

# Clean Water Action Council

OF NORTHEAST WISCONSIN

— CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF WORKING TO PROTECT PUBLIC HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT IN NORTHEAST WISCONSIN —



SPRING 2025

## Environmental Protections

The Impact of Trump's Orders and Actions  
on the Environment.  
Local and State Regulations  
That We Can Still Rely On

### Introduction

by CWAC President Dean Hoegger

In November 2025 *The Guardian* reported that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) staff feared Donald Trump would destroy how it protects Americans from pollution and that they would become targets of his attacks. Now in March 2025 those fears and attacks are happening. Trump's head of his new agency, the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), Elon Musk, has taken a "chain saw" to agency budgets including

the EPA's. [Knewz.com](https://www.knewz.com) reported that the EPA has initiated efforts to rescind approximately \$20 billion in grant funding allocated for climate projects under the Biden administration's Inflation Reduction Act.

Many of these attacks on environmental protections were outlined in the Project 2025 document published in 2024, which CWAC wrote about in the *Fall 2024 Newsletter*. Many environmental organizations warned voters before the election that this is what a Trump Administration would look like. Most of Trump's supporters pointed to Trump's denial that he had any connection to Project 2025. Some said it was



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a lot of bluster, and he did not always do the things he raged about. However, environmental laws and policies are now being shredded.

Many citizens are asking where Congressional oversight is in these actions to slash budgets and staff of agencies that were funded through laws passed by the legislative branch. Republicans control both the U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives, both by narrow majorities. While Democrats are urging concerned citizens to make their voices heard, it seems Republicans are turning a deaf ear to their constituents. Many representatives do not wish to hear their concerns and are canceling town hall meetings. It was reported by NBC News that Republican Rep. Rich McCormick told town meeting participants that many of these issues “will be litigated in court.”

With little hope for intervention by a Republican Congress, we will need to look to the courts for protections from actions by DOGE. Hopefully the courts will find many are a violation of law, or they even violate the Constitution’s separation of powers of our three branches of government. During the 2017-2020 Trump administration’s deregulation efforts, only about 20% were enforced by a court, compared to an historical average of 70%.

Efforts are being undertaken by Democrats to win some seats in special elections that are a result of Republicans taking positions in the Trump administration. These elections will be held in April, as will a Wisconsin Supreme Court election. The Wisconsin election will determine whether the court maintains a liberal majority or will lean toward the MAGA movement.

The following articles were written about the executive orders and Trump administration policies that we thought would cause the greatest harm to human health and the environment. However, we will begin on a hopeful note, outlining how we can still rely on local and state regulations, especially if the Wisconsin Supreme Court maintains its liberal majority, placing people over polluters.

## TAKE ACTION!

**Tell Congress your thoughts on the Trump Administration’s actions that will harm the environment and human health. It is best to call the local office rather than the DC office.**

**Most Representatives and Senators are not holding town hall meetings. So, organize a gathering at their local office. Send us the details and we will publish the event in our *Weekly Update*.**

**Use this link** to find your Representative. After opening the link, click on the screen icon for a new window with contact details which includes phone numbers:

<https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative>

**Use this link** to find Senators and Representatives:

<https://www.congress.gov/members/find-your-member>

## State Environmental Laws Provide Hope in Light of the Trump Administration’s Weakening

By Dean Hoegger

We are witnessing the most aggressive attack on environmental laws since the 2016-2020 Trump Administration. Now, we must look at what we can do at the state level to protect human health and the environment. At the heart of the legal basis for protecting our waters is that the Wisconsin Constitution grants citizens the rights to the waters of the state. And like the provision in the Federal Clean Water Act allowing citizens to sue polluters and government agencies, the Wisconsin Public Trust Doctrine also allows citizens to bring legal actions against a private party.

Wisconsin has more environmental protection laws than most states. Some of these include:

- Wisconsin Water Resources Act (1965) created the WDNR and charged the agency with water pollution control. It also included directives for shoreline protection and floodplain management.
- Wisconsin Environmental Policy Act (1972) was passed to establish the state’s environmental policy and, in some cases, require environmental impact statements (EIS) for major projects.
- Wisconsin Spills Law (1978) requires individuals and companies who possess or control a hazardous substance to clean up a spill and restore the environment, whether it is soil, water, or air. More later about the threat to this law due to the WMC vs DNR lawsuit.
- Wisconsin’s 1983 Groundwater Protection Act (Wisconsin Act 410) created Chapter 160 of Wisconsin Statutes and expanded Wisconsin’s legal, organizational, and financial capacity for controlling groundwater pollution.
- Water Resources and Conservation Law (1985) was passed to protect and promote the conservation of waters of the state by having a water management plan and to have cooperative and coordinated action with other states and provinces.
- Wis. Act 27 (1997) amends Wisconsin Chapter 92 by requiring that all counties have a land and water resource management plan. The intent is to foster and support a locally led process to help protect and restore those resources.
- Wis. Act 6 (Wetland Protection) (2001) provides guidance to persons restoring, enhancing, or creating a wetland and procedures for processing applications for water quality certifications.



Many of Wisconsin's environmental laws are based on federal laws, which provide a floor, not a ceiling, as to the degree of protection the law provides. Many of our state laws are more protective of the environment and its impact on human health. Wetland protection is a good example. When a U.S. Supreme Court ruling removed protections for about 50% of the nation's wetlands, it was noted that nearly a century of state laws and court precedents left most of Wisconsin's non-federal wetlands protected.



Wetland at Perrot State Park. Courtesy of the WDNR.

Not all state laws are more protective or more strongly supported. The federal laws such as the Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, and the Safe Drinking Water Act are examples of federal laws that are delegated to the states to implement and enforce. When a state fails to implement the rules, citizens can petition the EPA for corrective action, which CWAC, along with others, sought support from the EPA.

However, the weakened Trump Administration's EPA may be unable to provide such support. Fortunately, each of these Acts has a provision for citizen lawsuits against polluters and government agencies who fail to enforce the law. The courts may be needed to enforce these Acts in Wisconsin.

While it is true that some of Wisconsin's laws are more protective than the federal version, some of these laws are under frequent attack by powerful businesses and lobby interests in the state. The Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce (WMC) vs. the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources lawsuit over the agency's application of the Wisconsin Spills Law (1978) is one such case. WMC alleges that the WDNR exceeded its authority to order testing and remediation of soil contaminated by PFAS chemicals.

The DNR lost that case at the circuit court and the court of appeals levels. In January, the State Supreme Court heard oral arguments from the parties and allowed CWAC and others to submit friends of the court briefs in support of the WDNR. The ruling will have far-reaching implications for the state's ability to use the Spills Law to protect citizens from toxic spills.

Another case threatening the DNR's authority could lead to widespread contamination of drinking water and surface water, according to Midwest Environmental Advocates (MEA). Wisconsin Dairy Alliance and Venture Dairy Cooperative filed the lawsuit over the DNR's authority to require concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) to apply for permits under Wisconsin's Water Pollution Discharge Elimination System (WPDES) program. MEA further noted that the case could have a significant impact on how state laws can act as a backstop against potential future Clean Water Act rollbacks under a weakened EPA.

Passing and enforcing local laws can also be an important tool for environmental protection. When the State of Wisconsin failed to take action on manure spraying, CWAC fought the practice locally, and 17 towns banned the practice. This was also true with companies using coal tar pavement sealant containing a dangerous carcinogen. Local bans were passed when the State did not act. Where zoning exists, opposing the granting of conditional use permits (CUP) can also be used to protect human health and the environment. CWAC's efforts to have a CUP rescinded prevented the construction of a hazardous incinerator in Green Bay.

More than ever, we must work to protect the authority of state administrative agencies, whether in the courts, the legislature, or the governor's office.

#### References:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HPHOM3Xs6Uw>

<https://www3.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/UWEXLakes/Documents/resources/bookstore/Wisconsin%20Water%20Law-Edition2-G3622.pdf>

## Local Funding for AOC at Risk from Trump Administration Cuts

By Crystal Brown

In July 2024, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Office of Great Waters and the New North Inc., in partnership with a grant from the Fund for Lake Michigan, began the process of forming a Community Advisory Committee (CAC). The committee will engage the community in voicing input on environmental initiatives related to the Lower Green Bay and Fox River Area of Concern (AOC) and the Green Bay Conservation Blueprint.

The focus of the CAC is to engage the community in expressing "views on environmental initiatives," "influence the decision-making process and policy development for targeted initiatives," and "foster a collaborative setting for the discussion of the impact of environmental programs and policies on the local community." This CAC is modeled after the Waterway Restoration Partnership in Milwaukee.

CWAC Board Member Jane Benson and Administrative Assistant Crystal Brown were in attendance for the initial information session. After a thorough application and interview process, Brown was selected to join the CAC. It is

a diverse selection of community members in the Fox River/Green Bay Watershed, representing agriculture, education, business, environmental protection, and First Nation/tribal governments. It includes representatives from both the Oneida Nation and Ho-Chunk Nation.



Figure 1 Wild Rice growing in Duck Creek, an area impacted by the AOC work. Photo credit: Crystal Brown

Brown was selected to join the committee due to her background in the health and educational fields, her avid involvement in outdoor activities, being a community member living within blocks of the Fox River in downtown Green Bay, and as a representative of CWAC.

This citizen group is currently in the process of learning about current and previous projects of the AOC which included participating in the PCB clean-up efforts in the Fox River, and wetland restoration projects such as the Ken Euers Nature Preserve. The AOC efforts will continue to work towards completing targets over the next several years to delist the watershed as an Area of Concern.

The CAC will be advising the DNR on ways to increase public engagement



Figure 2 The Lower Green Bay and Fox River Area of Concern affects citizens in NE WI. Photo credit: Wisconsin DNR

with these initiatives, to help foster long-term sustainability and stewardship of this work, and to create a culture of stewardship to last long after the AOC Delisting has occurred.

The AOC program started in 1987 and continues to make great strides improving the overall health and integrity of the watershed, for humans, plants, and wildlife alike. Initiatives are both state and federally funded, and historically the project has had strong bi-partisan congressional support. However, one of the biggest sources of funding for this work has been from the

Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI), which is currently at risk.

According to the GLRI website, the program has “received approximately \$4.9 billion from 2010 to 2024. The GLRI has also received \$800 million from 2022 to 2025 under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.” This funding goes to projects performed by states, tribal nations, local governments, and nongovernmental organizations through agreements, contracts, and grants. Projects must support one of the GLRI focus areas: Toxic Substances and Areas of Concern, Invasive Species, Nonpoint Source Pollution, Habitat and Species, and Foundations for Future Restoration Actions.

According to Alliance for the Great Lakes on January 9, 2025, several U.S. House of Representative members reintroduced the bipartisan GLRI Act of 2025 bill that is “intended to reauthorize the GLRI program for a five-year period at \$500 million per year.” Wisconsin Representatives Bryan Steil (R) and Gwen Moore (D) were among supporting members of the bill.

According to an article from Grist on February 14, 2025, Vice President JD Vance, previously an Ohio senator, was part of a “bipartisan coalition calling to increase funding” for GLRI. Vance was quoted as saying, “The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative delivers the tools we need to fight invasive species, algal blooms, pollution, and other threats to the ecosystem.” He was also a “co-chair of the Senate Great Lakes Task Force when the reauthorization bill was announced” and “voted to extend and increase funding for the project until 2031,” calling on his colleagues to support this effort.

With recent Executive Orders from President Donald Trump, many fear that the GLRI funding may be at risk. According to Grist, the Trump administration previously tried to reduce and eliminate GLRI funding on multiple occasions. With environmental initiatives and funding being targeted with the current direction of the administration, we must voice our concern about this to our representatives, as well as contact the office of VP Vance, urging him to continue his support.

Many of the projects that were previously approved for funding would bring not only improved health of the environment and enhanced



relationships with the water, but would also bring economic prosperity with job creation and workforce development. Grist reported that a 2018 economic analysis from the Great Lakes Commission and the Council of Great Lakes Industries, found that “every federal dollar spent through the landmark program resulted in about \$3 of additional benefits,” making this an easy decision for bipartisan support of this funding.

It will be up to all of us, to rally behind the initiatives impacting our watershed that affects all life in Northeast Wisconsin, as well as reach out to our representatives across both parties to advocate for preserving this important work and necessary funding.

**CALL TO ACTION**

- Contact your congressional representatives and the office of Vice President Vance to express support for GLRI Funding.
- Stay tuned to *CWAC Weekly Updates* for information on Green Bay/Fox River AOC Projects.
- Engage in Community Advisory Committee sponsored events as they are scheduled and published in the *CWAC Weekly Update*

**Years of Environmental Protections to be Undone by President Trump**

By Lilly Pienta, CWAC Intern

The second Trump administration has already proven devastating for climate change action and other health and environmental issues. In his first term, President Trump gutted federal climate initiatives and attempted to rescind 125 environmental protections. Many of these attempts were halted by the courts, but this second term comes with a much more conservative and loaded Supreme Court. He will likely have more success in overturning previous environmental executive orders and undermining laws and regulations designed to protect our air, water, climate, and vulnerable communities.

Many of President Trump’s orders face litigation challenges and require congressional approval before implementation, but they signal how he will handle any environmental justice actions during his term. From just the first day in office, the Trump administration has established its intentions against environmental protection.

There are several executive orders that President Trump aims to rescind that call for major concern, especially from an environmental perspective. Some of the most impactful orders include rescinding former president Biden’s executive orders for:

- Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad
- Protecting public health and the environment and restoring science to tackle the climate crisis.
- Establishment of the Climate Change Support Office.
- Catalyzing Clean Energy Industries and Jobs Through Federal Sustainability
- Revitalizing Our Nation’s Commitment to Environmental Justice for All
- Designation of Officials of the Council on Environmental Quality to Act as Chairman

Trump enacted almost a total of 30 executive orders on his first day in office following the January 2025 inauguration. These orders rescinded 80 actions issued during the Biden administration. Some have already shaped how the next four years will be.

President Trump has not just targeted policies from the Biden and Obama administrations but has altered a notable order from the Carter administration, which is the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). President Trump ordered the Council of Environmental Equality (CEQ) to issue guidance on implementing NEPA, and he has proposed rescinding the current NEPA regulations.

Trump also revoked the 1977 order authorizing CEQ to issue binding regulations under NEPA. The importance of NEPA is that it encourages and sustains our relationship with the environment. It helps promote the efforts of protection and eliminate damage to the environment. This act is intended to aid public officials in understanding the consequences of a damaged environment and how to take preventative actions.



Image courtesy of Construction Physics.

A critical order that President Trump rescinded was Biden's Executive order 13990, "Protecting Public Health and the Environment and Restoring Science to Tackle the Climate Crisis". Not only did this order guarantee the protection of our environment and climate, but it also prioritized the creation of union jobs to aid with implementing these goals. This greatly conflicts with Trump's justification that these executive orders were "harming American job growth."

In general, executive orders are not self-executing, but they can be powerful and influential directions to the executive branch. It affects how government agencies will pursue their mandates and interact with the regulated community.

President Trump's executive orders exemplify how he views the environment as nothing more than a resource to pillage. The Trump administration's dismissal of environmental protections could prove devastating to human health and our future generations. Americans depend on natural resources and expect that the federal government will prioritize the protection of the environment, but unfortunately, this does not appear to be the situation for the next four years.

## The Dismantling of the EPA

By Debra Noel

**"WE'RE HERE, BECAUSE THE AMERICAN PEOPLE DEMANDED WE BE HERE...WE'RE HERE, BECAUSE WE STAND BETWEEN POLLUTION AND OUR PEOPLE."**

-EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy, 2016

Looking back before the 2024 election at the Project 2025's, "Mandate for Leadership: The Conservative Promise" document, it's clear the Trump administration is following the plan pertaining to the EPA so far. The document covers plans to drastically reduce and eliminate most of the EPA's role in protecting the environment. Pages 417-477 describes the plan to decimate the EPA.

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has given directives to Lee Zeldin, the new EPA administrator appointed by Trump, to fire 400 new employees. Zeldin claims they made a thorough review and followed proper protocols to carry out Trump's executive orders. Their mandate is to create a more effective and efficient federal government that serves all Americans.

Zeldin has met with the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), lead by the richest man in the world, Elon Musk. DOGE has access to the EPA's contracting system and is recommending slashing new personnel and many EPA programs. The instructions from Trump include the order to hire no more than one employee for every four employees cut.

Any new employees of the EPA or other government jobs that worked under a year, will not qualify for civil

service protections. One of those fired, a young woman named Nyla McCranie, spoke at a rally about her most impactful encounter on the job.

It involved a call from a woman in Ohio who called to complain about toxic air pollution near her home. It turned out a corporation close by was burning lithium-ion batteries. "I want everybody to think about that situation and how people in rural areas and even urban areas, will not be heard. Their concerns will not be heard if there are no more federal workers to work on environmental health and safety," McCranie told the crowd.

This is cruel to the workers and dangerous to us all. Employees who worked for the EPA for longer periods are also worried about their jobs being cut.

President Trump's reasoning seems to be cutting expenses in the government so polluters and manufacturers can make more money with less regulations to follow. There can then be tax breaks for the ultra-rich, including unelected Elon Musk, who's business contracts with the U.S. government were under investigation. These investigations have since been silenced through leadership changes and cuts in other departments.

As of Wednesday February 19th, some workers who had been previously cut were called back and told it was a mistake they were fired. There's a lot of confusion and fear regarding what is happening. This administration's disorganized way of slashing before thinking puts Northeast Wisconsin, and our country's environment in jeopardy.

Under the Biden administration's Inflation Reduction Act, \$20 billion in grants were to be distributed to fund clean energy, water, and transportation projects in low-income communities. Included is the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill that was created to reduce up to 40 million tons of climate pollution annually.

Contracts canceled include the Climate Justice Alliance. However, most of the canceled contracts have not been named yet. Already, Trump's orders have restrained 10's of billions of dollars for funding clean energy projects, conservation efforts, and transportation projects across the nation.



Zeldin will pressure the inspector general, Congress, and DOJ to end these contracts. The contracts were made with eight regional organizations named as financial agents. They were awarded these grants under the Biden EPA's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund.

These projects included home energy retrofitting and off-grid renewable energy solutions for communities with limited access to green funding. There are now plans to have less restrictions on chemical pollutants such as pesticides and PFAS as well.



The new administration wants to bypass the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which requires the federal government to consider the environmental consequences before approving infrastructure projects. These projects range from roads and bridges to oil and gas pipelines to solar farms. This will cause confusion, and projects could be completed before lawsuits have time to stop them. The consequences can harm the environment and have toxic cumulative effects on neighborhoods.

Congressional backing is required to implement these blanket freezes on previously allocated funds. This attempt to illegally freeze funding for climate change and environmental justice is being challenged and has already violated a court order to lift the freezes. Environmental groups, the media, private contractors, and states are suing the administration for these actions. Let's hope the courts will act quickly and the administration will abide by the rulings.

"A coalition of nonprofits under fire from President Trump's appointees says it will begin doling out money from a \$2 billion climate grant it received during the Biden era — despite the Environmental Protection Agency's attempts to claw back the funds," reported Politico on February 24, 2025.

A senator from the state of Washington, Patty Murray, told the press that "if Donald Trump wants to gut funding that is creating good-paying energy jobs all over our country, he can come to Congress and win the votes he needs to do that."



Pristine parks and wilderness areas may not be protected from pollution and drilling under the Trump administration. Photo from EPA Facebook.

We don't know how this struggle to keep the EPA from doing what Congress intended will end. There are many people fighting to uphold the climate change contracts, maintain environmental regulations, and protect the rights of EPA staff. It's important now more than ever to support organizations like Clean Water Action Council, to demand answers from legislators, and participate in boycotts and rallies. Let the power of the people prevail!

#### Resources:

The EPA Administrators: Looking back at 50 years of environmental protection.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hGRHCF5oqM>

Here's EPA's Plan To Rescind \$20 Billion On Climate Projects.  
[Climate grant recipient to start spending \\$2B as Trump's EPA tries to claw it back](#)

## Lies and Hyperbole, Trump's Energy Executive Orders and Their Impact on Established US Energy Policy

By George Mason, Guest Writer

On January 20th, 2025, Donald J Trump signed two executive orders related to US energy policy, one Titled "Unleashing American Energy," and another titled "Declaring a National Energy Emergency." Both documents effectively reverse every energy policy executive order signed from 2021 to 2024. These two executive orders also threaten long standing environmental policy tied to the Clean Air Act of 1974, Environmental executive orders from 1977 related to permitting, and revoke every energy policy aspect of the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 and the Infrastructure and Investment and Jobs Act. Finally, "Unleashing American Energy" attempts to destroy the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) entirely.

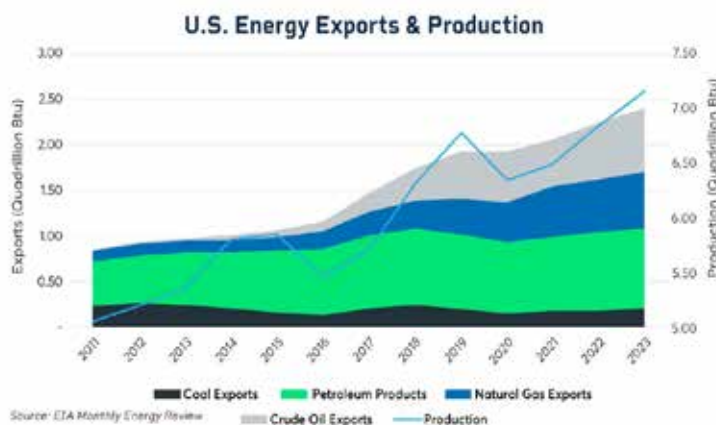


Figure 1. Graph of US Energy Exports and Production. Source: U. S. Energy Information Administration / Monthly Energy Review January 2024

The Trump executive order titled "Unleashing American Energy," is a parade of misinformation and outright lies concerning the American energy industry, consumer energy costs, and climate change and clean energy efforts. In this executive order, Trump claims that environmental regulations are to blame for limiting energy creation, reducing jobs, and raising energy costs. The facts are that the United States is the largest energy producer in the world and will remain so in the foreseeable future. US Oil companies are sitting on thousands of proven leases for the sole reason of keeping oil prices as close to \$100.00 per barrel as they can. There is no regulatory "limit" on US production, just the limits artificially imposed by greedy US corporations and investors. His claims about job losses are also outright lies. Not a single policy from 2021 to 2024 lowered the number of energy related jobs in the US, quite the opposite, they increased them and added a flood of clean energy jobs.

Worse than simply trying to discredit the Biden administration are the outright efforts such as "... eliminating the "social cost of carbon" calculation from

any federal permitting or regulatory decision.” The executive order is also an outright declaration of war on electric vehicles, clean energy, energy efficient appliances, and energy efficient products. The attempts to eliminate any form of energy efficiency or clean energy will be financially disastrous and will inflict massive damage to our economy. It is being done in spite, to gratify the massively misinformed base supporters of what can only be called regressivism in the 21st Century. Hiding behind lies and misinformation, the entire regressive movement is denying anything that relates to global warming and climate change.

**Clean energy revenues by sector in billion US dollars**

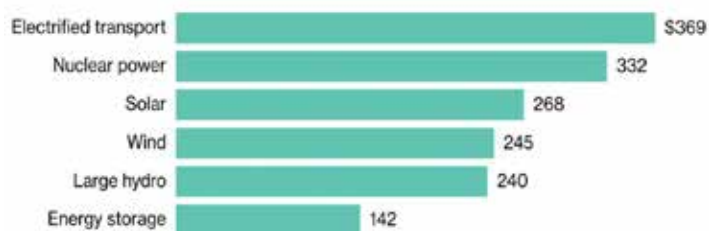


Figure 2. US Clean Energy Revenues by Sector.  
Source: Bloomberg NEF, 17 August, 2023

The declaration of “National Emergency” related to energy is pure fantasy and hyperbole. In this farcical document, Trump claims that “...hostile state and non-state foreign actors have targeted our domestic energy infrastructure (and) weaponized our reliance on foreign energy.” Both of those statements are outright lies. Akin to the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution and the Bush WMD fiasco, this executive order is itself an attempt to justify the destruction of long-standing US energy and environmental policies to limit the rights of the American people to have health and welfare protections from environmental destruction. It’s lies and claims mirror efforts to limit personal rights and promote the corporate state by every autocratic or fascist regime in history.

There is no emergency related to US energy production. The only foreign energy purchases made by US producers are those that result in profits from advantageous spot prices, or those mandated by the fact that US producers have not modernized their refineries to take advantage of cheap Canadian and other foreign produced sour crude oil. The US will always import sour crude for those reasons, as well as the need for high sulfur fuel oil for the marine shipping industry. In fact, any expansion in refined oil products will require an increase in imported sour crude from Canada and repressive oil producing nations like Saudi Arabia and Venezuela. US producers can increase drilling and production anytime they choose, however, with prices per barrel below \$100.00, they have chosen to deliberately

limit production to keep prices, and therefore profits, high. The US continues to expand its liquid natural gas export capability, and these executive orders will massively increase US exports of natural gas, thereby raising costs for US consumers.

There is no US energy emergency, and the US is the most self-reliant energy producer on the planet. It will remain so for decades to come based on our proven reserves. In terms of strategic minerals, both documents foster approaches to obtaining mineral resources that include permitting potentially disastrous environmental damage and using our demand for minerals as leverage against foreign nations, if not creating conditions for outright war. We are seeing this approach already with the Trump’s efforts to coerce Ukraine into signing away it’s mineral wealth for US support against Russian aggression. A Trump success in blackmailing foreign nations for their resources will embolden him to increase this approach with horrific outcomes for the peoples of the world and for our nation’s war fighters.

50% of the American electorate have chosen Trump in what was the first popular vote win by a Republican presidential candidate in 20 years. They favor the policies that he is promulgating even though the majority of them likely have no clue as to what the outcomes will be. For the 48% of the American electorate who voted against Trump, we must become more active. It is time to overcome the repeated failures of the Democratic party by fomenting activism and resistance in every way we can. Our nation cannot survive the damage from a Trump led autocracy and traditional liberals need to make the shift to deep progressivism. The watchword for the next four years should be: “Resist!”

*George Mason is a retired US Army Colonel and was selected as a 2013 National Security Fellow at Harvard University’s Harvard Kennedy School where he studied global energy policy and US energy security.*

## A Step Backward: Trump’s Executive Order Undermines Global Climate Efforts

By Peyton Zidlicky, CWAC Intern

On Donald Trump’s first day in office, he signed many executive orders targeting environmental and health organizations. One of these executive orders, titled “Putting America First in International Environmental Agreements,” effectively withdraws the United States, once again, from the Paris Agreement. The Paris Agreement is an international climate change treaty adopted by 195 nations in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The agreement was initially adopted in December 2015 and was aimed at addressing climate change.

This decision, announced on January 20, 2025, has sparked widespread criticism and raised concerns about the US’s credibility as a partner in the global economy. Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) Executive Director Amanda Leland gave a statement condemning this move.



She highlighted the far-reaching consequences of abandoning the international climate accord.

The Paris Agreement represents a landmark global effort to combat climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and encouraging international cooperation. The agreement aims to limit global warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. Current efforts are to cap the increase at 1.5 degrees Celsius. It also holds countries accountable for their nationally set goals to reduce emissions.

By withdrawing from the agreement, the United States will be only one of four countries not a part of the global effort. The United States was initially seen as a leader in addressing one of the most pressing challenges of our time. This decision undermines that role. The Paris Agreement is not just about environmental protection; it is also about economic opportunity, innovation, and most importantly, global cooperation.

Climate change is already driving up costs for families and businesses, destroying communities, and harming public health. Recent climate disasters, such as the devastating Los Angeles wildfires and Hurricane Helene, which caused \$60 billion in recovery costs in North Carolina, require an urgent need for action.

By stepping back from its responsibilities, the U.S. is denying itself the opportunity to lead in the development and organization of clean energy technologies. Other countries will fill this spot and reap the benefits of this growing market. This shift could put American companies at a competitive disadvantage as they lose ground in the rapidly expanding clean energy movement.



Image courtesy of EPA.

This is not the first time the U.S. has stepped back from global climate leadership. During his first term, Trump announced his intent to withdraw from the Paris Agreement, a process that was later reversed by the Biden administration. This policy instability and withdrawal from the agreement create uncertainty for American companies and could have long-term consequences.

This executive order reflects the Trump administration's long-lasting criticism of international climate initiatives, especially their financial burden on the United States.

Trump has repeatedly argued that agreements like the Paris Agreement unfairly give American taxpayer dollars toward other countries. Trump claims that many of these countries do not require any financial assistance. He contends that these agreements put unnecessary strain onto the U.S. while not prioritizing American interests.

The executive order also revokes and rescinds the U.S. International Climate Finance Plan. The finance plan includes resources to assist developing countries to reduce greenhouse gases and adapt to the effects of climate change. By revoking this plan, Trump aims to stop what he views as wasteful spending and redirecting the U.S. focus toward domestic economic growth.



Image courtesy of FMT

Despite the Trump administration's decision, the global transition to clean energy is already underway. This is a critical moment to lead or be left behind. Companies, cities, states, and other nations are already investing in resilience, recognizing the economic and environmental benefits of these efforts. The time calls for a renewed commitment to the environment, not retreat. Our communities must work together to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement, which will strengthen public health, economies, and the future of the planet.

## Trump Promises Oil Drilling Rampage in Alaska

By Charlie Frisk

Trump's Executive Order (EO), "Unleashing Alaska's Extraordinary Energy Potential", has the potential to unleash destruction of Alaska's wild lands, wildlife, and fisheries.

The EO directs federal agencies to rescind or revise restrictions, policies, and environmental reviews implemented since January 2021 that limit resource development on federal and state lands, including the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR). It further tasks agencies with expediting the permitting, leasing, and infrastructure projects critical for developing Alaska's resources, particularly its liquefied natural gas (LNG) industry and the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System.

In other words, there will be no rules on regulating the oil and gas industry as they rampage their way through some of North America's most pristine wilderness areas.

ANWR, at 19.3 million acres, is one of the largest and most pristine refuges in the U.S. Created in 1980, conservationists fought for many decades to protect these lands that sit relatively untouched at the northeastern edge of Alaska. For just as long, oil and gas interests have been trying to drill the refuge's coastal plain, an area that the Gwich'in people have called the "sacred place where life begins."

The refuge's 19.6 million acres are home to an incredible abundance of wildlife: musk oxen, wolves, caribou, and polar bears. It is also the summer breeding grounds for millions of birds that migrate there from six continents and all 50 states.

The battle over oil and gas drilling is centered on the 1.5 million acres making up the coastal plain because that is where the oil and gas are located. Unfortunately, the coastal plain is also the calving grounds for the Porcupine caribou herd, Alaska's largest herd at over 200,000 caribou, the nesting area for most of those millions of birds, and the denning sites for most of the polar birds that overwinter in ANWR.

The native Gwich'in are known as the "People of the Lands of the Porcupine Caribou". They have relied on the caribou for food, clothing, and tools for generations. They consider the calving grounds to be a sacred place and do not hunt or travel there when the caribou are calving.



Photo courtesy of Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game

Caribou are very susceptible to any disturbance while calving. Oil exploration and caribou calving are completely incompatible. If oil development takes place on the coastal plain, the caribou population will collapse.

"The rush for oil and natural gas totally ignores the fact that Alaska is warming four times faster than the rest of the planet, a trend that is wreaking havoc on communities, ecosystems, fish, wildlife and ways of life that depend on healthy lands and waters," said Carole Holley, Earthjustice's managing attorney for the Alaska office.

Villages along Alaska's coastline have had to move because they are increasingly threatened by higher water and stronger storm surges. Because of higher temperatures, biting insects are making portions of Alaska almost uninhabitable. Melting permafrost is twisting and tilting roads and building foundations.

Trump's EO will also open the Tongass National Forest to unprecedented clear cutting.

At 17 million acres, it is America's largest National Forest and one of the largest remaining rain forests in the world. It holds 44% of all the carbon stored by U.S. National Forests. Clearing those forests will increase climate change. Clear-cutting in the Tongass will also have significant negative impacts on the ecosystem, including widespread habitat destruction for wildlife, disruption of salmon spawning grounds, increased erosion, and a substantial loss of carbon storage due to the removal of old growth trees.

The worst part is that it doesn't even make economic sense. The Tongass, left as pristine old-growth forest, contributes more than \$2 billion annually to the 70,000 people inhabiting the region through recreation, subsistence food, salmon harvest, and tourism.



Swan Lake and surrounding rainforest on a calm and foggy evening. Petersburg Ranger District, Tongass National Forest. USDA Forest Service by Tiffany Christensen.

Logging in the Tongass has historically cost American taxpayers \$30 million annually because of disastrous contracts signed in the 1950s with two Japanese pulp mills, which subsidized their logging of giant trees. These contracts were developed to help Japan recover from the destruction of WWII but are certainly not needed today.

The debate over what to do with Alaska's lands has raged for decades, but now, amid a climate crisis that is causing devastation worldwide, there is a broad consensus that drilling the Arctic for fossil fuels is a terrible idea.

Trump is playing a dangerous game of denial, failing to address the undeniable reality of climate change, and instead is pushing an agenda that actively worsens it. This isn't leadership; this is an abdication of responsibility.



# Clean Energy at a Crossroads: The Implications of Trump's Wind Memorandum

By Peyton Zidlicky, CWAC Intern

On January 20, 2025, President Trump issued a memorandum titled *"Temporary Withdrawal of All Areas on the Outer Continental Shelf from Offshore Wind Leasing and Reviews of the Federal Government's Leasing and Permitting Practices for Wind Projects"*. This directive sparked significant debate about the future of renewable energy development in the United States. Environmental advocates and renewable energy experts saw it as yet another attempt by the Trump Administration to disturb progress on clean energy.



Photo courtesy of U.S. Department of Energy

The Trump administration claimed the move was a necessary step by citing concerns over national security, maritime navigation, and commercial fishing. However, many argue that it is a deliberate attempt to stifle the growth of the offshore wind industry, which has a potentially large role in our nation's transition to clean energy.

It is important to understand the difference between an executive order and a memorandum. An executive order is a formal directive from the president that has the force of law. It must follow the Constitution and existing laws. A memorandum is less formal. It outlines the president's policy preferences or gives instructions to federal agencies. While they can be influential, they don't have the same legal power as an executive order.

The memorandum did two main things. First, it temporarily halted all new offshore wind leasing on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS), effectively freezing the industry in place. This pause was meant to allow time for a review of how the government sells leases and issues permits for wind energy projects. This review was to look at how offshore wind might affect stakeholders, as well as whether these projects make economic sense. Second, it ordered a review of leasing and permitting practices, requiring a report within 60 days. It is expected to address concerns from groups like the Department of Defense and the fishing industry – both of which have raised questions about the rapid growth of offshore wind projects.

The Trump administration said the memorandum was

needed to make sure offshore wind projects don't interfere with other important uses of the ocean. For example, the Department of Defense worried that the wind turbines could disrupt radar systems and military training. The fishing industry also warned that large wind farms could block access to fishing areas, hurting coastal economies.

However, critics saw the memorandum as part of a larger pattern of favoring fossil fuels over renewable energy. Throughout his political career, he has repeatedly supported fossil fuels while rolling back critical environmental protections. His administration's decision to stall offshore wind projects echoes past efforts to weaken climate policies, favoring outdated and polluting energy sources over forward-thinking, sustainable solutions.



Photo courtesy of Flickr

According to the Department of Energy, offshore wind could provide enough electricity to power millions of homes. It also has the potential to create thousands of jobs and attract billions in investments. States of the East Coast, like Massachusetts and New Jersey, have already started developing major offshore wind projects. By blocking new leases and reviewing permitting practices, it raises questions about the future of offshore wind. For an industry that requires long-term planning and big investments, this uncertainty could discourage developers and investors, putting the U.S. further behind in the global race toward a clean future.

This move stands in stark contrast to the Biden administration's approach, which prioritized renewable energy development and set ambitious offshore wind goals. In March of 2021, his administration announced a plan to build enough offshore wind capacity to power 10 million homes by 2030. This memorandum jeopardizes this progress, showing just how difficult the transition to clean energy will be under the Trump administration.

As the fight for clean energy continues, Trump's latest attack on renewables serves as a reminder of the divide that is currently shaping America's energy policy. While the rest of the world embraces wind and solar as a part of the future, the U.S. risks being left behind under leadership that prioritizes profits over environmental sustainability.

## Trump's Policies a Huge Threat to Hunters and Anglers

By Charlie Frisk

Among the many groups that should be very concerned about the Trump administration's policies, it is people who hunt and fish. Trump is hitting the future of those sports with a double-barreled blast. He has promised to ramp up logging, mining, drilling and grazing on federal lands. Particularly in Western states, federal lands such as National Forests are the final reservoir for many game animals such as mule deer, pronghorn, bighorn sheep and elk. They also provide the clean, cold water to support trout and other game fish.

Trump's assault on everything to do with climate change is the other barrel. Not only has he promised to ratchet up production and use of all fossil fuels, but he is also attempting to reduce or eliminate research and development of clean, renewable energy sources such as wind or solar.



Photo courtesy of Trout Unlimited.

The brook trout, Wisconsin's only native stream trout, requires very clean, cold water, less than 55 degrees. WDNR biologists have predicted that if climate change continues unchecked, that brook trout will be unable to survive in Wisconsin. They have also predicted that the Wisconsin

state game bird, the ruffed grouse, will be extirpated in Wisconsin as well.

Randy Scholfield, in a recent Trout Unlimited newsletter said it all better than I could:

*It's hard to face reality sometimes, even when it's staring you in the face. Even when as at present, it's slapping us in the face.*

*Gaze out across another scorched summer of drought and fires in the West, and diminished water supplies and watersheds, and tell me climate change is a hoax. "You can ignore reality, but you can't ignore the consequences of ignoring reality," said a philosopher.*

*Some of those consequences are on full display this summer in the West. And for anglers and other river lovers, it's a sobering new reality that we ignore at our own risk.*

*Southern Colorado is currently undergoing another bone-dry summer that's shaping up to be a near-record hot season, with one-third of the region classified as in "extreme or exceptional drought." The meager snowpack (at 37% of normal for the Rio Grande basin) has severely pressured the Rio Grande River, which likely won't flow out of Colorado to New Mexico this year.*

*The Colorado River and its tributaries face drought. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, NOAA, is forecasting that flows into Lake Powell will be 39% less than normal. A popular rainbow trout fishery on the Yampa River in Colorado was closed June 10 due to low snowpack and drought.*

*Welcome to what likely is our "new normal."*

In yet another presidential edict, Trump has banned federal agencies such as NOAA from even saying or printing "climate change".

## The Impact of President Trump's Decision to Withdraw from the World Health Organization

By Jane Benson



In January 2025, President Donald Trump made a significant decision to withdraw the United States from the World Health Organization (WHO). This created waves across the country, including Northeast Wisconsin. Let's explore what this means.

### Understanding the WHO

What is the World Health Organization? Founded in 1948, the WHO is part of the United Nations that focuses on international public health. Its mission is to promote global health, respond to emergencies, and advance healthcare systems worldwide. This includes collecting and analyzing health data worldwide, setting policy norms and standards based on evidence, coordinating responses to health emergencies, and educating the public on disease prevention and improving health.

### The Reasons for Withdrawal

President Trump and his administration have expressed dissatisfaction with the WHO, arguing that the organization mishandled the response to the COVID-19 pandemic and favored China. They felt that the United States was providing the most funding to the WHO and was not getting enough in return.



Instead of negotiating a reduced U.S. investment, or changing the scope of what the WHO does, Trump unilaterally made the decision to withdraw from the organization. He apparently believes this will allow the U.S. to manage its health issues more effectively.

### ***Ramifications***

It leaves a huge gap in global health, as the U.S. can no longer be counted on as a partner for funds or information. The U.S. no longer has a seat at the table when discussing world health issues.

How will the U.S. be kept informed of health developments in other areas of the world when it has cut itself off from the data provided by other countries? Diseases spread easily within and over international borders with the rate of travel today.

Withdrawal from the WHO leaves our U.S. scientists and public health organizations scrambling for how to get facts about emerging health issues, like Monkeypox and Ebola. We are also unable to properly share findings about recent U.S. disease spikes in avian flu, measles, tuberculosis, and respiratory flu.

This withdrawal could lead to added confusion during health crises. For instance, as the avian flu evolves from infecting birds to cows and other animals and even to people, local hospitals may need to rely on their understanding of the situation without guidance from the WHO. The lack of global coordination could slow down the response to outbreaks, putting the health of people, animals and economies at risk around the world.



Avian Flu has spread to different animals, including humans. WHO is tracking the spread in humans without input from the US. (AI image from Jane Benson)

### ***Economic Consequences***

The decision to withdraw has potential economic implications for Northeast Wisconsin too. Public health systems rely on accurate information. Without WHO's knowledge resources, healthcare providers in Northeast Wisconsin might have to depend solely on their own limited assessment of health situations with risky consequences. Healthcare costs could rise unexpectedly with poor treatment results, if the root causes and researched treatments of emerging diseases are not available.

Additionally, local businesses could be impacted if health crises are mismanaged. Tourism, farming, and other industries rely on a healthy population of people and animals. If people start to worry about their health and safety, they may avoid buying products, traveling to shops, restaurants, or events, impacting local businesses.

Note how avian flu has killed over 20 million egg-laying chickens in the U.S. since the outbreak began in 2022. This nearly doubled the cost of eggs in the last year. The spread increased the evolution of the virus to attack other animal and human hosts.

### ***Community Response***

In response to the withdrawal from the WHO, it is recommended that citizens contact the president and their federal legislators to ask that the U.S. rejoin the WHO.

Meanwhile, state and community health organizations will have to come together to fill some of the voids that have been created.

Local educators and health departments will have to be resourceful about finding reliable reports about larger health trends. Misinformation could become more prevalent without the reliable sources that the WHO typically provided. They will have to be proactive about sharing disease incidences with broader-reaching organizations. More community-based education initiatives might be needed to ensure that residents are aware of health-related issues.

Residents can actively advocate for the importance of strengthening public health systems. Engaging in discussions, attending local health forums, and staying informed can empower communities to monitor their health.

### ***Conclusion***

President Trump's order to withdraw the United States from the World Health Organization has created threat blind spots, healthcare setbacks, and potentially catastrophic environmental and economic risks. Worldwide challenges will arise. Isolationism will make it harder for Northeast Wisconsin to get correct information and contribute to the global picture of disease evolution. Please contact your federal legislators to pressure President Trump to rejoin the WHO.

# The Action in Clean Water Action Council

By Dean Hoegger, CWAC President and Executive Director

## ACTION IS THE FOUNDATIONAL KEY TO ALL SUCCESS!

Pablo Picasso

**PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP FOR 2025 IF YOU HAVE NOT ALREADY DONE SO.**

**Memberships are for a calendar year. We keep your membership active even when you renew later in the year, but please renew as soon as possible for 2025.**

**To check your membership status, look at your address label which shows your last renewal year. A membership form and envelope is included with your mailed newsletter. Emailed newsletters include the last renewal year in the body of the email and an attached membership form if you have not renewed. If you did not renew in 2024, please consider a more generous donation for 2025. Membership donations are critical as they account for nearly half of our operational funds. Employee salaries are paid from a trust fund, our Packers' concession stand, and grants, not from membership donations.**

You can mail your membership donation with the enclosed form or go online to <http://www.cleanwateractioncouncil.org/membership/>. If we have your current membership information, then all you need to do is click on the "Donate" button on our website's home page or in our email's signature block. **Please know that you do not need a PayPal account to pay with a credit card, and a monthly donation is an option.**

We are thankful for members who sponsor any of the following, starting at the \$250 level: newsletter (\$800 per issue) health forum (\$500).

There are many volunteer opportunities with CWAC. Some are at the office, some outdoors, and another is volunteering at our Packers concession stand. Please consider helping prepare and work our April banquet. Contact us to volunteer by calling 920-421-8885 or email us at [contact@cleanwateractioncouncil.org](mailto:contact@cleanwateractioncouncil.org).

**Please consider joining our Planned Giving Circle of Friends to bequeath a donation to CWAC from your estate. See the mini posters about planned giving and charitable IRA distributions in this issue and then contact us with any questions. Previous gifts are funding much of our work.**

### **BELOW ARE THE ACTIONS THAT MEMBER DONATIONS SUPPORTED 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.

### ***A Reminder, Our Office Has Moved***

A reassignment of offices across many departments at UW-Green Bay occurred in May. We are now in 310P, Rose Hall. Thank you to the donors who help pay for our office on the university campus. If you come for a visit, park in the Wood Hall lot. No permit is required for visitors and there is no designated visitor parking. Rose Hall is the second building from the parking lot.

### ***Get Our Weekly Update by Email***

**Each Tuesday we email the CWAC Weekly Update with Actions, Events, In the News Updates, Jobs and Grants, DNR Permits, and Resources.** We have changed the order of information for quicker access to key information. Please know there is a table of contents to lead you to what you may be of the most interest to you. If you would like something posted in the Weekly Update, please send us your information by Sunday evening to be posted the following Tuesday. If you are a member with an email address, and you are not getting the CWAC Weekly Update, check your spam folder before emailing us to request to be put on the mailing list.

If you are reading this newsletter as a non-member, email us at [contact@cleanwateractioncouncil.org](mailto:contact@cleanwateractioncouncil.org) to be placed on the free Weekly Update list. Emails are sent via BCC to protect your privacy.

### **Legal Actions**

As a citizen organization, an important function of CWAC is to take legal action on behalf of our members to protect human health and the environment. Here is an update on ongoing actions:

### ***Our Effort to Ban High Coal Tar Pavement Sealants Continues***

These sealants contain polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), which are known to be a serious health threat. According to the Army Corps of Engineers, children living near surfaces treated with this sealant have a 13-fold increased risk of developing certain cancers. Lifetime exposure can result in a 38-fold higher risk of some kinds of cancer. **Children living near parking lots or playgrounds treated with coal tar sealant are at the greatest risk for developing certain cancers during childhood. One sealcoat company owner that objected to a statewide ban stated that he has used it on many playgrounds without any complaints. How shameful!**

**While some communities such as Green Bay, Sturgeon Bay, and De Pere have banned the use of the product, the state is not expected to do so.** Therefore, we need your help to seek local bans through village and town ordinances. Contact us to help get an ordinance passed in your community. Click this link for a slide presentation on the topic: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zyTSpzvwbk>



We offer a 12-minute presentation about the health threat from the sealant and how other cities have banned it. **If you live in a community without a ban, please reach out to an elected official and encourage the official to schedule a presentation or simply ban the product.** We can also provide sample ordinances for adoption.

**Our most recent effort focused on informing elementary school principals who we see as the first line of defense for protecting children. Letters and literature were sent to more than 50 schools in February.**

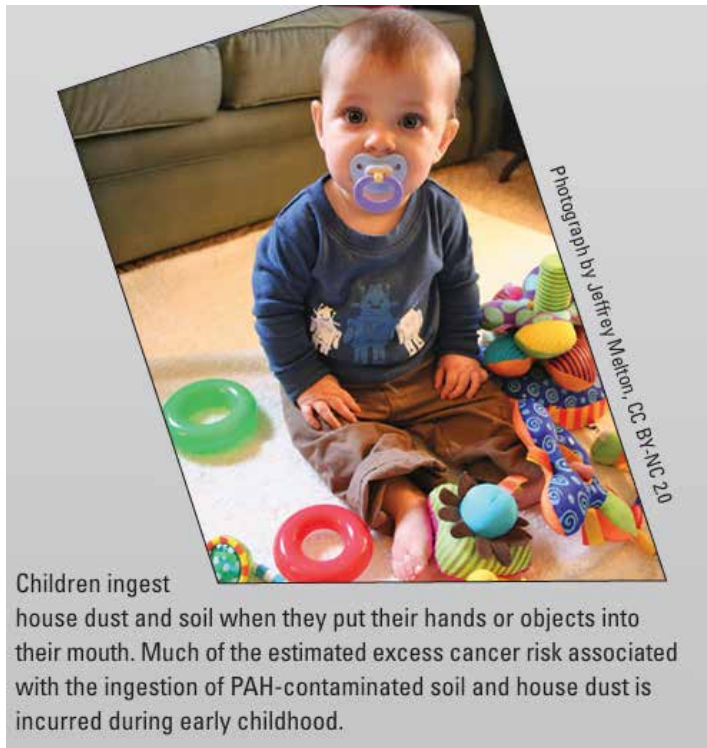


Image courtesy of USGS

### ***Air Quality Complaints***

We received a complaint in August regarding odors in Allouez and east Green Bay thought to be sulfur dioxide. As a result, we have established an air quality monitoring group. We may use this information to urge the DNR to install a sulfur dioxide monitoring station. We have also been monitoring perfume odors from a manufacturing plant in Ashwaubenon.

**Contact us if you have an air quality concern in your community.**

***The Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce vs the DNR case is now before the WI Supreme Court. Oral arguments were held on January 14, 2025.***

This case began in 2021 when Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce sued the DNR to limit the agency's ability to hold polluters accountable if they fail to clean up contamination they cause. Midwest Environmental Advocates provided friends of the court briefs on our behalf. Several CWAC board members attended the oral arguments and participated in a press conference found at



Board members John Hermanson, Dean Hoegger, Lauren Felder, and Jane Benson attended the oral arguments.

<https://wiseye.org/2025/01/14/news-conference-midwest-environmental-advocates/> The loss of the DNR's authority would likely significantly increase pollution from a host of chemicals that would no longer be regulated by the Spills Law. The court's decision could have far-reaching implications for the DNR's ability to protect Wisconsin citizens from toxic environmental pollution.

### ***CWAC Alerts Readers about Pollution Permits, Hearings, and We File Comments.***

We monitor notices for new water pollution permits and renewals, then alert over 720 readers via our emailed Weekly Update, and sometimes we comment on permits. To receive notices of permits and hearings, email your request to [contact@cleanwateractioncouncil.org](mailto:contact@cleanwateractioncouncil.org).

### ***Our Request for a Contested Case Hearing on the Pagels Ponderosa CAFO Permit Was Rejected.***

Midwest Environmental Advocates filed the petition on our behalf and two other parties to challenge the DNR permit. The DNR denied the request saying that our organization counted as only 1 party. Five requesting parties were needed by the State even though under the federal Clean Water Act that is not the case.

### ***Petition to Invalidate Wakker Dairy Compliance Offset Credits***

With help from Midwest Environmental Advocates, CWAC filed a petition with two other parties to nullify the credits that Wakker Dairy was receiving from the California Air Resources Board for offsetting California

air pollution with Wakker's manure digester. The program requires recipients to be in compliance with local and state regulations. There has been no decision yet from the California board.

### ***The Petitions to the EPA for Enforcement of The Safe Drinking Water Act***

CWAC, with help from Midwest Environmental Advocates, is working with other organizations across the country to reactivate petitions filed under the Safe Drinking Water Act. However, the future of the EPA is now in jeopardy under funding and program cuts by the Trump Administration.

### ***Actions to Protect and Monitor Water Quality Winter Manure Spreading Verifications***

We are working with the Environmental Law and Policy Center to verify winter manure spreading detected on satellite imaging. Our Verifier Team examines sites to determine if liquid or solid manure was recently spread on snow covered fields. ELPC then determines if follow up action is needed.



Sample satellite image of possible winter manure spreading in Outagamie County.

### ***Cultivation and Runoff Monitoring Near Waterways.***

We are pleased to report that we received a grant from the Community Foundation of the Fox Valley Region to conduct spring and early summer monitoring.

**Contact us if you have a site you would like us to investigate.**

### ***Water Sampling at Baird Creek***

We will begin water sampling at Baird Creek in May as part of the Lower Fox River Watershed monitoring program for water quality including levels of phosphorus. Please contact us if you would like to volunteer next year.

Median Total Phosphorus (mg/L)			
Map #	Monitoring Site	2015-2024	2024
1	Ashwaubenon Creek- Grant St	0.318	0.473
2	Lower Duck Creek- Pamperin Park	0.144	0.156
3	Wequiock Creek- Nicolet Rd/CTH A	0.114	0.166
4	Bower Creek- 50m Upstream of CTH GV	0.231	0.245
5	Upper East River- Mallard Rd	0.500	0.457
6	West Plum Creek- Downstream of County Line Rd	0.915	0.770
7	Middle Duck Creek- Seminary Rd	0.199	0.236
8	Baird Creek- Preble, WI	0.189	0.206
9	Lower East River- Harold Lewis Trail off Main St	0.170	0.152
10	Plum Creek- VandeHey Farm Crossing	0.401	0.380
11	Trib to Garner's Creek- CTH CE	0.185	0.185
12	Dutchman Creek- Oneida St	0.134	0.114
13	Upper Duck Creek- CTH S	0.180	0.153
14	Garner's Creek- Downstream of CTH Z	0.106	0.090
15	Kankapot Creek- CTH Z Dodge St 100ft upstream of bridge	0.331	0.220
16	Lancaster Creek- Lakeview Dr	0.070	0.063
17	Mud Creek- CTH BB	0.097	0.071
18	Middle East River-CTH G	0.376	0.305

Lower Fox River Basin Volunteer Monitoring Program 2024 Data Summary for Phosphorus

### ***Water Sampling at Casco Creek***

In 2024 board member Debra Noel had water samples tested from Casco Creek downstream of Kinnard's Farm where the Sedron manure treatment system will be installed. Water sampling is being done to obtain a baseline for water quality before the system is installed and is planned for 2025. Water sampling is again planned for 2025.

### ***Educational Efforts in the Community***

#### ***Monitoring Compliance with Wisconsin's Outdoor Events Recycling Laws.***

This spring and summer we will again monitor for compliance with recycling laws at outdoor events, post scores in the *Weekly Update*, and contact municipalities and organizations responsible for the event recycling.

#### ***Presentations Available from CWAC.***

Here is a list of current presentations that can be given in-person or via Zoom. Call or email us for scheduling. The presentations can be tailored to your group's geographic location, age, and available time. Also, contact us if you would like us to promote or co-sponsor your event or presentation.



- Citizen Action to Protect the Waters of Northeast Wisconsin
- Using Local, State, and Federal Laws to Protect the Waters of Northeast Wisconsin
- Communities on the Road to Zero Waste
- The Health Hazards of Burn Barrels
- The Hazards of Manure Spraying on the Health and Quality of Life
- The Health Threat from Coal Tar Pavement Sealants
- Micro-plastic Pollution from Clothing
- Food Waste Composting Made Easy
- Protecting Your Family from PFAS Chemicals

### Newsletter Outreach

The Winter Newsletter, *Understanding and Responding to Climate Change in NE WI* was sent to 550 members in December. Multiple copies remain as well as for CAFO Expansions Continue...newsletters. Contact us if you

would like to distribute some to friends, the public, or organizations. Newsletters are also available on our website at: <https://www.cleanwateractioncouncil.org/newsletter/>. Let us know if you would like printed copies of any of our previous issues.

### Outreach through Media Contacts

CWAC sends press releases to local media, and we are often contacted to comment on developing environmental issues. We will be seeking more radio interviews in the coming weeks.

### Website Updates

Updated articles, resources, CWAC events, board member bios, and previous newsletters can be found on the website <https://www.cleanwateractioncouncil.org/>.

### Other Actions

#### **CWAC Attends Meetings with Other Environmental Groups**

We attend some of the monthly meetings with directors of other state environmental groups, and we network with other state and national organizations.



# Protecting Your Family From PFAS Contamination

A Health Forum Presentation  
by the Clean Water Action  
Council of Northeast Wisconsin

**This presentation is free  
and open to the public.**



Crystal Brown, BSN-RN, of CWAC, will discuss the risks of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS).

Popularly known as *Forever Chemicals*, many PFAS contaminants have been linked to health issues and are found in water, fish, and food sources.

Learn how you can mitigate your risk and identify sources in daily life.

Join us for this engaging presentation to protect yourself, your family, and advocate for your community.

Tuesday, April 8, 2025

6:30 PM – 7:30 PM

Brown County Library – East Branch  
2253 Main St, Green Bay, WI 54302

### Citizen Complaints

Many of our more extensive actions, some requiring legal work, resulted from a follow-up of citizen complaints, such as the SO<sub>2</sub> complaint noted above. Keep us in mind if you have an environmental concern and our support is needed.

### CWAC's Non-Profit Status

To learn more about our non-profit status and financials, go to the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions, Credential Lookup, and then go to Credential Search for Clean Water Action Council. (<https://apps.dfi.wi.gov/ice/berg/Registration/CredSummaryDetails.aspx?chid=933009&h=1122515367>)



Please follow us on Facebook.

Click here for our page: [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/cleanwateractioncouncil)

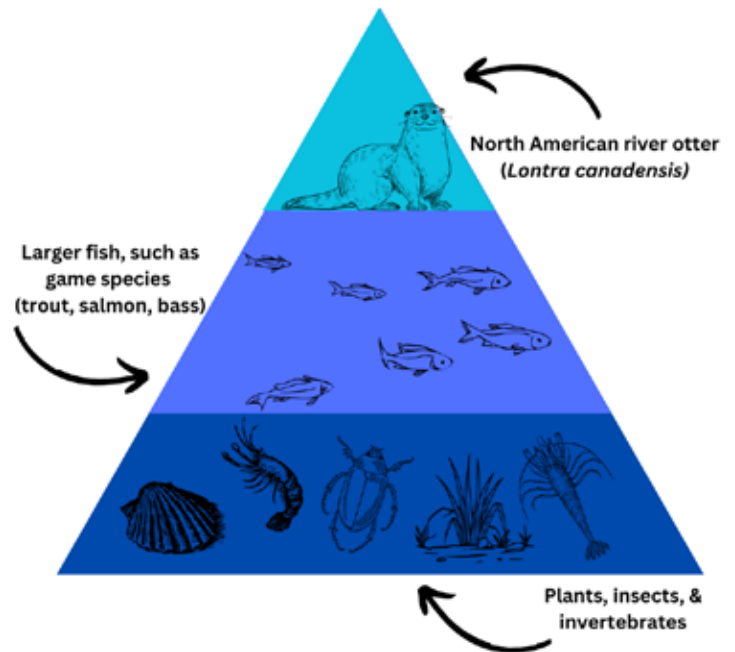
<https://www.facebook.com/cleanwateractioncouncil>

## Clean water for all: The effect of pollution on the North American river otter (*Lontra canadensis*) and how citizen science can save species.

A report on a capstone project by Sofia Gallus with CWAC collaboration.

The North American river otter (*Lontra canadensis*) is a semi-aquatic mammal native in large portions of the upper United States and Canada – including Wisconsin – as well as in smaller pockets of the southwest United States and Mexico. They're cute, fuzzy, and highly adapted to living in a variety of habitats but are reliant on access to bodies of water with sufficient prey. North American river otters feed on a variety of mostly aquatic organisms, including fish, frogs, small crustaceans, and invertebrates.

While the North American river otter may be adaptable to different environmental scenarios, their prey is not. Organisms at the bottom of the food chain, such as rooting aquatic plants, invertebrates, insects, and small fish are the most vulnerable to pollutants. Eventually, some harmful pollutants can travel up the food chain when those prey organisms are eaten by larger animals, in this case such as larger fish, and have the chance to travel all the way up to the top of the food chain where the North American river otter sits.



Being an apex predator in their native ecosystems, the North American river otter can be used as an indicator of environmental health, as many of their prey items are reliant on access to clean water.

This is where legislation like Wisconsin's Chemical Level Enforcement and Remediation (CLEAR) Act comes in. The CLEAR Act, originally introduced in 2019 and then



Photo by Sofia Gallus.



reintroduced in 2021, aims to address statewide per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) contamination. PFAS are harmful forever chemicals, meaning that they are resistant to natural degradation, and have the ability to cause illness in humans and animals who are affected by PFAS contamination.

While concern around PFAS contamination is usually connected to drinking water, PFAS are used in industrial products such as firefighting foam that can be spread directly to the environment, leading to soil, surface water, and groundwater contamination if not cleaned up properly.

Industrial chemical pollutants are not the only threat to wildlife. Agricultural runoff from nearby farms or fields can cause turbidity in the water column, making hunting difficult for species who rely on sight for hunting, which includes the North American river otter and several of its larger prey items.

Wisconsin has runoff management legislation in place, such as Chapter NR 151. This piece of legislation was established in 1997 to prevent groundwater pollution by agricultural runoff. It also sets standards for construction site erosion and monitors fertilizer use on large agricultural fields.

In addition to causing murkiness throughout the water column, agricultural runoff can also cause harmful algae blooms that can lead to dead zones. The runoff overloads the environment with nutrients, usually nitrogen and phosphorus, which in small amounts are completely natural and actually helpful to the aquatic environment. However, when dumped in large loads, it creates an environment where algae thrive.

The algae blooms block sunlight to underwater plants, killing them, and then in the decomposition process consumes oxygen from the water column to break the decaying plant matter down. The process leaves no oxygen left in the water column, causing mass die-offs of the other aquatic species in the area.

Both humans and animals rely on clean water to survive. While there is a general understanding of federal acts such as the Clean Water Act, this project aims to examine the impact of pollution on Wisconsin's native aquatic wildlife and clean water legislation within the state.

*Sofia Gallus is a graduate student at Unity Environmental University. Being so close to completing her graduate degree in Marine Sciences with an emphasis on wildlife conservation during the start of an administration that aims to slash funding towards health and wildlife conservation initiatives, she wanted to work locally and help bridge the gap between understanding environmental policy and those passionate about Wisconsin's native wildlife. CWAC primarily supported Sofia's project with project meetings and sharing professional contacts.*



## CWAC's Spring Interns



**Peyton Zidlicky** is a junior at UW-Green Bay and is pursuing a degree in Environmental Policy and Planning, with an emphasis on planning. She has always been passionate about the environment and conservation and is looking forward to the community outreach aspect of her internship with CWAC. She is also interested in

exploring the policy side of environmental issues through research and conferences. Peyton loves to travel and hopes to take the knowledge and skills that she gains from this experience all around the world. She is looking to teach sustainable and innovative community planning strategies to different areas around the globe.



**Lilly Pienta** is a sophomore at UW-Green Bay, studying political science with a focus on legal studies. She is passionate about public policy and making a difference in her community. Lilly values the opportunity with CWAC to learn more about environmental policy and its impacts on the local

community. She is interested in pursuing a career in law and hopes to apply all of her gained knowledge with CWAC to her future career.

**Have you renewed your membership  
for 2025?**

*See your newsletter label or  
email notice which indicates the last year  
that you renewed.*

**GREENERBAY**  
**COMPOST**  
Food Scraps and Organics Recycling Made Simple.

We are Northeastern Wisconsin's premier compost company, serving the Greater Green Bay area with our Award-Winning Residential and Commercial Compost Pickup Services, our area's only food-waste-focused compost facility, and year-round sales of our nutrient-rich, contaminant-free compost!

**[www.GBCompost.com](http://www.GBCompost.com)**



**Wednesday, March 19**

## **18th Annual Watershed Symposium**

UW-Green Bay, Green Bay

It's that time of year when we are excited to invite you to join us here on the UW-Green Bay campus for the 18th Annual Watershed Symposium which features community projects, campus research, and students from around the watershed showcasing the work they have done on the tributaries they monitor. Please RSVP by March 11, to Lynn Terrien at [terrienl@uwgb.edu](mailto:terrienl@uwgb.edu)

**Wednesday-Friday, March 26-28**

## **Wisconsin Lakes and Rivers Convention.**

### **"The Power of Words: Working for Our Waters"**

Holiday Inn Convention Center, Stevens Point

The power of words is immense, especially when advocating for our waters. By raising awareness, promoting conservation efforts, and crafting compelling messages, words can inspire action and drive positive change to protect our water resources for future generations. Learn more and register at <https://wisconsinwaterweek.org/home/lakes-and-rivers-convention/>

**April 8, 6:30 PM - 7:30 PM**

## **CWAC Presents: Protecting Your Family from PFAS**

Brown County Library – East Branch, East Meeting Room

Crystal Brown, BSN-RN, of CWAC, will be presenting on the risks and health effects of PFAS contamination, and ways that you can help mitigate your risk and exposure by identifying sources in our everyday life. Join us for this engaging presentation to help protect yourself, your family, and advocate for your community. This presentation is free and open to the public.

**Monday, April 14, 6:00 PM**

## **Annual Spring Hearing And Public Input Opportunity Wisconsin Conservation Congress**

The Wisconsin Conservation Congress (WCC) and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will once again offer their annual opportunity for the public to provide input on a variety of natural resource-related questions with an in-person opportunity April 14, 2025, at 6 p.m. in each county or online starting at the same time and continuing through 6 p.m. on April 16, 2025. Learn more at <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/about/wcc/springhearing>

**Thursday, April 17, 5:00 PM – 8:00 PM**

## **CWAC Annual Banquet: Dine and Bid for the Environment**

Riverside Ballroom, Green Bay

Join fellow CWAC members and guests for an evening of dining and bidding for the environment, while enjoying entertainment from activist/musician Tom Neilson. Enjoy a delicious, mostly local and organic dinner, gluten free. There will be a silent auction to support the work of CWAC, as well as door prizes. Tickets are \$30 for dinner and the program. Group reservations are available for tables of 8. See the insert in this edition of our newsletter or go to buy tickets online go to: <https://www.cleanwateractioncouncil.org/events/>

**Monday-Friday, April 21–29**

## **Earth Fest**

UW–Madison, Madison

Earth Fest is for all members of the Badger community: from students to alumni, faculty to friends, and seasoned experts to future badgers. Dive into groundbreaking research or dig in the dirt as you pot your own plant. Sift and winnow the latest research or sort and filter recyclables. Make career connections for your future or master sustainable techniques for your home. Learn more at <https://earthfest.wisc.edu/>

**Tuesday, April 29, 8:00 AM – 2:00 PM**

## **Green Bay Conservation Partners Spring Roundtable**

UW-Green Bay: University Union, Green Bay

Please join us for an exciting event to share information and foster collaboration among conservation practitioners, researchers and stakeholders working in the bay of Green Bay, Lower Fox River watershed, Green Bay's west shore and Door Peninsula. The morning includes an opportunity for networking, regional and legislative updates, lightning talks, and student posters. Learn more at: <https://www.gbconservationpartners.org/events/>

**Tuesday, April 29, 9:00 AM**

## **Using Local, State, and Federal Laws to Protect Our Waters**

Brown County Central Library, 515 Pine Street, Green Bay

CWAC's Executive Director will be giving this presentation to the Green Bay Retired Men's Club. The talk will include the impact of the Trump Administration policies on federal laws, regulations, and agencies. Learn more about the Club at: <https://gbretiredmensclub.com/>

**Tuesday, May 6**

## **Conservation Lobby Day**

Madison

Join us in Madison for one of our most impactful days of the year! At the beginning of every legislative session, we bring conservation voters like you together from around the state to meet with your legislators. You will have the opportunity to tell your legislators about the action you want them to take on clean water, clean energy, and a healthy democracy. Watch for information in the CWAC *Weekly Update*. Learn more at <https://conservationvoters.org/events/cld-2025>

**Saturday, May 10, 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM**

## **Wisconsin Grassroots Festival**

McFarland High School, 5103 Farwell St, McFarland

The theme is We Are the Guardrails Now! McFarland High School is completely accessible with lots of free parking. There will be exciting keynote speakers and 16 breakout sessions from which you'll choose 4. Coffee and snacks will be available. Learn more at: <https://wigrassrootsnetwork.com/15th-Annual-Festival>



# Dine and Bid for the Environment And Be Entertained!

**FUNDRAISER, Earth Week Celebration  
and our 40th Anniversary!**

**Thursday, April 17, 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM  
Riverside Ballroom, 1560 Main St., Green Bay**

Enjoy a delicious, mostly local and organic dinner, gluten free. Choose between roast beef or vegan portabella mushroom with Marsala sauce, both served with salad, roasted root vegetables, mashed golden potatoes, dessert and coffee, all served gluten free.

Tables can be reserved for seating up to 8/table.

**Tom Neilson will be our featured entertainer.**

Known locally as the “bard insurgent,” his travels are reflected in his songs, intertwined with farm roots and a fervent commitment to social justice, as he writes about historical and current events. He has been at the forefront in helping communities organize against water privatization, mountain top removal, nuclear energy, incinerators, GMOs, fracking, & toxic waste.

“Tom is a very much in-demand performer for the environment and his songs tell stories about government cover ups, things we know scantily from the news; but thanks to his songs, we see the human side of what happens after the headlines stop. His added humor makes his show a lot of fun!”

— Dr. Milly West, *Music Connection*



**Order your tickets using the enclosed or attached order form.**

**Group pricing is available for mail in orders.**

**Tickets can also be purchased with at credit card at  
<https://www.cleanwateractioncouncil.org/events/>**

# BE PART OF THE PACKERS GAME DAY EXCITEMENT!

We are seeking volunteers for our Packers' game day concession stand for all home games.

We end sales when the fourth quarter starts and leave by the end of the game.

**Last season we had lots of fun,  
connected with fans about our work,  
and earned \$9,500!**

Email us with Packers' Concessions in the subject line  
for more information.

## CELEBRATE OUR 40TH ANNIVERSARY BY HONORING THE PACKERS GAMES CONCESSION VOLUNTEERS

Join us at Titledown Brewery on  
Tuesday, March 25 5:00-7:00 PM

Tacos and many craft beers will be available.



Volunteer Jane Benson with a VIP at our concession stand.

## Food and Yard Waste Composters Available



The composter features a locking lid, two doors for removing compost, and comes in two sections plus the lid for easy transport, set up, and take down. It can easily be moved to a new garden location. Made from a sturdy sun absorbing plastic, they have been in operation in Northeast Wisconsin for over a decade.

A limited number of composters will be available from CWAC this summer. Help the environment and produce your own soil amendment by composting your food and yard waste.

Food and Yard Waste Composters  
can be purchased for \$60 by contacting us at  
[contact@cleanwateractioncouncil.org](mailto:contact@cleanwateractioncouncil.org)  
or call 920-421-8885

*We can deliver and set it up in the Green Bay and Sturgeon Bay areas, or it can be picked up at the office by appointment.*

*Thank you to...*

**Gary and Dee Austin,  
Community Foundation for  
the Fox Valley Region, Dottie  
Gerrits, and Melissa Roulo**  
for supporting our internship program.

~

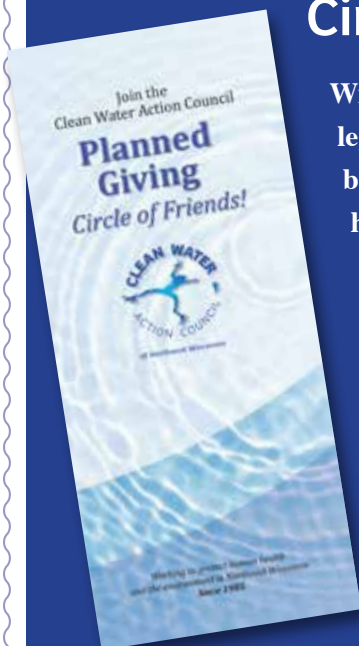
**Dave and Chris Kellems and the  
George Kress Foundation**  
for supporting our administrative  
assistant position.

~

**Carole A. Wood**  
for supporting our work by paying for  
our office rent at UW-Green Bay



## 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*

### Wondering what to do with your required minimum distribution?

Make a qualified charitable distribution from your Individual Retirement Account (IRA) to Clean Water Action Council

#### What is a qualified charitable distribution?

Starting at age 70 ½ you can choose to gift up to \$108,000 annually directly to a qualified charity from most IRAs, with the distribution being tax free. This type of gift is called a qualified charitable distribution (QCD). It's not only a powerful incentive for charitable giving, it also has tax benefits. QCDs count as IRA distributions, so they can be used to satisfy all or some of your required minimum distribution (RMS) for the calendar year.

#### What type of organization qualifies for my donation?

A QCD must be made to a qualified 501 (c)(3) organization (a charitable organization eligible to receive tax-deductible contributions). Clean Water Action Council of NE Wisconsin is a 501 (c)(3). Contact your financial advisor to learn more about making a qualified charitable distribution!

#### Office location:

310P Rose Hall, UW-Green Bay  
2420 Nicolet Drive  
Green Bay, WI 54311

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



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

The newsletter, "Clean Water Action Council of N.E.WI" is published quarterly by the Clean Water Action Council of Northeast Wisconsin, Inc., P.O. Box 9144, Green Bay, WI 54308, a registered non-profit charitable, educational organization.  
*Contributions may be tax-deductible.*

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*If you leave us a message, we will try to get back to you within 24 hours.*

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