



## A Softer Path: An Invitation to Building Relationship

*How First Nations Perspectives on Environmental Stewardship Can Influence Our Responsibilities to Activism*



*Iskwaaj Nibi – The Last Waterhole: Creating a New World*, by Rabbett Before Horses Strickland calls attention to all of the orders of creation and the responsibilities we have to protect water. - Permission obtained from artist. (See 'About the Artist' on page 3.)

*“Wealth will no longer be measured in terms of money, materialistic gain, political power and control, and all of those ego centric things, but wealth will be measured in terms of clean water, fresh air, pristine wilderness, and once again the new people will acknowledge that everything in the natural world has its own spirit.”*

- Moka'ang Giiziseban, Joe Rose

### Introduction: An Invitation...

By Crystal Brown

Fall 2003. I was barely 18, a quiet and timid freshman at Northland College. I had enrolled to study environmental outdoor education. I remember the first moment I walked into “Intro to Ojibwe Language I” in

Wheeler Hall. Two elder men were at the table; one man with a pony tail was standing, setting out some orange-covered spiral books, while another man sat in a chair, leaning back, arms folded. His hair was white, his presence grounded and stoic. With a deep, warm voice whose cadence I will never forget, he said to students entering the room, “Boozhoo, aaniin.”

The man passing out booklets was our instructor, Dana Jackson, and the other elder, whom I would later get to know through being a work study student and member of the Native American Student Association (NASA), was the head of the department, Bad River Tribal Elder, Moka’ang Giiziseban, Joe Rose.



Moka’ang Giiziseban, Joe Rose (left) gathers with member of the HELP Camp, located in the Penokees of Northern Wisconsin, during the GTAC Mine resistance starting in 2013. Photo Credit: Scott Pitta

Now that’s a name I get reminded of nearly every time I enter the CWAC Office at Rose Hall at UW-Green Bay. There’s no relation that I’m aware of, but the last name in itself, connects my memories to a series of experiences that ultimately shifted the trajectory of my life, in the ways that I have attempted to be in relationship with the land and water every single day. At the time of my attendance, Joe was working on establishing the Native American Cultural Museum on campus. He would welcome all students, native or non-native to be a part of any activities and cultural teachings on campus. He invited the NASA students to his home at Waverly Beach to share stories. I would later understand this invitation as a part of the steps necessary to create a way for the “New People,” whom he would speak about.

He taught me about reciprocity and living in right relationship. He taught me about the gift of asemaa. He shared with us experiences of boarding schools and

how even as a child he would be beaten for speaking the Ojibwe language... the same language that in its very structure holds beauty and lessons on our relationship and responsibilities to the natural world. One of the most influential teachings he shared was about the Ojibwe prophecy of the Seventh Fire, an age that we have entered into that presents a choice for all of humanity. There are many recordings of him speaking about this, but what Moka’ang Giiziseban shared was that there would be a time, in which human kind would face a juncture with two separate paths. He said:

*“At one of these forks in the road, there would be a hard surface. We see that today as those forces of unbridled technology that pollute and destroy and upset the balance, that threaten us as well as the future of our children. The other fork in the road is a more natural path and they tell us that we have to return to that connection with nature and once again acknowledge that everything in the natural world has its own spirit... We are in the eleventh hour of a very serious environmental crisis not just locally but on a global basis.”*

He described that at this period in time, a “New People” would arise, consisting of all the races of humanity, and that they would look to the Anishinaabe people, the original people, who still held on to the “knowledge and wisdom of how to live in harmony and balance with the four orders of creation.” This was a gift, a medicine, mashkiki. The teachings would help connect all to the web of life and lead to a state of natural harmony and balance. He said:

***“I invite all of you to come and stand with us as a part of that New People.”***

I left Northland after my first year to go on my own journey that took me about 13 years to come back full circle to the roots of that connection that was shared at the shores of Gichi Gami, Lake Superior. While on that journey, I remember watching on Facebook feeds about the fight for the Penokees against Gogebic Taconite. I read about the Harvest Education Learning Project (HELP) Camp, who engaged in peaceful resistance while reclaiming original knowledge of the land, waters, and medicines. Joe was there. I watched from afar when issues arose with Enbridge Line 5. Later on there would be the overharvesting of grey wolves in February 2021, with 216 deaths in Wisconsin. I learned around that same time that Joe had fallen ill from COVID-19, and on February 23, 2021, he walked on.

I remember messaging with my friend Nick Vander Puy, sharing my grief of having not had the opportunity to reconnect with my teacher, as I had been contemplating coming up for events surrounding Enbridge Line 5 for some time. There had always been some excuse or delay, and when the shutdown happened, I didn’t travel far. Later that spring, however, I made the trip up north to help at maple sugar camp. This was just the beginning of many visits to the Penokees over the subsequent years.

I remember that summer, when I first joined a group paddle along the Bad River, and to the site along the North Country Trail where Enbridge plans to reroute, upstream from Copper Falls State Park. It was June 2021; I was quiet and timid. Yet it was through showing up that I met so many people who have become friends since... those who knew Joe. I learned so much about relationship with land and water... about activism. Those people would be part of the community that had further influences on adopting wild food and medicines into a seasonal lifestyle as well. My friends Brandon Rudesill and Sandy Gokee would teach me even more about the responsibilities we have to protect these gifts.

Outside of the geographical limits of the Penokees, I have met others who have had the opportunity to know Joe Rose. Often times it is the parent of one of his former Northland students, or someone who visited HELP



Water Protectors gather along the Bad River in June 2021, along the reroute path for Enbridge Line 5. Photo Credit: Crystal Brown

Camp or heard of his activism. My friend Chris Gavin, a fellow wild food educator, spoke with me this fall at the Midwest Wild Harvest Festival, about “a softer path” that Moka’ang Giiziseban shared with him, and how that now transfuses into our own teachings that we pass on. Some of these connections that started with conversations about Joe, have forged friendships with other water protectors, like fellow CWAC member, Nicole Bickman, who met Joe through the Traditional Ways Gathering by Lake Superior. Her tenderness about our responsibilities to the land and each other through inclusivity and social justice have been a blessing to my time in Green Bay.

The connections continue with traveling along this web of life. I would later meet my teacher and friend, April Stone, a Black Ash basket maker from the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe. April has shared with me more than I can imagine about the lessons that can be learned through craft, by being intentional and vulnerable, by slowing down and being a student of the materials that we are working with. Through teaching me black ash basketry, she has shared lessons about the living beings of this land that care for us, and invited me to consider relationships with other living beings differently. One of those reflections is when she shared about “non-local” relatives, such as the Emerald Ash Borer. April shares that their presence on the land is a message for us to consider our relationship with the land. It is a sign that it is out of balance, and we must examine what is happening and slow down.

This past spring I had the opportunity to join April in harvesting black ash logs for Ukwakhwa’s Field to Basket program. This program is based out of the Oneida Reservation on Becky and Steve Webster’s farm. I have gotten to know them over the past year through their invitations for community to come and learn and help restore traditional knowledge. I’ve had an opportunity to participate in the program, pounding black ash logs for splints, and weaving baskets with Liandra Skenandore and Rae Skenandore. I have made many friends like Stephanie Stevens and my “basket buddy” April Jordan. I’ve been able to share knowledge through herbal medicine workshops and walks.

When we were harvesting the black ash this spring, the experience touched my heart in ways I had not imagined. The black ash were located in a forested swamp that is in the direct path of the Enbridge Line 5 reroute. If the reroute goes through, the whole forest of them will be logged off. April specifically selected this location in hopes that no matter what the outcome, something good would come from the felling of these trees. We harvested them respectfully, with intention versus them being desecrated. It is the rings of these ash that make up the splints of the pack basket I’ve been working on. I’d like to imagine that once finished, a part of the Penokees and the lessons that I have learned will carry with me wherever I may go.

I am grateful for the people who have shared their wisdom and knowledge and have welcomed me to return to a softer path. I am looking forward in my role with CWAC, to help share how these teachings have influenced my activism. I have learned that when we show up with curiosity and humble hearts, we begin that journey of joining the “New People” that Joe spoke so tenderly about.

To listen to the full recording of the Seventh Fire teaching, go to: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qjh6tqtmaEE>



A black ash stump after harvesting for basket making, is rooted in the Penokees, along the path of the proposed Line 5 reroute. Photo Credit: Crystal Brown

### About the Artist: Rabbett Before Horses Strickland

**Ojibwe artist Rabbett Before Horses Strickland** is a member of the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa. His work blends captivating colors and imagery with Ojibwe spiritual teachings and cultural stories. I am grateful for his permission to publish his painting “Iskwaaj Nibi – The Last Waterhole: Creating a New World” on the cover of this issue. I had received a print from Rabbett of this painting, which I have hanging in the CWAC office, serving as a reminder to connect our work through heart and spirit, and understanding our responsibilities to live as good relatives.

To learn more about Rabbett and his amazing work, watch the documentary “Rabbett Before Horses.” You may also be interested in “Ma’iingan: Brother Wolf” which also features interviews with Moka’ang Giizis, Joe Rose.

PBS Wisconsin: *Rabbett Before Horses* (2020)  
<https://www.pbs.org/video/rabbett-before-horses-bzal5v/>

PBS Wisconsin: *Ma’iingan: Brother Wolf* (2019)  
<https://www.pbs.org/video/maiingan-brother-wolf-9apsy7/>

# The Power of Water Walks

By Jane Benson

Water Walks have become a worldwide phenomenon. They were initiated by Indigenous women and are meant to be a selfless, beautiful, spiritual act to invite us to all take up our responsibility to protect our water, the giver of life, and to protect our planet for all generations. “Creation Water Walks” have been done in Northeast Wisconsin to draw attention to a huge manure spill in Lake Winnebago, the bay side of Door County, Mackinac Straits water issues, and more. Time is spent getting to know the unique environmentally significant areas, First Nations’ history, and current tribal people. There is a Facebook page dedicated to Northeast Wisconsin water walks where you can find information about upcoming events.<sup>1</sup>



Sawanaquadtokwe (Yellow Thundercloud Woman), also known as Oralann Caldwell, is of the Bear Clan, and is a spiritual teacher and an enrolled member in the Menominee Nation from Round Lake, Keshena, Wisconsin. Photo Credit: Kim Diaz

Siobhan Marks, Communications and Marketing Director at the Indian Community School, serving the Native community of metro Milwaukee, was interviewed in a North Coast Chronicles podcast in January 2023, *The Water Walker*:

*The Life and Inspiration of Josephine Mandamin.*<sup>2</sup> Marks shared the origin story of world-renowned water rights activist, Ojibwe Grandmother Josephine Mandamin, who influenced Marks and spiritual teacher, Oralann Caldwell, to start the Creation Water Walks.

Some of the following comes from excerpts of Siobhan’s podcast, from a local individual/activist, and from a YouTube video, *Josephine Mandamin: Grandmother Water Walker.*<sup>3</sup> Mandamin’s story is also available in a children’s book called *The Water Walker* written and illustrated by Joanne Robertson who worked with Mandamin on the book.<sup>4</sup>

Josephine was born in 1942 on Manitoulin Island and lived with her husband and children in Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada. She was challenged by a prophecy warning that people’s negligent ways could cause the cost of pure, clean, drinkable water to rise to as much as an ounce of gold. It is part of the Ojibwe beliefs, value systems, and teachings, that women are the caretakers and protectors of water.

After much discussion and prayer, she and her sister, Melvina, decided that they could walk and pray for the fresh water in our Great Lakes to raise awareness of our need to protect water for future generations and for all life on the planet. They were well into their 60s when they began walking around Lake Superior. Between the two of them,

they had \$10, a vehicle, and a copper vessel to carry water. They would take turns, one grandma walking, one driving very carefully behind. And then when the grandma walking would get tired, she would hand off that copper pail to the other grandma. And every time they handed off that copper vessel, the words “I do this for the water” were said, and that has carried through to today’s water walks. Water walks often go “around” a body of water and the original vessel of water, filled with prayers and intentions, is emptied back into the place of the start of the walk.

The Water Walks, led by women, have since expanded to include men and people from all walks of life, emphasizing the spiritual and communal significance of water. Women are the caregivers and protectors of the water, and men are the caregivers and protectors of the women. A man will walk with an Eagle Staff next to a woman who’s carrying the copper vessel of water. When a man transfers the Eagle Staff to another man, he also speaks the words, “I do this for the water.”



Woman carries copper vessel with water and man carries eagle staff. Photo Credit: Kim Diaz

Siobhan says, “And I think it was so inspirational for people, because it was that reminder of the power of one. We tend to feel like everything is overwhelming, unless you’re a big corporation or have all this money or status that there’s so little that can be done against that, that destroyer, that machine that

threatens our beautiful mother earth and her lifeblood, the water. But this was a reminder that you can do something as an individual, and it’s something as simple as supporting this water walk and in prayer, because it is definitely a spiritual act. Water is a spirit, and we absolutely believe in the power of prayer, but to give of our time in our love and our effort, and then all of those prayers and all of those hearts and minds that are carrying that water, because she carries us at the end of that water walk. That vessel of water is carrying all of that, and when it’s released back into the lake, it’s just a very magical moment.”



Communities rally around Water Walks. Photo Credit: Kim Diaz

As awareness of the non-political walks has grown, communities have rallied around walkers to give them care, shelter, and food. Clean Water Action Council members have prepared meals, housed walkers, donated money and publicized walks over the years when a walk occurs near them. You can get involved at any time to help the water walk work by messaging the Facebook page referenced below.

Main takeaways are the “power of one” and humility. Go out there with good intentions to do water walks for Mother Earth and her lifeblood, the water. Make it about that and not about personal attention.



Water is protected for the next seven generations. Photo Credit: Kim Diaz

**References:**

- <sup>1</sup> Northeast Wisconsin Creation Water Walk Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/3380572408679415>
- <sup>2</sup> North Coast Chronicles Podcast, The Water Walker: The Life and Inspiration of Josephine Mandamin, January 18, 2023: <https://www.coastalnewstoday.com/podcasts/the-water-walker-the-life-and-inspiration-of-josephine-mandamin-north-coast-chronicles>
- <sup>3</sup> YouTube video Josephine Mandamin: Grandmother Water Walker <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w6ozyPS03SM>
- <sup>4</sup> Children’s book *The Water Walker* written and illustrated by Joanne Robertson who worked with Mandamin

## Listen to Grandmother Josephine Madamin’s Interview

From Reporter Nick Vander Puy of WPR and Indian Country TV, Grandmother Josephine Madamin shares reflections on the Lake Superior Water Walk in a 2008 interview on YouTube at: <https://youtu.be/wPega7E8Lhg?si=D4i5w-C7Ib-ROIDHO>



Ojibwa Grandmother recounts walk around the Great Lakes

## Water, Wellness, and the Oneida Way

By Isabella Kramer, Fall Intern

For the Oneida Nation, water is more than a resource. It is a living relative, the lifeblood of Mother Earth, and a reflection of the health of both the land and the people. Through generations, Oneida teachings have guided a relationship of care, respect, and responsibility toward water and all of Creation. Today, those values continue to shape how the community approaches education, environmental protection, and wellness.

To learn more about the Oneida Nation’s relationship with water and how these teachings continue to guide community life, I reached out to Tehahuko’tha (Randy Cornelius), a longtime educator and cultural leader within the Oneida community. Through our email exchange, he reflected on the changes he has witnessed over his lifetime, from shifts in environmental practices to the resurgence of traditional knowledge that connects water, health, and spiritual balance.



Oneida cultural teacher and respected elder, Tehahuko’tha, Randy Cornelius presents to audience. Photo Credit: Randy Cornelius

As a child growing up on the Oneida Nation Territory, Tehahuko’tha observed practices that harmed the environment. “I saw farmers letting cattle roam the woods, creeks, and streams, destroying vegetation and polluting the water. People’s sewers went directly into the streams as well,” he said. Today, regulations are in place

to prevent these harmful practices, reflecting both improved environmental policies and a growing awareness of how water quality directly impacts community health and well-being.

Yet the effects of past contamination are still felt. Tehahuko’tha shared that over the past 35 years, well water and springs tested across the territory have repeatedly come back as unsafe to drink. “I believe the well water on our territory is contaminated,” he said. This ongoing challenge underscores the importance of cultural values that center long-term responsibility and collective care. “The decisions we make today will impact our grandchildren seven generations into the future,” he reminded. “Will they benefit from the choices we make, or will they suffer? We must always keep that at the forefront of our minds.”

Within Oneida history and teachings, caring for land and water is inseparable from caring for the community. “Traditionally, we were given the responsibility to be the caretakers of Mother Earth. All life was molded and shaped by the Creator, and it was the soil of the earth that he used,” Tehahuko’tha explained. “Our ceremonies, held throughout the year, are how we show appreciation to Creation for the sustenance of life it provides.”

Over the past four decades, there has been a resurgence of interest in traditional knowledge, particularly the medicinal value of plants and the role of ceremony in reconnecting with the natural world. “A healthy environment equals healthy people, mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually,” he said. This holistic perspective has also guided the growth of preventative health and wellness programs within the community, addressing everything from diabetes and heart disease to mental health and substance abuse. “All these programs are about getting our people back to a well-balanced human being. Culture is prevention.”

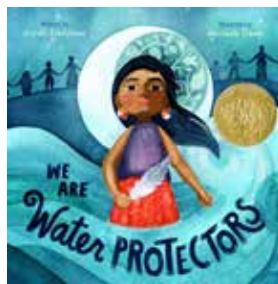
Water, in Oneida understanding, is viewed as a living, feminine spirit that sustains life. “Water is the blood of our Mother Earth. It serves the same purpose as the blood that runs through our veins. We need to keep them both clean and pure,” Tehahuko’tha said. This sacred relationship extends beyond the physical. The way people treat water, land, and each other mirrors their internal balance. “How they interact with the natural environment reflects the kind of relationship they have with themselves,” he said. “Awareness, education, and help are keys to change. We must make things right with ourselves before we can make things right with others and with Creation.”

For young people, he believes the first step toward environmental care begins within. “They need to have a respectful relationship with themselves. They need to know what love is, to have self-respect, to believe in themselves, to know that they have a purpose, a sense of belonging, and to be loved unconditionally,” he shared. “Once they have this, it extends beyond themselves and becomes altruism toward all of Creation.”

Through these teachings, the Oneida Nation continues to model an approach to education that integrates environmental awareness with cultural, spiritual, and emotional wellness. The message is clear: when we honor water, we honor life itself. And when we care for the Earth, we care for our communities and for generations yet to come.

## Suggested Resources for Additional Perspectives

Consider these books to expand your understanding of water protection and Indigenous perspectives on our relationship with the earth. (Reviews sourced from publisher sites).



### **We Are Water Protectors** (2020)

Written by Carole Lindstrom, Illustrated by Michaela Goade

Roaring Brook Press: Inspired by the many Indigenous-led movements across North America, *We Are Water Protectors* issues an urgent rallying cry to safeguard the Earth's water from harm and corruption—a bold and lyrical picture book.



### **Women and Water: Woven Portraits from Around the World** (2023)

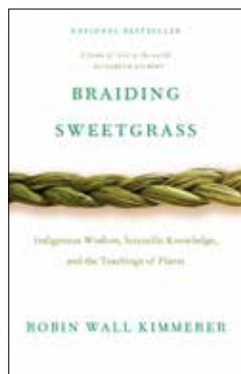
By Mary E. Burns

Manitowish River Press: The *Women and Water* exhibit celebrates and honors water by portraying women who work with it, protect it and advocate for it. Featured are scientists, water-walkers, teachers, farmers, activists and healers, all who hold deep connections with water. Seven years in the making, Mary Burns' twenty-nine handwoven jacquard portraits of

women from around the world form the core of the exhibit. Water is the life blood of the planet and of all living beings. May we be deeply inspired by the work of these remarkable women to protect our waters.

### **Braiding Sweetgrass** (2015)

By Robin Wall Kimmerer



Drawing on her life as an indigenous scientist, a mother, and a woman, Kimmerer shows how other living beings—asters and goldenrod, strawberries and squash, salamanders, algae, and sweetgrass—offer us gifts and lessons, even if we've forgotten how to hear their voices. In a rich braid of reflections that range from the creation of Turtle Island to the forces that threaten its flourishing today, she circles toward a central argument: that the awakening of a wider ecological consciousness requires the acknowledgment and celebration of our reciprocal relationship with the rest of the living

world. For only when we can hear the languages of other beings will we be capable of understanding the generosity of the earth, and learn to give our own gifts in return.

### **Listen to the Interview: Robin Wall Kimmerer – Braiding Sweetgrass**

Listen to this remarkable interview of Robin Wall Kimmerer from Superior Broadcast Network reporter Nick Vander Puy, as Kimmerer tells us “For all of us, becoming indigenous to a place means living as if your children's future mattered, to take care of the land as if our lives, both material and spiritual, depended on it.” Listen now at: <https://creators.spotify.com/pod/profile/william-vander-puy/episodes/Braiding-Sweetgrass-with-Robin-Wall-Kimmerer-e150rdh>

# Enbridge Plans Pipeline Build-Around of Tribal Land

By John Hermanson

Canadian owned Enbridge Energy Line 5 pipeline goes from Superior, Wisconsin, to Sarnia, Canada, for 645 miles carrying 23 million gallons of oil and natural gas liquids per day.

It transports Alberta tar-sands Canadian oil and gas from western Canada to eastern Canada through Northern Wisconsin, the Bad River Reservation, the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, along the lakebed's Straits of Mackinac and on through Detroit to Canada.

Constructed in 1953, it has spilled over 1.1 million gallons of oil and gas in 33 incidents. With a designated lifespan of 50 years, it is operating 22 years longer than expected. A similar Enbridge Energy pipeline in 2010 caused a catastrophic spill into the Kalamazoo River costing Enbridge roughly \$1.2 billion in clean up fees.

Along with adding to climate change and poor human health effects, oil and gas spills threaten the waters of the Great Lakes region including groundwater, wetlands, streams, rivers and the Great Lakes. These “Everglades of the Great Lakes” provide treaty-protected rights, resources and a way of life including gathering (wild rice), hunting, and fishing for the Bad River Reservation peoples.

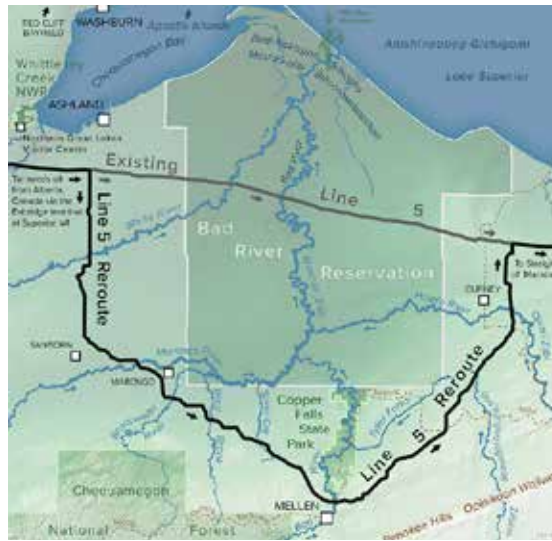
Of particular interest to this newsletter theme is the Bad River Reservation and Line 5 in northern Wisconsin and Enbridge’s attempts to build a 41-mile detour around the Reservation. It is important to note that this would simply put the pipeline further upstream from the Reservation.

In 2024 Enbridge offered the Band \$80 million in exchange for allowing Line 5 to continue trespassing on Tribal land. Their response was, “our homeland, our treaty rights, and our way of life are not for sale.”



Photo Credit: BadRiverFilm.com

A beautiful and stirring story about this issue is portrayed in a documentary film, *Bad River*, by Mary Mazzio (2024). Please also note there are many



What's at risk... a map details the multiple water bodies that will be threatened by a Line 5 Reroute. Photo Credit: Carl Sack

more details to be had by Midwest Environmental Advocates website that chronicles their important role in this legal battle.

In 2013 the Bad River Band refused to renew Enbridge’s easement, and in 2017 the tribe voted to have them remove the pipeline which Enbridge refused to do bringing a cascade of court litigation that some speculate may go as far as the Supreme Court.

For the bigger picture, beyond the scope of

this article, please refer to *A Great Lakes oil pipeline faces 3 controversies with no speedy resolutions*, published: September 22, 2025, in The Conversation. <https://theconversation.com/a-great-lakes-oil-pipeline-faces-3-controversies-with-no-speedy-resolutions-264105>

Currently, Midwest Environmental Advocates and their plaintiffs: Sierra Club Wisconsin, the League of Women Voters, and 350 Wisconsin, along with Clean Wisconsin and the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, are awaiting a decision to their challenge to the Wisconsin DNR permits granted to Enbridge. A six-week contested case hearing ended in early October and the decision in the case is expected this winter.

Ironically, in the very same week the DNR gave Enbridge permits to build their rerouted pipeline, both a leak detection system and a 1975 pipe valve failed in Jefferson County between Madison and Milwaukee (Wisconsin/Line 6), spilling 69,000 gallons underground. The DNR had sited their approval for the Line 5 reroute in part because “continuous monitoring and control of Line 5 [would be] carried out by Enbridge.”

Enbridge’s systems failure makes the Wisconsin DNR conclusion—that the risks are “small” for damage to the Bad River Reservation—seem at best inaccurate, especially considering what is at stake to the Lake Superior Chippewa Band with the reroute construction and continued operation of the pipeline.

Enbridge’s Energy has a tarnished and confrontational history including refusing to shut down its Line 5 pipeline in 2021 when Governor of Michigan Gretchen Whitmer revoked its easement based on endangerment to the Great Lakes. The Straits of Mackinac bifurcated pipeline is battered by ship anchors, corroded, bent and deformed from strong currents. It presents a risk that many believe is not worth the benefits.

A 2022 study titled, *Potential Enbridge Line 5 Closure: Alternatives for Crude Oil Supply* concludes that a shut down would have minimal economic impact to energy costs, but comes with some caveats.

States’ rights, tribal sovereignty, international treaties, executive power, judicial power and appointments, political power, Army Corp of Engineers, future elections, Midwest Environmental Advocates, and you and me will continue to shape this issue. In the meantime, I hope nothing catastrophic happens as Line 5 pipeline keeps on pumping.

Enbridge’s Line 5 is a foreign greedy serpent that slithers across sacred landscapes and water threatening better futures. It has served its time and

does not need to be if we envision and build a future of the sun. The better stories the Bad River Band inhabitants' model can be honored with current appropriate technologies that exist today and inspired grounded imagination.

## Learn More About the Threats of Enbridge Line 5

### Watch the Film: *Bad River* (2024)

Link: <https://play.xumo.com/free-movies/bad-river/XM0HRGCYFSTLRW>

From [BadRiverFilm.com](http://BadRiverFilm.com): Bad River is a new documentary film which chronicles the Wisconsin-based Bad River Band and its ongoing fight for sovereignty, a story which unfolds in a groundbreaking way through a series of shocking revelations, devastating losses, and a powerful legacy of defiance and resilience, which includes a David vs. Goliath battle to save Lake Superior, the largest freshwater resource in America. As Eldred Corbine, a Bad River Tribal Elder declares: "We gotta protect it...die for it, if we have to."



### Take the Bad River Watershed Self-Guided Tour

Link: <https://arcg.is/br48O>

Created by water protector Carl Sack, in conjunction with Communities United By Water, this virtual Story Map takes you along the path of the proposed Enbridge Line 5 Reroute. The tour covers hydrology of the region, history of the Bad River people, and the multitude of waterways at risk from construction of a reroute.

## Trump Administration's Cuts Will Harm Wisconsin Native Americans

By Dean Hoegger

The Trump Administration's proposed budget cuts are harming Wisconsin communities including many of Wisconsin's Tribal Nations. Especially impacted are efforts to mitigate climate change, provide food security, and support educational opportunities.

President Trump's disdain for diversity, equity, and inclusion has placed underserved communities high on the Administration's list for cutting grants aimed at mitigating climate change. President Joe Biden's 2022 Inflation Reduction Act provided billions of dollars for climate change and water protection projects. Trump has cancelled, or proposed cancelling, and even clawing back about \$75 million of these funds, impacting marginalized communities such as Milwaukee's African American residents and Wisconsin tribes.

The Republicans, including Wisconsin U.S. Representative Tom Tiffany, have generally been climate change deniers and oppose spending money for mitigation efforts as evidenced in the July 2025 Republican Reconciliation Bill. Tiffany, who is expected to run for governor, represents much of northern Wisconsin and First Nations communities located there.

One project that Trump cancelled is a \$3 million grant that would have helped UW-Wisconsin researchers work with the Brothertown Indian Nation to restore wild rice habitat in the Lake Winnebago watershed with reseeded over a five-year period. Wild rice is threatened because it is susceptible to warmer winters and greater summer precipitation.



Wild rice not only protects watersheds but is also an important food source for Wisconsin's Indian tribes. Photo Credit: First Nations

Wild rice is not only a plant that many of the state's tribes view as sacred, but it is also an important food source.

The loss of wild rice in the watershed can impact the water quality in Lake Winnebago which provides drinking water for over 200,000 people. The plant, as part of a healthy wetland, filters contaminants like phosphorus and nitrates coming from farm fields. These nutrients can create harmful cyanobacteria blooms which can cause serious illnesses.

A major outbreak in Lake Winnebago occurred in 2023 causing "do not swim warnings." So far, there has not been an impact on drinking water in Wisconsin as there was in Toledo in 2014. In that case, there was a loss of safe drinking water serving 400,000 people due to contamination with microcystin from cyanobacteria. Lake Erie was the source.

Food security has also been impacted by actions of the Trump Administration and its Department of Government Efficiency. In March 2025, the Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement Program (LFPACA) saw a \$500 million cut in 2025 and 2026 funding. The program historically purchased food from underserved producers and distributed it to communities facing food insecurity.

The First Nations Development Institute reports that the cut will have "detrimental impacts on tribal food distribution programs." The Institute further notes that the cancellation of the Menominee Nation's LFPACA contract displaced \$3 million in future funding for the Tribal Elder Food Box Program, which serves all 11 tribes in Wisconsin under the Great Lakes Intertribal Food Coalition."

Fortunately, Governor Evers used Wisconsin Department of

Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection Funds to make up some of the shortfall for 2025. Where the funds will come from for 2026 is uncertain.

Across the country, people in need of nutritional support are being harmed by the uncertainty of continued funding of the SNAP program. The Trump Administration, unwilling to negotiate an end to the government shut down, for weeks left SNAP recipients in the dark regarding continued funding of SNAP. At the time of this writing, the Administration has not made even the half benefit available to recipients.

Prior to the shutdown, additional requirements were being placed on SNAP recipients including work requirements. The work requirements may be a greater burden on Native Americans living on reservations where opportunities for employment are often more limited. For instance, in Menominee County, where the Menominee Indian Reservation is located, has an unemployment rate of 5.1%. The state average is 3.1%. These rates were current as of August 2025.

These funding cuts to food security programs are further amplified by the Trump budget, with cuts of about \$617 million for core tribal programs across the country that support tribal communities and self-governance. This amount represents about one-quarter of previous funding.

The future of education at Wisconsin's tribal colleges is also being threatened by the Trump Administration's budget cuts. The Bureau of Indian Education has proposed a 90% reduction for tribal colleges. These cuts could force some colleges to close.

In Wisconsin, the Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe University in Hayward is one of two tribal colleges in Wisconsin. It is among those colleges that would be harmed by the cuts and would likely need to reduce programming for both the students and the community. The reservation, being somewhat isolated, provides an important pathway for young tribal members to begin post-secondary education and earn an associate degree, then transfer to a four-year university. "The loss of this important resource would reverse the progress of the Lac Courte Oreilles people," explained tribal member Debi Schillinger.

Schillinger continued saying, "The college library is also an important hub for community programs for all ages and is the only library on the reservation. It houses an extensive collection of books, tribal records, periodicals, computers, and research materials often needed for genealogy research."



Photo Credit: LCO Ojibwe University

While communities all across the state are being harmed by the Trump Administration's budget cuts, Wisconsin's First Nations peoples will be especially harmed. Contact your congressional representatives to pass a budget that does not single out members of marginalized communities.

**Resources:**

Learn more about the projects and initiatives of First Nations' Native Agriculture and Food Systems Investments. <https://www.firstnations.org/our-programs/nourishing-native-foods-health/>

Raise awareness of Native food systems and food sovereignty by hosting a screening of First Nations' "Gather" film. <https://www.firstnations.org/projects/gather-film/>

## The Impacts of Climate Change on the Tribes of Northeast Wisconsin

By Peyton Zidlicky

For the Indigenous peoples of Northeast Wisconsin, the land is not a resource to be exploited, but a relative to be honored. The forests, waters, and wildlife of this region are woven into the very fabric of tribal identity. For generations, life for the Oneida, Menominee, Stockbridge-Munsee, and Ho-Chunk nations has been guided by the reliable patterns of the seasons. But now, a profound shift is underway. The escalating climate crisis is not a distant threat, but a present day reality that strikes at the heart of cultural practices and ecological knowledge passed down through millennia.

The most immediate impact for Northeast Wisconsin's tribes is the disruption of the sacred relationship with Manidoo-giizis, the Ojibwe word for January, translating to "Great Spirit Moon". The sugarbush, where families have gathered for generations to tap maple trees and produce syrup, is under direct threat. Warmer winters and erratic temperature swings disrupt the freeze-thaw cycle which is necessary for sap to flow. Tapping seasons are becoming shorter and less predictable. The process of making maple syrup is a ceremony in itself. It's a time for teaching, storytelling, strengthening community bonds, and giving thanks to the tree for its gift. As this tradition becomes more fragile, so does the bond and knowledge from the elders to the youth.



Maple tree tapping at Sleeping Bear Dunes. Photo Credit: National Park Service

Similarly, the wild rice beds, or manoomin, a sacred food central to the identity of the Anishinaabe and other tribes, face an existential threat. Manoomin is not merely a crop; it is a spiritual being. It is a core component of creation stories and migration prophecies. Climate change assaults manoomin from multiple angles. Intensified rainfall

leads to flooding that can drown the young plants, while droughts can lower water levels and leave them vulnerable. Warmer water temperatures encourage the growth of harmful bacteria and invasive species. The loss of manoomin would be a cultural and nutritional catastrophe.



Manoomin being tossed in a birch bark basket. Photo Credit: Flickr

The waters of Lake Michigan and the inland lakes and streams are also sending distress signals. Warmer water temperatures are contributing to toxic algal blooms, which can contaminate drinking water and harm fish

populations. For tribes where fishing is both a subsistence activity and a cultural right, the decline in fish health and the shifting populations of species like walleye are deeply alarming. The ice cover on the Great Lakes is forming later and melting earlier, disrupting traditional ice fishing and threatening the safety of those who travel on the ice.

Yet, in the face of these challenges, the tribes of Northeast Wisconsin are not passive victims. They are on the front lines, responding with resilience, innovation, and the deep knowledge of their ancestors. The Menominee are intensifying their forest monitoring, using both traditional knowledge and modern science to adapt their management practices for a warmer world. The Oneida Nation is a leader in sustainability, investing in solar energy, implementing green building codes, and working to restore wetlands that act as natural buffers against flooding. All the tribes are actively involved in climate adaptation planning, focusing on protecting culturally significant plants, monitoring water quality, and most importantly, revitalizing their languages and cultural teachings to ensure that the next generation has the tools to continue the fight.

As we look to the future, it is clear that solutions must be built on partnership. Supporting tribal sovereignty and including Indigenous knowledge in regional climate policy is not just an act of justice, but an act of necessity. The tribes of Northeast Wisconsin hold the key to generations of ecological understanding. By listening to their leadership and standing alongside them, we can all help preserve not only their heritage, but the health and vitality of our shared home for generations to come.

## The Rights of Nature—A Potentially Powerful Legal Framework

By Lauren Felder

Humans have inherent rights which are all encompassed by our rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The rights of nature are the right of natural features and resources to be free from interference and to thrive. Giving nature rights in a legal sense would give nature and natural

features (e.g. bodies of water, animal species, and plant species) “legal personhood,” meaning nature can defend itself in court through representation by a lawyer.

Allowing land and other elements of nature to appear in court for itself would strengthen legal protections for the natural world. Under the current framework, legal challenges may only be brought by groups of people who are harmed by actions taken against land. The exception to this is land which has been designated as public land and is therefore protected under local, state, or federal law. These protections, however, do not come from the rights of nature itself; they come from the rights of people to use or own the land and features of nature that come with it.

The rights of nature are not a new concept. First Nations people have recognized them without legal structure for millennia. The Ho-Chunk Nation became the first entity in the United States to recognize the rights of nature by amending their tribal constitution in 2016. In 2018, the White Earth band of Ojibwe and the 1855 Treaty Authority of the Chippewa passed a law to recognize the Rights of Manoomin (wild rice). The Menominee Nation adopted legislation that recognizes the rights of the Menominee River in 2020.

The rights of Manoomin and other natural resources are important to First Nations peoples’ right to hunt, fish, and gather. The Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa has been fighting the reroute of Enbridge Line 5, a gas and oil pipeline, through their ancestral lands in Wisconsin, since 2019. So far, the tribe’s challenges against the pipeline have been under the Clean Water Act. By formally recognizing the rights of nature as they relate to Manoomin and water especially, First Nations people may have more legal ground to stand on to challenge Line 5 and other similar developments. In 2021, the White Earth Band of Ojibwe became the first to challenge a state agency, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, in Tribal Court on the basis of the rights of nature in *Manoomin v. Minnesota Department of Natural Resources*. Unfortunately, the Tribal Court determined that it did not have the authority to limit non-tribal members’ actions that took place off the tribal reservation.



A manoomin bed on the Flambeau Flowage. Photo Credit: Crystal Brown

Milwaukee County was the first county in Wisconsin to pass a resolution on the rights of nature on October 27, 2023.

The resolution was based on legislation and legal framework already adopted by First Nations peoples in Wisconsin. The resolution “supports the rights of nature” in ensuring that human activities do not interfere with water bodies in Milwaukee and their “ability to be healthy, robust, and resilient.” This resolution is non-binding and does not take any formal action or create any binding law. The City of Green Bay directed its sustainability commission to draft a similar rights of nature resolution in August 2025. Alderperson Joe Prestley noted that the resolution was not meant to give legal rights to individual natural entities, like trees or wetlands, but to codify a process that puts the environment first as the city considers its development. This is not then, technically, a resolution on the rights of nature.

Shortly after Green Bay directed its commission to draft this resolution, Representative Joy Goeben (R-Hobart) and Senator Steve Nass (R-Whitewater) released senate bill (SB420) in September 2025. If passed, the act would create a section of the statutes which prohibits cities, villages, towns, or counties from passing rights of nature ordinances.

Governor Tony Evers signed Executive Order 277 on October 13, 2025, which directs cabinet agencies and other appropriate organizations to increase public awareness of tribal treaty rights to hunt, fish, and gather on tribal lands; directs the Department of Natural Resources to create a plan to incorporate First Nations languages and public education onto signage at state parks, and creates the Wild Rice Stewardship Council to promote protection of wild rice, among other actions.

Also on October 13, 2025, Rep. Darrin Madison (D-Milwaukee) released a package of three bills related to the rights of nature. LRB-4418 would re-establish legislative requirements for sulfide ore mining projects to submit proof that they would prevent harm to the environment prior to approval for a permit. LRB-4420 recognizes the natural rights of Devil’s Lake State Park, or Tee Wakaçak in the native Ho-Chunk language. The bill would create legislation that penalizes any damage to the area not because of the harm it does to the people who visit the park, but because of the infringement upon the park’s right to exist and flourish that any harm to it would do. Finally, LRB-4400 would create legislation which formally recognizes the rights of nature in Wisconsin and, in the opposite of SB420, call upon local governments and agencies to adopt rights of nature laws and policies.

### Want to learn more? Watch the Film: *Does Nature Have Rights?* (2023)

Link: <https://www.pbs.org/video/does-nature-have-rights-wild-hope-ar12yp/>

On October 7, JOSHUA for Justice of Green Bay hosted a film screening and community discussion on the PBS Nature Documentary: “*Does Nature Have Rights? WILD HOPE.*” The film highlights Ecuador’s journey to be the first nation in the world to adopt “rights of nature” into its constitution.



Devil's Lake State Park. Photo Credit: Lauren Felder

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## The Oneida Bird Monitoring Program

By Sarah Baughman and Joseph Torres, Guest Contributors

The Oneida Bird Monitoring Program (OBMP) supports a partnership among four organizations: Oneida Nation of Wisconsin, Northeastern Wisconsin (NEW) Bird Alliance, Audubon Great Lakes, and UW-Green Bay’s Cofrin Center for Biodiversity in the greater Green Bay, WI region. Through this collaborative effort, we began monitoring birds at restoration sites owned and managed by the Oneida Nation in 2021 thanks to >100 dedicated volunteers. We monitor spring migratory waterfowl and shorebirds (~March–June), breeding marsh, grassland, forest, and shrubland birds (May–June), and fall migratory waterfowl and shorebirds (~July–November). We will form small teams (2–5 people) that connect a community of birders and Oneida Nation members for a shared experience in nature through community science and storytelling.

One of the products of the OBMP is a bird guide titled *Birds of the Oneida Nation: A beginner’s guide to bird identification*. This introductory guide features birds that we



Randy Cornelius, cultural advisor to the program, and Sarah Baughman work with volunteers in the field. Photo Credit: OBMP

would find during monitoring or that hold significance in Oneida culture. For example, this guide features an entry for the Passenger Pigeon, a now extinct dove-like bird that once filled the skies of this continent. We also include rare or endangered species

like the Henslow's Sparrow, which nests in the Trout Creek Grassland where we survey.

### Why did we make this guide?

This guide is a culmination of various goals of the OBMP: education about birds, highlighting the incredible restoration sites, sharing of Oneida language and teachings, and connecting across different communities through an appreciation of nature.

Educational resources (e.g., field guides, printed species lists, etc.) that were available to use did not meet our needs. To fill this gap, we created a guide specially made for the birds in Oneida that could be shared with volunteers and community members.



### Where can it be found?

The bird guide just entered the publishing process and will be available in spring of 2026. This guide is intended to be shared thoughtfully via the OBMP community. This means it will not be for sale in bookstores or available anywhere online. Our hope is that when we connect with people through the program, we will have the opportunity to share this guide, the context that it should be cared for, and that the knowledge within it is to be respected.

Across various iterations of the guide that have been printed over the last three years, we have handed it out to individuals that we have connected with and we expect to do that in the future. We also hope to share it as an educational tool with the Center for First Nations Studies at UWGB, with the Elders in Oneida, and with the schools in Oneida so that it can be used by the community.

### Community Outreach

To share our program and to invite volunteers from different communities, we spend a great amount of time building our community outreach network. This includes in-person work like tabling at the Oneida Farmer's market during the summer, presenting at conferences like the Great Lakes Coastal Symposium or the 2025 Great Lakes Regional Conference, or events at the University of Wisconsin-Green

Bay. We also send information out into the community by submitting articles (like the one you are reading right now!) or fliers to local newsletters and publications, like the Kalihwisaks, the official newspaper of the Oneida Nation. Our group also attends tours and workshops with local organizations to learn about Oneida culture, food sovereignty, and regional restoration work.

Surveys for 2025 have concluded, but we will be right back out monitoring in March 2026! If you are interested in volunteering or would like to learn more about this program, please check out the Northeastern Wisconsin Bird Alliance website at: <https://newbirdalliance.org/oneida-bird-monitoring>



Community outreach is essential to the program. Photo Credit: OBMP



Tony Kuchma, Oneida Wetland Program Coordinator, leads campers at the OBMP summer youth program. Photo Credit: OBMP

When speaking with Joseph and Sarah about the OBMP, they shared the importance of recognizing that this program is a specific experience between the Oneida Nation and involved organizations, "rather than general guidelines." They advised that "building relationships with any Tribal Nation (or community for that matter) must be catered to that specific group's needs, interests, goals, challenges, and histories. What the OBMP is doing in Oneida shouldn't be directly applied to other collaborative projects – but there are some foundational 'rules.'" They offer the following considerations:

- Lead by listening – listening first, even before asking questions. Approach with "These are the resources/skills I can provide; would they help you reach your goals?"
- Approach with humility – even with all the experiences we have, we will not know it all. Even as experts in certain fields, we should approach acknowledging that others can teach us so much. (i.e., westernized approaches to science do offer "expertise", but if we approach acting like we are then the authority, we will alienate those that have knowledge outside of that framework).

# Food Sovereignty

By Rick Adamski

“Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts the aspirations and needs of those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations.”

– Declaration of Nyéléni, the first global forum on food sovereignty, Mali, 2007

This quote from the US Food Sovereignty Alliance website defines Food Sovereignty. The declaration is important to people that were historically discounted, whose rights were denied throughout history. It is also important to every eater and farmer no matter their origins. Food sovereignty aims to restore food to a place of primary importance for the health of the people, the land, and waters.

These values align with the desires of the Clean Water Action Council to reduce the environmental degradation of our land and waters. Food Sovereignty aims to change the trajectory of industrial agriculture and the consolidation of food production. The trend of industrial agriculture has been the removal of people from the land. People have been replaced with mechanical and chemical technologies that produce large volumes of food.

The food is processed and distributed over great distances to feed a growing world population. According to the USDA, farmers receive only 14 to 16 cents of every dollar American consumers spend on food. This is historically low because processing, marketing, distribution, storage, etc. continue to claim a larger share of the consumer’s food dollars.

Food Sovereignty aims to restore the value of food producers. It also aims to grow foods that are historically important to specific tribes. Wild rice is a prime example of a native food that has suffered huge losses. The Menominee tribe used wild rice as their staple food. It was plentiful in all northeastern Wisconsin. Other tribes and European settlers called them by the same name; manoomin or wild rice people.

I had the opportunity to interview my friend Jen Falck. She is a farmer and Oneida Tribal member, and she works for the Menominee Department of Agriculture and Food Systems, Great Lakes Intertribal Coalition. Jen defines Food Sovereignty as, “A culturally specific group of people having access to their culturally significant foods and producing it for themselves.” For the Oneida people, Tuscarora white corn is their flagship food. They have continued to grow that variety of corn to maintain their connection to their heritage. They use it as a cultural experience to tell the story of their people.



A group of tribal elder box food producers gathers with tribal partners and recipient elders. Community takes care of each other through this connection with traditional foods.

Photo Credit: Stephanie Stevens

Different tribes practice different levels of the practice of Food Sovereignty. Some other prominent foods that are important in Tribal Food Sovereignty include bison, fish, and maple syrup.

Our daughter Genevieve works for the Red Cliff Tribe in northern Wisconsin, and their culturally significant food is fish because they live on the shores of Lake

Superior. They also operate a fish hatchery to restock walleye in area lakes because that is important to them. Many tribes have a significant cultural connection with bison because that was a major source of food. That is why many native tribes have bison herds today.

A significant component of food sovereignty is traditional ecological knowledge (TEK). This is an important historical practice of learning from the experiences of our ancestors. It requires sharing stories from our ancestors and respecting traditions. TEK requires keen observation skills and sharing with others to learn from others, both from the past as well as current experiences. These skills are invaluable as we experience climatic change at a more rapid pace than has been experienced before.

Can Food Sovereignty feed almost 8 billion people that live on planet earth today? It may serve as an important step in the process of restoring a better relationship between humans and our planet. TEK recognizes that humans are a part of the world. This is contrary to the prevailing western civilization’s view that we have dominion over the earth.

Food Sovereignty aligns with current trends supporting local foods. This movement is intended to restore health to the land and to people by focusing on the basic needs of both. The local foods movement confronts the fact that food travels many miles from its point of production to the point where it is consumed. This takes time and energy, and often the energy is fossil fuels whose balance sheet of costs exceed their benefits. If food is consumed close to where it is grown, then it is more likely that it is fresher and thus more nutritious. If it is consumed locally, the producers gain more of the income from the consumers than if the same food was processed and distributed for the commodity market.

My wife, Valerie Dantoin, believes that there is a difference between food security and food sovereignty. She is the Instructor of Sustainable and Organic Food Systems at NWTTC. Valerie defines food security as the ability to buy the food that you need. Food insecurity is when a family can’t afford groceries. Food sovereignty means that a community can feed itself.

I remember Gary Besaw explaining a great example of food security versus food sovereignty when he described the difference between the food box program initiated by the first Trump administration. Gary said

that most products were highly processed, high fat, high sugar content foods. When the Intertribal Food Coalition partnered with the Wisconsin Food Hub Cooperative, Wisconsin Farmers Union, and Feeding America they were able to increase the nutritional value of the food boxes, and they supported the local farmers supplying the food. Gary is Director of the Menominee Tribal Department of Agriculture and Food Systems, and he serves on the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection Board of Directors.

For current non-native farmers, the ability to feed people in our own region is important for the farm's bottom line, and because it brings satisfaction and security of feeding our own community. When you buy local food at the farmers market or from a CSA, you are supporting the ability of our region to feed itself, especially if there was a disruption to the energy, transportation, and internet sectors. Europe learned the lessons of self-reliance during the last two world wars when food supplies were disrupted, and people were starving. Part of the reason they subsidize their farmers is that they can rely on internal food supplies should another catastrophic war or a pandemic or a weather disaster or any other disruption occur.



A three sisters garden grows at Valentine Gardens with seeds gifted by Rebecca and Stephen Webster of Ukwakhwa (Our Foods) from the Oneida Reservation. Singing and Cranberry beans are shelled after harvest and saved for future planting and sharing. Photo Credit: Crystal Brown

Food sovereignty is the security of knowing your farmers can feed their neighborhoods culturally appropriate food. The polar opposite is the corporate domination of our food system. When we commodify food and ship it away to the east and west coast or to China, we impoverish our soil, our farmers, and ourselves.

All these reasons emphasize the importance of Food Sovereignty as we struggle to change the recent history of food production. The experiences of traditional practices can show us ways to solve environmental problems, social disruptions, and can help us navigate climatic disruptions.

## Want to learn more? Watch the Film: *Kanenon: Original Seeds* (2025)

Link: <https://www.pbs.org/video/kanenonwe-original-seeds-kokphn/>



Per PBS, this documentary "features three Haudenosaunee women: Angela Ferguson, Rebecca Webster

and Rowen White, who are stepping back into their sacred responsibility as seed keepers.

They honor the work of their ancestors by regenerating, rematriating and protecting sacred seeds offering a powerful view of what is possible in Indigenous communities working towards food sovereignty."

## Cultural Burns

By Charlie Frisk

For thousands of years, Indigenous Peoples have used fire to alter the landscape for ceremonial, ecological, and utilitarian ends—practices known today as "cultural burns" to differentiate them from "prescribed burns," or fires without Indigenous ties.

In Northeast Wisconsin the Ho-Chunk practiced cultural burns throughout their territory on the east side of Green Bay. The burns provided many benefits including; opening up the forest to more sunlight making it possible to raise the three sisters, corn, beans and squash, providing a more suitable environment for grazing mammals such as bison and elk, and reducing the cover for mosquitos and blackflies and other biting insects.

When the first European settlers arrived most of the forests along the east side of the bay were more open than



A controlled burn of Hartman Prairie in 2020 by NES Ecological Services. Photo Credit: Charlie Frisk

they would have been without the cultural burns and in many areas would actually be considered savannas, the name ecologists give to a community with widely scattered trees with a unique combination of prairie species in the understory.

On the west side of the bay and south of Green Bay the areas subjected to cultural burns were a mix of savannas and tall grass prairies. Tom Erdman, local bird expert and former curator of the Richter Field Museum at UWGB, can recall seeing prairie chickens along the west shore of Green Bay as recently as the 1960s.

A very unique biological community in this area that benefited from burning is the alvar. Alvars are a very rare community that is noted for having an unusual combination of plant species and high biodiversity.

*“An alvar is a native community with shallow soil on top of bedrock, near a large body of cold water [in this case, Lake Michigan]. Alvars have microclimates which create good habitat for many different groups of species. Red Banks Alvar is a very neat spot because it’s the best example of an alvar in the state of Wisconsin.”* -Josh Martinez, WDNR

The Red Banks Alvar is located just 8 miles northeast of the UWGB campus along Highway 57. It is a State Natural Area and the Northeast Wisconsin Land Trust, the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin, and UWGB are all working to restore and protect this unique biological community.

The cultural burns of the Ho-Chunk kept the alvar forest community of bur and white oaks open enough to allow the unique understory of prairie, savanna, and wetland species to thrive. Once the burns were halted, red cedars began to fill in the understory, shading out all of the other species. Today, the management agencies are using cutting and prescribed burns to restore the community.

Whenever European settlers moved into an area and displaced the native people, the benefits of cultural burns as well as natural burns were lost. Breaking up the native forest, savanna and prairie communities with villages and farms stopped natural burns from being able to spread and the European settlers did not see any benefits from cultural burns and put an end to that practice.

The early U.S. Forest Service was staunchly anti-fire. In 1935 the USFS instituted its 10 a.m. policy which required all forest fires to be suppressed by 10 a.m. the day after they were reported. This policy was in effect from 1935 until 1978, when it was phased out due to its contribution to larger, more catastrophic fires.

Even the great conservationist, Aldo Leopold, who held a Masters in Forestry from Yale University, fought against the use of “light burning” in his early career. In 1920, as a 33 year old, he stated: *“The Forest Service policy of absolutely preventing forest fires insofar as humanly possible is directly threatened by the light burning propaganda. Light burning*

*is the very negation of the fundamental principle of forestry, namely to make forests productive not only of vegetative cover to clothe and protect our mountains, but also of the greatest possible amount of lumber, forage, and other forest products.”* -From “Piute Forestry vs Forest Fire Prevention,” (1920) by Aldo Leopold.

Leopold used the term “Piute Forestry” as a derisive term to describe the use of controlled burns but didn’t stop with using Piute as a racist insult against foresters who were pro-burning, he and other professional foresters insulted foresters from the Southeast who had recognized controlled burns as the only way to maintain their economically and ecologically valuable long-leaf pine forests. Foresters from the Southeast had long realized that, *“Frequent, low intensity, and often large scale, surface fires were the dominant factor in shaping the longleaf pine ecosystems across the historical range. This frequent fire regime, over generations, selected for longleaf pine’s fire-resistant attributes.”* -Quote from the Long-Leaf Pine Alliance.

The governmental hostility toward cultural burns was quite incredible. *“As a means of stifling Indigenous culture, California’s 1850 Act for the Government and Protection of Indians was among the first state laws to prohibit cultural burning. In the years that followed, rangers reportedly shot natives they found conducting cultural burns.”* -From “What Makes a Fire Good” *National Wildlife Magazine*, Fall 2025.

It took almost 20 years, accumulated wisdom and trips to Germany’s highly managed, totally unnatural forests and to the forests of Mexico’s Chihuahua Sierras for Leopold to realize that fire played an important role in forest and grassland health. It was in his late fifties when he was developing his “land ethic” and writing essays such as “Thinking like a Mountain” that Leopold became an advocate of light burning.

In 1937 he wrote, *“The Chihuahua Sierras burn over every few years. There are no ill effects, except that the pines are a bit further apart than ours, reproduction is scarce, there is much less juniper, and there is much less brush. But the watersheds are intact, whereas our own watersheds, sedulously protected from fire, are a wreck.”*

-From “Conservationist in Mexico” (1937) by Aldo Leopold.

Leopold had come to see controlled burns as essential for restoring natural ecosystems and promoting the health of the land. By mimicking natural fire cycles, prescribed burns can help control invasive species, promote fire-adapted native plants that make up prairie and oak savanna flora, release nutrients into the soil, and improve wildlife habitat by managing undergrowth.

Unfortunately, it was not until 1978 that the USFS phased out the 10 o’clock policy for putting out all forest fires and admitted that low intensity fires performed important environmental as well as safety benefits. Over a century of extreme fire suppression had greatly changed the nature of American forests. The buildup of excessive fuel on forest floors, much denser undergrowth and the impacts of



Aldo Leopold and family engaging in a prescribed burn of the UW-Arboretum.  
Photo Credit: UW Madison

climate change had set the stage for disastrous “megafires,” fires that reach over 100,000 acres.

In many of the high elevation forests, such as in Yellowstone National Park, it is too dry and cold for dead trees to decompose, in those forests; fire is the primary agent of decomposition. A century of fire control had become a century of debris buildup, as well as allowing for the development of a much thicker understory of shrubs and small trees.

These changes on the land, exacerbated by climate

change, have set the stage for the massive “megafires” that seem almost commonplace today. For example, in 2020 10.1 million acres were destroyed by wildfires in the U.S., with California alone burning over 4.2 million acres, 4% of the state’s total land area. These mammoth fires have destroyed billions of dollars’ worth of property, millions of acres of forest and resulted in hundreds of deaths.

Better late than never, professional foresters and the USFS have come to recognize the value of controlled burns and in many cases are studying and attempting to duplicate the cultural burns conducted by indigenous people. Two examples of this are foresters from all over the world visiting the Menominee Reservation to study the historic forestry techniques of the Menominee and Australian land managers working with the native Aborigines to restore the health of biological communities in the Outback.

In this area, the Baird Creek Preservation Foundation is using fire as a tool to restore a small portion of the oak savanna that formerly covered much of the land east of Green Bay. The three agencies working to protect the Red Banks Alvar are also using fire to restore much of that community.

Whether they are called cultural burns, controlled burns, or low-intensity fires, fire is a tool that is here to stay for managing forests, savanna, prairies and even some types of wetlands.

## It is Time to Renew Your Membership for 2026

**CWAC 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 2026.**

To check your membership status, look at your address label showing your last renewal year. Emailed newsletters include the last renewal year in the body of the email. If you did not renew in 2025, please consider a more generous donation for 2026.

Membership donations are critical as they account for nearly half of our operational funds, supporting our:

- educational outreach
- newsletters
- student internships
- rent
- health forums

Employee salaries are supported from a trust fund, our Packers’ concession stand, and grants, not from membership donations. We are grateful for Planned Giving contributions that have supported the trust.



**All membership gifts are appreciated. We are grateful for additional consideration of levels starting at \$250 that help support the costs of:**

- \$800: Newsletter Publication
- \$500: Intern Scholarship
- \$500: Health Forum Event
- \$2500: Year of Office Rent

**Thank You for Your Continued Support**

Please mail your 2026 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.

# The Action in Clean Water Action Council

By Crystal Brown

It has been a full schedule for Clean Water Action Council of Northeast Wisconsin this past fall. We have been taking an active role in spreading PFAS education in our community, advocating for clean water and sharing concerns for CAFO operations, and spending time reflecting on our work as an organization as we begin strategic planning activities to help direct our efforts and engage our members in feedback. We also took time to celebrate our 40th Anniversary and Dean Hoegger's retirement. I am excited for what winter and the New Year will bring for us as we continue to work to protect our environment and promote human health, even in some of these trying times.



CWAC Members celebrate as Vice President Charlie Frisk recounts 40 Years of Clean Water Action Council. Photo Credit: Crystal Brown



Fall Intern Isabella Kramer harvests fresh greens from Valentine Gardens for The Fridge community program. Photo Credit: Crystal Brown

I have been incredibly grateful for our Fall Intern Isabella Kramer, from St. Norbert College, as she has helped with creating educational materials and delivering presentations in our community, including developing youth curriculum for the students at Red Smith School in Green Bay. One of my most memorable experiences with her

this semester was when we visited Valentine Gardens to tour and discuss local sustainable agriculture, as well as help harvest greens for The Fridge, a community program that helps promote food security in our community.

In addition to our newsletters and email communications, during the last three months, your membership donations have supported the following work in our community:

## Legal Actions

### ***Gilbert Farms CAFO Permit - Door County***

In August, CWAC submitted a formal request for a public hearing, on behalf of our members and the community, regarding the proposed permit to expand the Gilbert Farms by over a thousand animals in the community



CWAC Board Member Debra Noel testifies at the Gilbert Farms CAFO Permit Hearing in front of WI-DNR staff. Photo Credit: Crystal Brown

of Sevastopol. On November 5, the first in-person public hearing since 2020 was held in Sturgeon Bay, WI. Over 400 people were in attendance in person and virtually.

CWAC Board Members Debra Noel and Jane Benson, along with Executive Director Crystal Brown, appeared in person to give public testimony. Local and state news sources covered the event and quoted CWAC. Additionally, CWAC Board Members submitted written public comment voicing opposition to this permit. We are now waiting for the DNR to review testimony. It may possibly take months for a final determination to be made. In the meantime, we will stay connected with local organizations and community members evaluating ways to advocate for public ordinances that help protect our waters and communities. CWAC will continue to monitor notices for new water pollution permits and renewals and send alerts to our readers via email.

Green Bay Press Gazette

Article: <https://www.greenbaypressgazette.com/story/news/local/door-co/2025/11/06/door-county-cafo-hearing-about-gilbert-farms-draws-large-crowd/87116750007/>

Wisconsin Public Radio

Article: <https://www.wpr.org/agriculture/door-county-cafo-hearing-gilbert-farms-sevastopol-dnr>



CWAC shows up to support clean water and our members at the Gilbert Farms CAFO Permit Hearing. Photo Credit: Hanna Lopez, NBC 26

### ***Sign-On Letters***

CWAC has signed-on to four letters from September to November, in regard to both state PFAS legislation for Wisconsin SB 127 & 128, concerns about the EPA Endangerment Finding, and support of Knowles-Nelson funding. We also voiced support of the Wisconsin Conservation Voters campaign for legislation regarding "Right to Know" for private well owners to be informed by the DNR of contamination risks in drinking water.

## Education and Outreach Efforts

### PFAS Education

We have spent much of our fall efforts on community outreach and education regarding PFAS contamination, in light of the September 4 announcement from the Wisconsin DNR for consumption advisories for the Bay of Green Bay and Town of Stella. We have sent letters to area hunting and angler organizations and health care organizations, offering presentations on PFAS contamination and associated health concerns. We PFAS presentations for the following groups:

- Green Bay Area Retired Men's Club (over 135 attendees)
- Red Smith School Wildlife and Animal Science 7-8 Grade Classes (over 80 students)
- Two Public Presentations at the Brown County Library – Central Branch



Fall Intern Isabella Kramer teaches students about the dangers of PFAS and Microplastics and how they harm pets.  
Photo Credit: Crystal Brown

We are securing additional presentations for the UW-Green Bay Lifelong Learning Institute, and recently had a request from the Wisconsin Waterfowl Association to prepare an article for their winter newsletter, after leadership from their Brown County Chapter attended one of our presentations.

### Additional Outreach

This fall we also connected with the Environmental Policy and Planning Association (EPPA) for UWGB Students. With the help of CWAC Board Member Peyton Zidlicky, a member of

## New PFAS Education Handouts

Special thanks goes to Fall Intern **Isabella Kramer** for her assistance in publishing these handouts that were inspired from feedback from our members at our PFAS Education Events. To request copies of these handouts electronically, to print at home or email out, or to get printed copies from our office, email us at [contact@cleanwateractioncouncil.org](mailto:contact@cleanwateractioncouncil.org)



EPPA, Executive Director Crystal Brown led Wildfood Hike for the EPPA students and informed them about CWAC and how to become involved with our efforts. Several of the EPPA Members are participating in CWAC's Book Club, featuring "Food Freedom" by Robin Greenfield. Students are assisting CWAC with the preparation of the December 6 event "An Afternoon with Robin Greenfield," that will be held at the Tarlton Theatre in Green Bay, WI.



Board Member Peyton Zidlicky encourages UWGB EPPA students to join CWAC's Book Club.  
Photo Credit: Crystal Brown



CWAC attends Downtown Green Bay Saturday Morning Farmers Market to connect with community members.  
Photo Credit: Debra Noel

On October 16, CWAC attended the Downtown Green Bay Saturday Farmers Market. It was wonderful seeing all of the CWAC members that stopped by to talk with Crystal. Board Member Debra Noel also visited and supported the event.

## **Actions to Protect and Monitor Water Quality**

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

We concluded the 2025 water sampling season in October, as part of the DNR's Lower Fox River Watershed Monitoring Program for water quality including levels of phosphorus. Fall Intern Isabella Kramer assisted with sampling. Please contact us if you are interested in joining us for 2026 Water Sampling at Baird Creek which will begin in May.

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

Water sampling for phosphorus concluded for the season in October. CWAC Board Member Debra Noel has also been collecting baseline stream monitoring data of the biotic index to help measure the health of Casco Creek. Other volunteers working with Debra assist with monitoring Three Mile Creek in Algoma and there may be additional volunteers starting this spring. Luxemburg Creek is also being sampled. Thanks to Debra and volunteer efforts, quality data of the health of the Kewaunee River basin is being collected.

## **Other Actions**

### **40th Anniversary Celebration and Dean Hoegger's Retirement Party**



VP Charlie Frisk presents President Dean Hoegger with an award for his many years of service to CWAC. Photo Credit: Crystal Brown

Approximately 45 of our CWAC members attended the celebration on October 7, 2025, at the Riverside Ballroom in Green Bay, Wisconsin. Vice President Charlie Frisk reflected on the key actions of our organization and gave special recognition to Board President Dean Hoegger, as well as former director Rebecca Katers. It was a special

evening, and we welcomed guests from the Baird Creek Preservation Foundation and Wisconsin Conservation Voters to join us in celebrating.

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

In addition to my representation of CWAC at the Community Waters Coalition - Citizen Advisory Committee, during this fall, I also attended the Areas of Concern Cross Agency Partnership Summit in Toledo, OH, from September 16-18, 2025. I was able to represent not only CWAC, but also the Community Waters Coalition Citizen Advisory Group and the Green Bay/Lower Fox River Watershed and community. I was joined by LuTia Vander Velden of NEW Leaf Foods and the Community Waters Coalition. We were able to tour restoration sites in the Toledo, Ohio area, as well as connect with other organizations focused on protecting water and promoting

connection to stewardship. On our visit, we also toured an urban, organic farm promoting sustainability and food security for residents of a neighborhood in Detroit, Michigan.

### **Strategic Planning Process**



CWAC Board Members gather at Jane Benson's home for strategic planning. Photo Credit: Crystal Brown

On October 1, 2025, the CWAC Board of Directors met for a Strategy Day Away to begin the process of strategic planning. CWAC has accomplished much in its last 40 years as an environmental non-profit. Strategic planning allows us to reflect on where we have been, and what actions our community needs for us to take to uphold our mission of protecting the environment and promoting health. We will be engaging our members for feedback on our efforts and look forward to your input. I am grateful for the support of all of our board as we engage in this process, but special thanks goes to Rick Adamski for our conversations and his guidance about this. Special thanks to Amanda Giannunzio for assisting in these efforts.

### **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>



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



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

# Protect Our Water Ways at Home

By John Gosling

One of the best ways to contribute to protecting our water is on the home front. Board Member John Gosling, an Appleton, Wisconsin, resident shared information about the city's "Storm Water Supporter Pledge." The pledge shares 47 ideas to help protect local water inlets. Even if you are not a resident of Appleton, you will find inspiration from this pledge. Are you a Green Bay resident? Consider "Adopting an Inlet" to protect your neighborhood's entry points into our watershed.

Take the City of Appleton Storm Water Supporter Pledge: <https://cms2.revize.com/revize/appletonwi/Documents/Public%20Works/City%20Hall/Stormwater/Stormwater%20Supporter%20Pledge%20Form%20Appendix%20C.pdf>

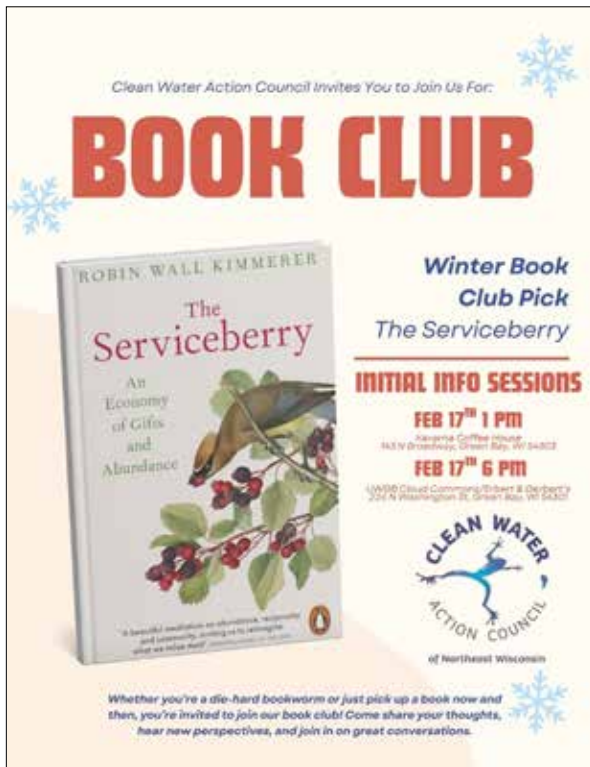
Adopt a City of Green Bay Inlet:  
<https://www.greenbaywi.gov/1573/Adopt-An-Inlet>

## Looking for Holiday Gifts?

Food and Yard Waste Composters, \$60  
Delivery and setup available in the Green Bay area.

Long and short sleeve T's, hoodies, and caps with CWAC frog logo, \$15-\$40

Contact us at [contact@cleanwateractioncouncil.org](mailto:contact@cleanwateractioncouncil.org) or 920-421-8885 for details.



## Winter Book Club: *The Serviceberry*

Robin Wall Kimmerer | Scribner, 2024

### *An Invitation to Join from Crystal Brown.*

I was grateful that my partner gifted me a copy of *The Serviceberry* this past winter holiday season. We had spent much of the mornings since the beginning of the calendar year reading excerpts on the days we shared coffee. What a delicious book this was.

For those of us already in a deep relationship with all our kin, this book is affirmation about the importance of those connections and praise to the gift economy. Mutual Aid. Reciprocity. I'd like to think we would be heading in a different direction as a collective if we got this into the hands of every municipal leader and educator.

If you haven't read it yet, please join us for our Winter CWAC Book Club. I'm looking forward to sharing this winter read with you all, and I promise to bring service-berries to one of our meetings. For those traveling a distance, we can have you join us via zoom.

The Fall Book Club sessions for *Food Freedom* by Robin Greenfield have held space for nourishing discussion, and we've been able to connect with local college students studying environmental policy in the process and prepare for the December 6 visit from Robin on his nationwide speaking tour. I look forward to connecting with our members more with this book club.

As part of this book club, we will also go on an outing in the spring to learn more about the serviceberry and the amazing gifts it has to share with all. We will schedule a wild food scouting trip to understand the life cycle of the plant, and how planting perennial foods like the serviceberry also have an impact on creating a sustainable environment.

Consider purchasing a copy at an independent bookstore (NOT AMAZON). Check out Birchbark Books, an Indigenous-owned bookstore out of the Twin Cities (they ship), or from a local community supporter, such as Lion's Mouth Books. There are also two copies available via the Brown County Library system for rental.

[https://birchbarkbooks.com/products/the-serviceberry?\\_pos=1&\\_sid=b7e54abc1&\\_ss=r](https://birchbarkbooks.com/products/the-serviceberry?_pos=1&_sid=b7e54abc1&_ss=r)

[https://lionsmouthbookstore.com/item/gQpiPqSJBXgrecZAv\\_7cZQ](https://lionsmouthbookstore.com/item/gQpiPqSJBXgrecZAv_7cZQ)

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**Thursday, April 23, 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM**

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

Riverside Ballroom, 1560 Main St., Green Bay

Join fellow CWAC for an evening of dining and bidding for the environment, while connecting with fellow members and guests. 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. More details to be announced in our spring newsletter.

**Thursday, January 15, 6:30 PM - 7:30 PM**

**CWAC Presents: The Hidden Threat - The Dangers of Microplastics**

Brown County Library – Central Branch, 515 Pine Street, Green Bay

The poster features a blue background with yellow and white text. At the top, it reads 'The Hidden Threat: The Dangers of Microplastics' in large, bold letters. Below this, it says 'A PRESENTATION BY DEAN HOEGGER, BOARD PRESIDENT OF CLEAN WATER ACTION COUNCIL'. A circular inset photo shows Dean Hoegger speaking into a microphone. To the left of the photo is a white plastic bottle. At the bottom, it lists the meeting location: 'Meeting Room 1 & 2, Brown County Central Library' and the date: 'Thursday, January 15, 2026 | 6:30 PM - 7:30 PM | 515 Pine Street, Green Bay, WI 54301'. A small CWAC logo is in the bottom right corner.

A presentation by Dean Hoegger, Board President of CWAC. Tiny plastics, enormous impact. Microplastics are now found in our water, food, air, and even our bodies. This presentation will uncover how these invisible pollutants threaten human health, wildlife, and the environment—and what we can do to stop them at the source.

Wisconsin, 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. To learn more about LLI and this program, go to: <https://www.uwgb.edu/lifelong-learning-institute/>

**Wednesday, February 25, 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM**

**What is an AOC? Learn About the Green Bay and Fox River Watershed**

UW-Green Bay Lifelong Learning Institute (LLI)

Members from the Community Water Coalition, a community advisory committee that works with the WI DNR for the Green Bay and Fox River Watershed Area of Concern (AOC) will present on Green Bay's very own AOC. Learn about the history of the program, including PCB clean up, and the many projects taking place in our community to restore healthy waters and habitats, and how you can be involved and enjoy them. To learn more about LLI and this program, go to: <https://www.uwgb.edu/lifelong-learning-institute/>

**Wednesday, February 25, 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM**

**Baird Creek Preservation Foundation Annual Banquet**

The Rock Garden Weddings & Event Venue, 1951 Bond St, Green Bay

Join in community for an event that supports the organization that protects one of the area's greatest outdoor gems, the Baird Creek Parkway. CWAC's Executive Director Crystal Brown will be the keynote presenter, speaking about "Building Community Through our Connection with Plants," while focusing on how our relationships with plants as food and medicine can influence restoration efforts. To learn more and to register, go to: <https://bairdcreek.org>

**Tuesday-Saturday, March 10-14**

**National Water Quality Monitoring Council (NWQMC) 14th National Monitoring Conference**

KI Convention Center, Green Bay

This conference serves as a national forum for water professionals to discuss monitoring of various water bodies, including Great Lakes, groundwater, streams, rivers, lakes, wetlands, estuaries, and oceans. To learn more, go to: <https://nwqmcconference.org/>

**Saturdays, January 3 & 31, February 14, 9:30 AM - 3:00 PM**

**Seed Packing with the Brown County Seed Library**

Brown County Central Library, 515 Pine Street, Green Bay

Volunteer to clean and pack seeds for the Brown County Seed Library. To learn more and to register, go to: <https://www.newleaffoods.org/events>

**Friday-Sunday, February 13-15, 2026**

**Garden & Green Living Expo**

Alliant Energy Center, Madison, WI

This expo features exhibitors and presentations on gardening, sustainable living, and environmental conservation. For more information, go to: <https://pbswisconsin.org/events/garden-green-living-expo-2026/>

**Wednesday, January 14, 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM**

**Protecting Your Family From PFAS Contamination**

UW-Green Bay Lifelong Learning Institute (LLI)

Crystal Brown of Clean Water Action Council of Northeast

## Call For Volunteers

Are you looking for ways to get involved in our community to help protect our environment and promote health? Perhaps you are seeking ways to connect with other like-minded and valued CWAC members or the community. Consider joining our efforts. We are looking for support with some of the following activities:

- WPDES Permit Reviewer
- Annual Banquet Planning Committee
- Annual Banquet Silent Auction Assistance
- Office Support
- Event Support

Take this brief survey to share what ways you would like to take part in our mission, email us at [contact@cleanwateractioncouncil.org](mailto:contact@cleanwateractioncouncil.org), or call at (920) 421-8885.

## Seeking Spring & Summer Interns

We are seeking student interns interested in working in environmental science and policy, health, and non-profits. For more information on current internships, go to: [https://www.cleanwateractioncouncil.org/employment/files/CWAC\\_Internship\\_Opportunities.pdf](https://www.cleanwateractioncouncil.org/employment/files/CWAC_Internship_Opportunities.pdf)



## 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!*

*Thank you to...*

**Mick and Marilyn Sagrillo**  
for their generous support of our work.

~  
**Packers Concession  
Volunteers**

~  
**Water Sampling  
Volunteers**

# Join or Renew Your Membership to Clean Water Action Council for 2026!

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

- ( ) \$25 Individual    ( ) \$50 Sustaining (this amount would really help)  
( ) \$35 Family    ( ) \$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 \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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## Receive FREE newsletters with each membership.

Please choose one...     Printed version     E-mailed version

### Send check or money order to:

Clean Water Action Council  
P.O. Box 9144  
Green Bay, WI 54308

### To pay with a credit card or to make a monthly contribution, please go to:

<https://www.cleanwateractioncouncil.org/membership/>

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

### PLEASE VOLUNTEER!

(BE SURE TO PROVIDE PHONE NUMBER ABOVE)

- the newsletter     events     work at office     mailings  
 other \_\_\_\_\_

### 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.

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*Contributions may be tax-deductible.*

### STAFF MEMBERS

**Crystal Brown**  
Executive Director

### BOARD MEMBERS

**Dean Hoegger**, President  
Door County  
920-495-5127

**Charlie Frisk**, Vice President  
Brown County  
920-406-6572

**John Hermanson**, Treasurer  
Door County  
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**Peyton Zidlicky**  
Student Representative

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**Crystal Brown**, Editor  
**Bev Watkins**, Graphic Design

To become a member of CWAC, go to  
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### CONTACT US

**By phone: 920-421-8885**

*If you leave us a message, we will try  
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Clean Water Action Council  
P.O. Box 9144, Green Bay, WI 54308

**By e-mail:**

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**TIME TO RENEW  
FOR 2026**

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