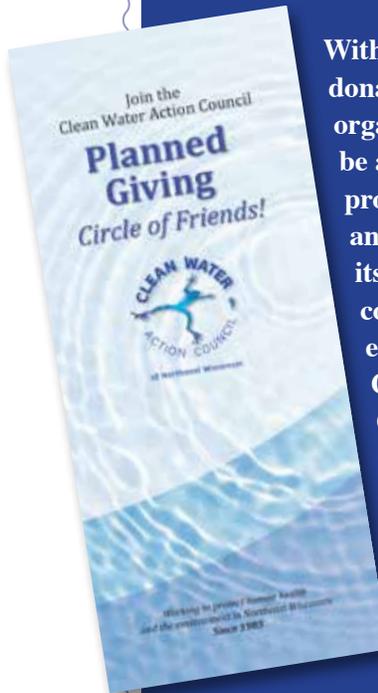
# Have you renewed your membership?

*See your newsletter label or e-mail notice which indicates the last year that you donated.*

## Join Our Planned Giving Circle of Friends

Without planned giving donations or legacies, our organization would not be able to do the work of protecting human health and the environment at its current level. Please consider supporting our endowment fund at the Greater Green Bay Community Foundation with a gift in your will or bequest.

*Contact us for a  
Planned Giving  
Brochure*



of Northeast Wisconsin

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

The Clean Water Action Council of Northeast Wisconsin Non-Profit Corporation is organized to promote a safe, healthy, and sustainable environment in northeast Wisconsin, to educate and inform members and the public on environmental issues, and to take action on behalf of members and the public to protect the environment and human health. All operations are exclusively for charitable and educational purposes and for the promotion of environmental justice.

# CWAC Accomplishments for 2019

*Here are some significant actions that member donations supported. Thank you!*



- Educating the public about the dangers of coal tar sealants was a high priority in 2019. With Clean Wisconsin we gave four presentations to the public, and then gave presentations to the city of Sturgeon Bay, the town of Sturgeon Bay, and Democratic Party of Door County. We also mailed educational materials to over 400 recipients, primarily children's health advocates,
- With the help of Midwest Environmental Advocates, we won a lawsuit against the DNR to overturn their settlement with the Wisconsin Dairy Business Association to give up DNR's authority over calf hutch manure runoff.
- Hosted seven student interns guiding them with strategies for managing an environmental non-profit organization, and providing workshops, trainings, and networking opportunities to advance their education and career. We sent some of our interns to Wisconsin Environmental Health Network Conference, Lake Michigan Day Conference, Healthy Water Door County Conference, and the Lake Michigan Stakeholders Fall Membership Meeting.
- Held two Health Forums: "Protecting Your Family from Toxins in Your Home and Environment," and "Solving the Climate Crisis."
- Exhibited at the New Leaf Farm Market, Green Bay Farmers Market, Lake Michigan Day Conference, and the American Association of University Women presentation and meeting.
- Published quarterly newsletters.
- Participated in Congressman Gallagher's Save the Bay Committee.
- Gave seven presentations on protecting the waters of Northeast Wisconsin in Green Bay and Sturgeon Bay.
- Director spoke on eight radio and TV interviews or programs.
- E-mailed the Weekly Update to 1050 recipients each week which contained information about recommended actions, water pollution permit notices for renewal and variances, events, and links to important news.

- Updated Facebook with 6-10 weekly posts.
- Shared concerns and gave recommended actions to the public, and provided comment, on bills and administrative rules that would impact the environment and/or human health including the livestock siting rules, NR151 expansion, the Speakers Task Force on Water Quality, and Michigan's Back Forty Mine.
- Continued to research perfluorinated chemicals, educated members and the public about the threat, reported hearing dates, and urged the public to support the "Clear Act."
- Continued efforts to educate the public about the health threats from spraying manure by offering presentations to the public and town boards.
- Testified or submitted comments on permit renewals and permit variances.
- Held annual fundraiser featuring locally sourced Dinner, Program, Dance, and Silent Auction.
- Worked to improve Wisconsin's livestock facility siting rules through lobbying for public hearings and accepting citizen comments.
- Monitored plowing setbacks for violations and followed up on member concerns regarding potential manure spreading violations.
- Participated in the DNR's Lower Fox River water quality monitoring project with monthly sampling May through October.
- Director interviewed by Door County Daily News about coal tar presentations to Door County municipalities.
- Updated website articles and resources as new information became available.
- Applied for grants through the Door County Community Foundation, Green Bay Community Foundation, and Network for Good.
- Co-sponsored, promoted and attended the Green Bay Climate Strike.
- Furthered efforts to increase membership in our Planned Giving Circle of Friends.
- Sponsored and exhibited at the Farming and Clean Water Celebration.
- Director participated in Door County Water Justice Panel hosted by Midwest Environmental Advocates.
- Continued efforts with petitions to the EPA under the Safe Drinking Water Act and the Clean Water Act.

## Join or Renew Your Membership to Clean Water Action Council for 2020!

Renewal     New Member    Date \_\_\_\_\_

( ) \$20 Individual    ( ) \$30 Family (**this amount would really help**)

( ) \$50 Sustaining    ( ) \$100 Donor    ( ) \$500 Benefactor

( ) Non-member donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_

( ) Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

( ) Please send me information about making a planned gift to CWAC

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

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E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

### Receive FREE newsletters with each membership.

Please choose one...

Printed version     E-mailed version

### PLEASE VOLUNTEER! (BE SURE TO PROVIDE PHONE NUMBER ABOVE)

the newsletter     events     work at office     mailings

joining or leading one of the committees     other

Send check or money order to:    **Clean Water Action Council**  
P.O. Box 9144  
Green Bay, WI 54308

*CWAC is a registered non-profit organization.  
Your contributions may be tax-deductible. **Thank you!***

**Office location:**  
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[www.cleanwateractioncouncil.org](http://www.cleanwateractioncouncil.org)



Find us on [Facebook](#) or updates on hearings  
and current or upcoming events.

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P.O. Box 9144, Green Bay, WI 54308

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[contact@cleanwateractioncouncil.org](mailto:contact@cleanwateractioncouncil.org)



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For previous newsletters, go to: [www.cleanwateractioncouncil.org](http://www.cleanwateractioncouncil.org)