Clean Water Action Council

OF NORTHEAST WISCONSIN

Celebrating 36 years of working to protect public health and the environment in Northeast Wisconsin

SPRING 2021

Waste Not, Want Not.

Seeking a Zero Waste Economy

Introduction by CWAC President Dean Hoegger

It will take producers, consumers, businesses, and the support of governments to help us achieve a sustainable level of waste, which is often referred to as Zero Waste. It does not mean any waste, but is the effort to reduce what is sent to a landfill or incinerated. It is defined by the Zero Waste International Alliance as, "The conservation of all resources by means of responsible production, consumption, reuse, and recovery of products, packaging, and materials without burning and with no discharges to land, water, or air that threaten the environment or human health."

The effort to achieve waste reduction is often referred to as travelling the road to Zero Waste. In recent years, we believe that road has become less travelled, and we now need to make a greater effort to get back on the road. Zero Waste and climate change concerns are interrelated. Reducing our waste stream by getting closer to the top of the zero waste triangle can also reduce climate change emissions.

In 2012, CWAC convinced

We can reduce climate change emissions by reducing production of waste.
Image courtesy of www.beagreencommuter.com

the City of Green Bay to rescind a permit for a waste-to-energy incinerator. The proponents claimed they could use municipal solid waste (MSW) to produce electricity without any emissions. But in addition to the greenhouse gasses that would be produced, an additional 19 toxic emissions would have been emitted; and then there was the left over burnt waste, or char, as it was called. City council members who promoted the project asked us, "if we cannot 'recycle' it this way, what then?"

Therefore, it became our mission to educate the council and the public that waste-to-energy is not recycling. It would be like saying that when we burn fossil fuels we are recycling them. So, in search for alternatives to incineration and landfilling, we attended a Zero Waste conference to learn from the experts.

The conference brought forth a series of actions, including two newsletters titled, *Moving Toward Zero Waste: A Goal for Northeast Wisconsin to Embrace* in Summer, 2012, and then in Winter, 2018, *We Are Drowning in Plastic! Join the Efforts to Reduce Plastic Waste*. In 2013, we co-hosted a speaker, Dr. Paul Connett, a retired professor of environmental chemistry and toxicology at St. Lawrence University and author of *The Zero Waste Solution, Untrashing the Planet One Community at a Time.*

At that time, with the help of other individuals, we co-founded the Northeast Wisconsin Zero Waste Coalition and also became an active member of the Northeast Wisconsin Food Waste Task Force. As more recycling was initiated by the counties, including food waste drop off, we turned our attention to other environmental concerns. However, here we are eight years later with what seems to be little progress on the road to zero waste.

Some communities have set ambitious zero waste goals. San Francisco diverted 80% of its waste from the landfill in 2012 and proposed 100% diversion by 2020. Austin, Texas, set a goal of a diversion rate of 90% by 2040. New York has committed to becoming a zero waste city by 2030 by focusing on organics collection and composting, single stream recycling, and making public housing and public schools zero waste compliant. Ambitious goals, but the evidence suggests that some of this diverted waste, while not going into local landfills, is not being recycled.

The EPA reports that about 68% of paper and paperboard were recycled in the U.S. in 2018. And sadly, that material had the highest rate of recycling. Glass for instance had a recycling rate of 31% but only accounted for about 4% of all municipal solid waste that year. The 4% shows how plastic has taken over the food container market, replacing products that were previously sold in glass. Unfortunately, plastics have the lowest rate of recycling at about 10%.

But, where does our recycled plastic go? The symbol on plastic food containers are often mistaken by consumers as indicating the container can be recycled. Many environmentalists believe this was a purposeful effort by the plastic and petroleum industries to make consumers believe that they were buying a product in a container that could be recycled. The symbol actually indicates the type of plastic resin.

While a small percentage of plastic resins can be recycled, there is growing evidence that some are not. CBC/Radio Canada investigators found that Canadian plastic going to Malaysian companies was being burned after sorting out the higher-value plastic. This was also true for the plastic we sent to China for decades, but it was causing so much pollution that China banned plastic waste imports. Investigators also found that some recycled plastic was ending up in Canadian landfills.

There are similar findings here in the U.S. An investigation by the *Guardian* revealed that in Los Angeles County recycling facilities are separating mixed plastics, retaining only higher-value resins found in water bottles, milk jugs, and laundry detergent bottles. The rest are going to landfills or to incinerators. Honolulu is also considering incineration as a solution.

Fortunately, incineration of municipal collected recyclables is banned in Wisconsin, according to Brown County Resource Recovery Director Mark Walter. However, there is a renewed effort by the incinerator equipment industry to promote waste-to-energy, but now with portable units. MSW or industrial wastes are slated for energy recovery in the Wisconsin recycling hierarchy.

Wisconsin Hierarchy of Waste Options

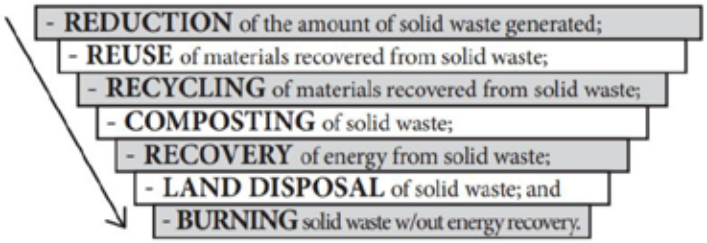

Image courtesy of WDNR.

But with the decline in the plastic market since China's pull out, northeast Wisconsin will likely see more single-stream recycled plastic destined for the landfill. The Guardian reported on dozens of cities that are either landfilling plastic previously marked for recycling, or are stockpiling it, or are simply directing residents to put it in garbage bins.

Stockpiling plastic and illegal dumping pose serious health risks. As plastic breaks down, it becomes microplastic, contaminating our soil and water bodies. The Public Broadcasting System (PBS) reports that there will be more plastic than fish in the oceans. Researchers are growing concerned that the resulting microplastic is able to pass into the flesh of fish and then biomagnifies right up the food chain to humans.(See in this issue, *The Great Lakes Are Swimming in Microplastics*, page 6)

Fortunately, there are many solutions on the horizon. For instance, Reed College graduate student Morgan Vague experimented with naturally occurring bacteria that are

shown to breakdown plastic. Adding plastic to road construction materials is being studied. The plastic sidewalk industry has been able to make use of hard-to-recycle industry waste. Prototypes are being developed for removing plastic from the oceans.

Unfortunately, the plastics industry, responsible for producing some the most difficult to recycle waste for over 70 years, is using its lobbying power to influence state lawmakers nationwide, including here in Wisconsin. In 2016, Wisconsin Republicans passed a bill that prevented municipalities from banning any bag, cup, bottle, can, or other packaging designed to be reusable or single-use. Similar laws have been passed in a dozen other states.

Clearly, in order to move closer to a zero waste economy, we will need to seek solutions at the top of the zero waste hierarchy. As consumers, we need to make better sustainable product choices that also send a message to manufacturers; they need to design out wastes or make the waste truly recyclable, not once but over and over. As voters, we need to send a message to elected officials as well; we need more waste take-back rules for industry and more money for science research to solve waste problems, so we can get back on the road to zero waste.

The Art of Marketing by the Fossil Fuel Industry Is a Challenge to Zero Waste

By Katie Hieb, UW-Green Bay Student Intern

Reducing our own personal waste by living with less is an idea within the Zero-Waste movement to preserve the environment. Zero-waste encompasses a lifestyle of understanding our consumption and waste patterns, and reducing them to little or none. When striving for zero-waste, it is critical that we not only look at individual consumption, but also how members of our society have developed habits of over-consumption due to market deception.

We need to place responsibility on the companies that have the largest role in misleading the public; making them think individual consumers are the problem. Yet, it is these very companies who produced products and packaging that are difficult to recycle.

A basic zero-waste strategy is to evaluate our personal carbon footprint. Defined by the World Health Organization, "a carbon footprint is a measure of the impact your activities have on the amount of carbon dioxide (CO^2) produced through the burning of fossil fuels and is expressed as a weight of CO^2 emissions produced in tonnes." We have seen the idea of a carbon footprint expressed as calculators, showing how our own emissions are impacting the climate crisis. If we look deeper into who first coined this term, we see that the carbon footprint was actually a marketing tactic invented by oil companies.

Carbon footprint
Photo courtesy of Didier Vidal on flickr: https://www.flickr.com/search/?text=carbon%20footprint

The term carbon footprint was an ad campaign produced by oil giant BP in 2004 as a way to shift the focus away from the fossil fuel industry and put responsibility on the individual consumer. Yet, a carbon disclosure project report written by Dr. Paul Griffon states that "over half of global industrial emissions since human-induced climate change was officially recognized, can be traced to just 25 corporate and state producing entities." While over half of the total carbon emissions can be linked to only a handful of companies, the push to reduce our carbon consumption is put on the consumer instead of the companies that are producing the most CO^2.

The carbon footprint idea is now accepted everywhere as a great way to track our own emissions and waste, but the use of the term is flawed. No matter how much we try to limit our own consumption, it will make little difference if we do not require greater carbon reductions by the fossil fuel industry.

Another deceit by fossil fuel companies is seen in recycling. By the 1960s, recycling took hold as a mainstream convenient way to dispose of our waste. Martin Melosi, author of *Fresh Kills: A History of Consuming and Discarding in New York City*, states, "As the environmental movement begins to take hold on a national scale, recycling was seen as a personal manifestation of helping the environment."

Recycling, when done right, offers an incentive to the plastic problem. Yet, it is reported by the Environmental Protection Agency that in 2018, only 8.7 percent of all plastic was actually recycled. The sad truth of our recycling system is that it is cheaper to keep producing more plastics than to recycle them. While very few plastic products are cost effective to recycle, the chasing arrows recycling symbol can be found on almost every plastic product.

Plastic symbol codes
Photo courtesy of Forge Recycling
https://www.forgerecycling.co.uk/blog/why-cant-all-plastic-be-recycled/

The main ingredient of most plastic is a derivative of crude oil and natural gas. Because there are many different types of plastic, a system was devised to classify the plastic types. This system of labeling numbers 1 through 7 in a recycling symbol was created by the fossil fuel industry only to identify the chemicals and substances making up the plastic.

Having the chasing arrow symbol misleads consumers, creating more harm than good. A report done by Orion Donovan Smith, writer for *Frontline*, states that out of the seven identifying numbers, about two of those are feasible to recycle. As long as this symbol stays on these products, it will jeopardize the entire recycling system.

An online poll conducted by the Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries, reported that 65 percent of the respondents said they do not understand what plastics are acceptable in their curbside collection. The fossil fuel and plastic industry have capitalized on the public confusion of consumers believing most plastic is recyclable.

While it is crucial that we cut our consumption by applying zero-waste principles, we need to continue to place pressure on fossil fuel and plastic manufacturing companies to stop misleading the public about their products being recyclable. We must demand that their products are designed to truly be recycled. A zero-waste lifestyle on a large scale will have a profound impact, but the largest contributors to the climate crisis will still mislead the public to promote their own interests. We need to be aware of their tactics to fight for a more sustainable world.

Let's Make the Zero Waste Movement Intersectional

By McKenzie McDermott, UW-Green Bay Student Intern

As the world faces the increasing impacts of climate change, zero-waste lifestyles have become a way for many to be more mindful of their consumer habits and reduce how much of their trash actually ends up in the landfill. While this is a great way to reduce personal environmental impact, a zero-waste lifestyle is not realistic for everyone. Throughout 2020, the term intersectionality was used frequently, and while it may have been a new vocabulary term for most, intersectionality is not a new concept.

The term intersectionality was coined in 1989 by Kimberlé W. Crenshaw, a civil rights activist and legal scholar, and is defined as "the complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism, and classism) combine, overlap, or intersect, especially in the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups." While the term was initially intended to discuss the intersection of race and gender, it can be used to discuss the intersection of many topics – including race and environmental justice. When discussing the topic of environmentalism or zero-waste lifestyles and how it intersects with marginalized groups, it is clear that

Image by McKenzie McDermott

representation is lacking.

Briana Erin Avila dissects her own zero-waste journey as a white woman through the lenses of intersectionality and representation. She found that the zero-waste movement was primarily dominated by white, middle class, able-bodied young people. The most significant barrier to achieving zero-waste is access. Avila states that "access looks like different things to different people and is affixed to intersectionality."

In addition to barriers such as lack of transportation access, proximity to zero-waste options like bulk grocery, financial access, and time, there are several additional barriers tied to human identity. Barriers tied to identity can include race, ethnicity, nation, gender, sexual identity, ability, socioeconomic status, age, and more. These barriers are incredibly significant for communities that are already at a disadvantage or experiencing environmental racism.

Environmental racism refers to the rules, regulations, policies, or government decisions that deliberately target certain communities, resulting in disproportionate exposure to environmental hazards. According to a 2018 report released by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), communities of color and low-income communities are disproportionately located near landfills or hazardous waste sites. These communities are also more likely to experience high levels of pollution exposure and may not have safe access to drinking water and other necessities.

High levels of pollution exposure can result in medical complications, medical bills, reduced property values, and reduced life expectancy. What is even more startling is that 95% of claims brought against polluters by communities of color are denied by the EPA. In addition, more than 23 million Americans live in areas known as food deserts, or areas that do not have access to supermarkets or affordable healthy food options. The food that can be found in these areas is usually unhealthy and packaged heavily in plastic, making it nearly impossible to reduce waste. While a zero-waste lifestyle is a great way to be conscious about consumption and waste, the expectation cannot be applied to communities that are already at a disadvantage.

"It's important to take into account which communities are already struggling to be protected equally by environmental laws so they can have equal access to a safe environment." - Leah Thomas

Leah Thomas, an advocate for intersectional environmentalism and environmental justice, created the Intersectional Environmentalist platform to be an "inclusive version of environmentalism that advocates for both the protection of people and the planet." Thomas wants the platform to amplify the voices of the most vulnerable while educating others about oppression to advocate for an equitable future for all. The zero-waste movement goes beyond swapping plastic straws with reusables or bringing a coffee cup from home.

Truly being zero-waste involves understanding privilege and recognizing the barriers to equality in our community. When working to achieve zero-waste, it is important to recognize the systems of oppression that may prevent others from doing so and advocate for a more equitable environmental movement.

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Trash Incinerators – A Rose by Any Other Name

By John Filcher

With a new election cycle, we often see a new federal regime in Washington D.C. that intends to pursue its new goals. Accordingly, the new Biden Administration has signaled an interest in pursuing a new green agenda. But is that entire agenda really good for the environment?

The array of potential projects is comprehensive and potentially innovative, spanning from recycling to alternative energy production. As we saw here in Brown County during the last presidential administration with a big emphasis on a green agenda, the possibility of scoring greenbacks often attracts purveyors of dubious greenwashing schemes to chase carelessly spent federal and state funding.

As we learned the last time, not every project is beneficially innovative. Our government leaders should be reminded to remain skeptical of old industries pitching new solution opportunities to old problems where the only true innovation is the new, trendy jargon being used to sell the project. We saw this happen right here with a proposed trash incinerator beginning back in 2010.

December 2011 billboard which the Oneida Seven Generations Corp threatened a lawsuit over.

That one project would have created all sorts of harmful effects. It was so costly, the millions it would have diverted would have ended Brown County's legitimate recycling program. In addition, that trash incinerator would have spewed highly contaminated toxic wastewater directly into the bay and spread harmful ash and gas into our air. All for a project whose purveyors repeatedly tried to claim was a green, waste-to-energy recycling facility, but which really would have thrown away millions to transform trash into air, water and ground toxins. It took until 2018 for that proposed project, and the lawsuits between the developers and the City of Green Bay, to finally go away.

Trendy labels for incineration processes are just distinctions without a difference – incineration isn't recycling.

To get a new publicly funded trash incinerator, the industry has a well-earned reputation for deploying several types of rhetorical red herrings as a device intended to divert the public's attention from the real issues. One of the primary red herrings is trendy sounding labels to portray the incineration process as advanced, beneficial and green. Technical sounding but unfamiliar jargon like Gasification, Pyrolysis, Laser Arc, and Waste-to-Energy were favored in past years, each featuring slightly different processes that do little to avoid creating pollution and harmful secondary impacts.

The catchy new terminology that seems to be catching is labeling the basic process "organic recycling" that somehow produces "renewable natural gas" despite the presence of huge amounts of non-organic municipal solid waste in the feedstock.

Such industry semantics are really just attempts to draw minor rhetorical distinctions which ultimately lack meaningful differences because incineration generally just means reduction to ash without specifying a particular thermal method by which that is accomplished. The reality is incineration schemes have never been able to avoid the inherent liabilities that occur when trash is reduced to fly ash, char, and wastewater. Regardless of the trendy label affixed to their choice of incineration methodology, those liabilities inevitably include: hauling dirty trash in to the incinerator, reducing the trash to create significant quantities of toxic fly ash and char, and producing hazardous amounts

of toxic waste water and air pollution that eventually must be released into the environment by all incinerators.

What should we make of any proposed project featuring that sort of slippery rhetoric? A good rule of thumb is the less candor a developer displays, the higher the likelihood the project is not something you want near your home. Since Wisconsin law fails to protect the public from these projects and we are facing the dawn of another new era of green government emphasis, it is likely we may see new proposals for our area. Instead of being deceived by wasteful trash incineration schemes which will falsely be described by slippery rhetoric carefully chosen to convey the appearance of benign entrepreneurship, we should seek to encourage legitimate efforts to clean up our environment. It will be up to a well-informed public to help our regulators distinguish between acceptable recycling solutions, and dangerous proposals that directly or indirectly threaten our environment.

In Wisconsin, our recycling infrastructure leaves plenty of room for improvement. Currently, only two types of plastic in the waste stream, rigid No. 1 and No. 2 plastics are recycled while the rest are still destined for the landfill. As plastics and uses for plastics aren't going to just disappear, an informed public will encourage the development of new technology that would allow us to recycle more kinds of plastic. Some of those new technologies range from designer solvents to separate specific types of plastics polymers, to plastics eating microbes, to changes in the formula of certain plastics to allow them to biodegrade over time.

While plastics certainly aren't the only form of pollutants in our society's waste stream, their sheer volume alone presents a major challenge for efforts to have a cleaner environment. Until viable new solutions become available, it behooves all of us to remain vigilant to guard against fake schemes that will damage our environment or drain funding away from legitimate recycling solutions.

About the author:
John Filcher, a CWAC member, is a graduate of the University of South Dakota, and received his Juris Doctor from the University of South Dakota law school in 1992. Filcher has served as co-chair of Incinerator Free Brown County for the past eleven years, and recently penned a book about IFBC's successful campaign against a proposed incinerator in Brown County titled Red Herrings - A Cautionary Journey for Citizen Opposition Groups. In addition to serving with IFBC, Filcher was previously chairman of Forward Ashwaubenon, which successfully advocated for construction of the new Ashwaubenon Performing Arts Center, aquatic center and village community center. He is a father of three Ashwaubenon High School graduates. When he is off duty, he can be found enjoying bike rides on our local roads and trails.

Editor's note:
To learn more about gasification incineration projects in Wisconsin including the mobile Gasification Project Operating in Butler, Wisconsin go to the Waukesha County Environmental Action League's website at https://www.weal.org

The Great Lakes Are Swimming in Microplastics

By Jim Wagner

Research the past several years has highlighted the increasing quantities of microplastics found in everything from our oceans to tap and bottled water. Studies have shown ocean microplastic sediment doubling every 15 years, enough so that future archeologists will be able to record our plastics use through fossil records.

Welcome to the Plasticene, where like the Bronze and Iron Ages, our reliance on plastic has come to define our time on this planet.

Until recently, Midwest residents didn't have much insight into whether that ocean trend translated to our back yard: The Great Lakes. Earlier this year, the United States Geological Survey (USGS) published a report showing microplastics presence throughout Lake Michigan and Lake Erie sediment. It's the third in a series of studies conducted the past five years by the agency to find out how prevalent microplastics are in the world's greatest freshwater resource.

What makes this research significant is that while microplastic presence in the marine environment has been extensively studied, there has not been nearly as much research on freshwater resources like the Great Lakes. A USGS study in 2016 evaluated water surface samples from 29 Great Lake tributaries and found microplastic fibers to be the dominant particle morphology (type). This was unexpected, given previous studies of water surface samples from the offshore Great Lakes did not find fibers to be prevalent.

USGS scientist Pete Lenaker takes velocity measurements and microplastic samples at mid-depth within the water column on the Menomonee River. (Credit: Molly Breitmun, USGS).

This left an important unanswered question: Where do the fibers go once discharged into the Great Lakes? The USGS pursued this question by investigating the vertical distribution of microplastics and sampling the water surface, within the water column, and in the sediment. Plastic microfiber particles were abundant in the water column and the sediment. Combined, the three publications indicate that plastic fibers such as polyester, nylon, and cellulose acetate, among others, are suspended in the water column of rivers due to turbulent flows, but settle out and are deposited in bottom sediment when the river flows into the more quiescent Great Lakes.

Peter Lenaker, a physical scientist with the USGS' Upper Midwest Water Science Center and the lead author of the study, said it's important to understand any differences in microplastics behavior between freshwater

USGS scientists Pete Lenaker, left, and Nic Buer collect a water surface sample for microplastics at the Manitowoc River. (Credit: Austin Baldwin, USGS).

and marine environments. For example, if a plastic fiber is positively buoyant and floats on the surface in saltwater, is that also the case in freshwater?

"What we learn and understand as it relates to microplastics in marine environments may not be the case for freshwater environments, and studies specific to freshwater are important for increasing our understanding of microplastics in the environment," he said.

The report seems to bear out the assumptions that lower-density plastics tend to stay at the surface or upper water column, though some will eventually make their way to the Great Lakes floor. Their source is only too obvious – tributaries, storm water runoff, atmospheric deposition, and wastewater treatment plants (WWTP). USGS sampling showed the presence of microplastics in every sample collected from the three different studies, but determining the quantity and types of microplastics contributed from specific sources requires more research. The USGS is expected to conduct more microplastics sampling in 2022 in Milwaukee to gain more insight into the sources of microplastics.

For more information on the three USGS studies, you can access them here:

Plastic Debris in 29 Great Lakes Tributaries: Relations to Watershed Attributes and Hydrology: https://pubs.acs.org/doi/10.1021/acs.est.6b02917 (2016)

Vertical Distribution of Microplastics in the Water Column and Surficial Sediment from the Milwaukee River Basin to Lake Michigan: https://pubs.acs.org/doi/10.1021/acs.est.9b03850 (2019)

Separate research on the source, spread and impacts from microplastics in the Great Lakes is also underway on the other side of Wisconsin. A joint effort between the University of Wisconsin-Superior, UW-Eau Claire, UW-Madison and the Lake Superior National Estuarine Research Reserve will examine the issue in Lake Superior and the St. Louis River Estuary.

The effects of microplastics on human health are not specifically known, but it can't be good. A report published earlier this month indicates that chemical additives in plastics are particularly worrying, such as:

- Bisphenol A (BPA) used as a flame retardant and to make household products and food packaging, contain endocrine disruptors that are harmful if swallowed. BPA released from polyvinyl chloride (PVC) microplastics has also been found to influence the anaerobic digestion of waste-activated sludge.
- Phthalates are an additive that give plastics more flexibility and another endocrine disruptor; four types of phthalates are banned in the European Union.
- Heavy metals, though naturally occurring, are used as heat stabilizers/flame retardants, and as biocides, and have been linked to increased risk of breast cancer and lung, skin, liver, bladder and kidney damage.

While the risk when taken individually might be low, when ingested, say, through drinking contaminated water, the risk factor increases the higher up the food chain you travel. As fish and other marine life bioaccumulate the microplastics in their bodies, humans eat and collect microplastic chemicals from those same fish and other marine life through biomagnification. As microplastics become more pervasive in the Great Lakes and elsewhere, the more concentrated harmful effects will eventually make their way into the human body.

As with most environmental hazards, Wisconsin has limited success slowing down the spread of microplastics into our waterways. In 2015, the state passed a law banning the manufacture and sale of microbeads – used for toothpastes and exfoliating personal care products - in the state, joining Illinois, New Jersey and Indiana in ultimately protecting the Great Lakes.

What Can You Do?

Our elected officials need to be more aware of the potential hazards and increased presence of microplastics in our freshwater resources, not just the Great Lakes but our groundwaters, rivers and lakes. Contact your local representatives today and ask for their support. To protect you and your family, following are some tips to reduce the amount you ingest:

1. Stop using bottled water and buy a water filter with a micron rating of 2 or less
2. Buy eco-friendly clothes
3. Get a laundry ball to catch microfibers in your washer
4. Air dry, don't use the dryer
5. Reduce meat and fish consumption
6. Use public transportation (tire rubber wear is a significant source of microplastics)

Suggestions for Living a More Zero Waste Lifestyle

By Carol Pearson

The goal of a zero-waste lifestyle is to reduce your carbon footprint by sending no trash to the local landfill. Although it may sound like too great a challenge, you can take simple steps that are very easy. You can reduce your waste output and also save money doing so.

Here are some suggestions:

1. **Try to avoid plastic packaging whenever possible.** Plastic isn't really recycled, it instead undergoes a process called "downcycled." This means plastic is turned into lower quality forms of plastic until it cannot be downcycled further. Then it ends up in landfills. Products packaged in aluminum cans, glass, and paper can be recycled indefinitely. With these types of materials there is no degradation in the quality of the material.

2. **Stop using disposable materials or products.** Purchase a good quality metal or glass water bottle or thermos instead of cases of bottled water or coffee at the drive-through in disposable containers. Use cloth napkins instead of paper ones. Purchase metal or bamboo straws instead of plastic ones. Go old school and use a handkerchief instead of tissues. This will save you about $48 a year for what the average person spends on tissues. Switch to a safety razor instead of using disposable ones.

3. **Try shopping for secondhand items first instead of purchasing new.** When purchasing new clothing consider if you really need it. Always buy quality instead of cheap or trendy. This goes for children's toys, too. Purchase toys of classic quality instead of plastic cheap ones.

4. **Reduce your food waste by consuming those leftovers** or adjust to make only as much as you and your family can consume in one meal.

5. **Set up a countertop compost bin for food waste.** If you have the outdoor space, set up a compost bin or pile. If that is not possible, find a neighbor who could make use of your food waste. You can also try indoor vermicomposting which uses worms to quickly change the organic matter into compost. There is a long list of organic materials that can be composted: fruit and vegetable scraps, coffee grounds, crushed eggshells, clippings from disease-free houseplants or bouquets, tea bags, unbleached paper such as unbleached coffee filters, leaves, grass clippings, and cotton/linen/wool clothing. The cotton/linen clothing can also be used as a weed barrier under mulch around your shrubs or plantings. (see in this newsletter "Keep food waste out of our landfills. Compost it at home!" and the Food Waste Composting Workshop poster.)

6. **Consider donating your used cooking oil** to a biodiesel fuel site since it cannot be composted or poured down the drain.

7. **Avoid plastic bags if at all possible**. Instead, use bags made from cloth, mesh, canvas, or consider reusable cardboard boxes. If your grocery store doesn't allow you to use your own bags, take your groceries to your car and bag them there. You can buy a canvas unbleached bag from CWAC. They are $7.00 pick up or $10 mailed.

8. **Buy in bulk when possible**. Bulk groceries will save money and use a lot less packaging than purchasing in small or single serving packages.

9. **Bring your own lunch and utensils to work or school.** This will help reduce the 100 pounds of trash each person on average generates annually from takeout packaging and disposable plastic utensils.

10. **Make your own multipurpose cleaner** instead of purchasing cleaners in disposable containers. A standard one is 1 cup of water, ½ cup of white distilled vinegar, and 10-20 drops of essential oil such as lemon, tea tree, eucalyptus, or lavender.

11. **Refuse anything you do not need**, especially single-use plastic items like straws, bags, free pens at expos, etc. If you consume less, less will be produced and therefore less waste.

12. **Dig out some of those old t-shirts** from the back of your closet and use them in place of sponges and paper towels. They are completely free, multipurpose and can be washed and reused much longer than the sponges.

13. **Switch from plastic wrap to beeswax wraps**. You can wash and use the wraps forever instead of the single-use plastic wrap.

14. **Instead of buying single-use dryer sheets, switch to wool dryer balls**. They will have the same effect with fewer chemicals, and a few drops of essential oil can be added in place of fabric softeners or artificial fragrances.

15. **Use items until they are worn out or no longer work** rather than only until it goes out of fashion or a new model is released.

Remember, none of these changes will happen overnight. It will take time to implement them into your everyday life. An easy way to begin is by replacing already purchased disposable items with sustainable ones as they are consumed.

For a deeper understanding of this topic, try reading *Zero Waste Home* by Bea Johnson or watch one of her TED talks. Another suggestion is *101 Ways to go Zero Waste* by Kathryn Kellogg.

Keep food waste out of our landfills. Compost it at home!

By Dean Hoegger

When it comes to recycling, much of what we can recycle is often beyond our control. Manufacturers produce packaging that has no recycling markets or requires great expense to do so. However, when it comes to the food waste created in our kitchens, it need not leave our property to be recycled, even in if we are renters. We can choose to be in complete control with just a little planning and the right equipment.

We can use our home food waste, which is generally defined as plate waste, inedible fruit and vegetable parts, and spoiled foods to create compost. Mature compost is a stable material with content called humus that is dark brown or black and has a soil-like, earthy smell. When producing compost, the emphasis is on plant wastes. However, eggshells, coffee grounds and filters, and paper towels are common kitchen wastes that can be composted.

Finished compost.
Photo courtesy of EPA.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimated that more food reached U.S. landfills and combustion facilities than any other single material in 2018. You can choose not to be part of that statistic. Compost your food waste! "When food goes to the landfill, it's similar to tying food in a plastic bag. The nutrients in the food never return to the soil. The wasted food rots and produces methane gas," according to the EPA.

Methane is a powerful greenhouse gas that traps heat 28 to 36 times more effectively than carbon dioxide over a 100 year period and is largely responsible for about 23% of climate change in the 20th century. While there are many sources of methane being released to the atmosphere, some natural, some from human activities, your food waste should not be a contributor. Proper home composting can alleviate your food waste as a source of methane.

While there are federal and state rules requiring the capture of methane from landfills, the EPA estimates that municipal solid waste landfills are the third largest source of human related methane emissions in the U.S. In 2018, that amounted to about 15%, and was approximately equal to the greenhouse gases created by 20.6 million passenger cars driven for one year. Keeping food waste out of landfills can significantly reduce methane emissions.

Some people might say, "this doesn't apply to me because I have a garbage disposal." Maggie Sauerhage of the EPA told AP News "…that when food is added to the wastewater system, it must be further treated." She recommends composting. Food waste is rich in nitrogen which must be removed to keep it from polluting the waters where it is discharged. It is also water wasteful as a way of moving food waste from the kitchen to the sewage treatment plant.

The use of garbage disposals is usually not recommended for people with septic systems or holding tanks. The tanks can fill more quickly when food waste is needlessly sent down the drain. In our home, that would amount to 10-15 pounds of waste each week, and much higher in the summer, with garden processing. Instead, our home composting gives us about five to six five gallon pails of finished compost for our garden and flower beds each year.

Solids left over after wastewater treatment are commonly sent to landfills, incinerated, or even land spread. With land spreading, the food waste sent down the drain is then mixed with other solids and contaminated with toxic materials sent down residential and commercial drains such as heavy metals, and as we have seen in NE Wisconsin, even PFAS. Home composting can produce a safe garden and lawn supplement with little effort.

As previously discussed, sending food waste down the drain is a wasteful use of water. Composting at home can also conserve other energy sources. Not including food waste in one's home sewage or sending it to a sewage treatment plant can reduce fuel expended for hauling it to the plant and the solids away from the plant. Where municipal food waste pick-up and composting is available, fuel is used for hauling and then processing the large scale compost piles.

The compost bin offered at the workshop.

The simplest solution is a backyard compost bin. The one being offered to participants of the CWAC composting workshop (see page 18) is a simple to use bin that I have used for over eight years. It sits next to my garden, is a short distance from the kitchen, and I

keep the path shoveled through the winter. I have never had a rodent get into the bin nor have such reports been received by Brown County Resource Recovery who made the same bins available to the public ten years back.

The bin has a large diameter cover making it easy to turn the pile with a pitch fork every few weeks to keep it oxygenated, preventing production of methane gas. No doubt you will find it fascinating to see the progress of decomposition, discovering which foods break down the fastest. The slowest items I have discovered are cotton and wool clothing. I now use those as mulch for young tree plantings. I cover them with some woodchips, and they keep weeds away for several years.

An old t-shirt serves as mulch which then decomposes along with the covering of woodchips.

The EPA recommends including these in your compost bin: fruits and vegetables, eggshells, coffee grounds and filters, tea bags, nut shells, shredded newspaper, cardboard, paper, yard trimmings, grass clippings, houseplants, hay and straw, leaves, sawdust, wood chips, cotton and wool clothing, hair and fur, and fireplace ashes. Avoid meat products and fats.

If you live where an outdoor compost pile is not possible, consider using a vermicomposter which uses red wiggler worms to rapidly break down the food waste. The EPA provides directions and advice for building your own at How to Create and Maintain an Indoor Worm Composting Bin | Reduce, Reuse, Recycle | US EPA. They can also be purchased at hardware stores or online. A teacher colleague of mine helped her students compost most of our schools food waste in her classroom using vermiculture. Other than the occasional appearance of fruit flies, she reported no problems.

Another choice for apartment dwellers is to team up with a friend who can have a backyard composter. Bring your food waste to that location and assist with turning the pile occasionally. Possibly your landlord will allow you to do a pilot program for composting food waste, grass clippings, and leaves. Or, do vermicomposting with a friend. Two households would likely produce less food waste than our K-5 grade school did. Another option would be to find a farmer, such as our composting workshop presenter, FarmHer Donna, who picks up about 300 pounds of food waste each week from area restaurants to improve the soil on her vegetable farm. (See page 18)

Clearly, home composting food waste with other yard waste is the most environment friendly recycling method. You only need to make the choice to do so.

Useful Resources:

Small Scale or Backyard Composting - Cornell Waste Management Institute

Composting At Home | Reduce, Reuse, Recycle | US EPA

Community Composting of Food Waste

By Student Intern Katie Hieb

If you are unable to do backyard food waste composting, you could instead encourage your local government to provide community composting. Community composting allows larger volumes of waste to be processed. Two methods of community composting are windrow and in-vessel.

Windrow composting is a process forming the organic waste into long and narrow piles (called windrows) that are turned regularly. The size of the rows depends on the machinery that is used and the type of materials coming in from the community.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) states that the ideal height for the pile is between four and eight feet with a width of 14 to 16 feet. This size allows for enough heat generation to occur due to microbial breakdown, while also being small enough to create a flow of oxygen at the core of the pile.

Windrow composting courtesy of City of San Francisco

In cold climates, the outside of the pile can freeze but it still can compost due to the heat within the core. Although windrow composting has the ability to yield significant amounts of compost, it does require large amounts of land.

An issue common to windrow composting is the liquid that is released during the composting process, called leachate, which has the ability to contaminate groundwater. Due to Wisconsin's composting rules, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) requires the composting site be turned and the temperatures be monitored to ensure leachate is not released.

Another form of community scale composting is using an in-vessel system. In-vessel composting is ideal in cold climates as the process takes place inside an enclosed area. Unlike the windrow method, in-vessel composting has the ability to process large amounts of waste without taking up as much space.

In vessel Composting courtesy of Johnson County Community College https://www.jccc.edu/about/sustainability/composting.html

According to the EPA, this process includes feeding the organic material into a drum that has controlled conditions such as moisture, temperature, and airflow. Ranging in many different sizes, in-vessel composting mechanically turns the material to allow for bacterial activity. An advantage of in-vessel systems is that little leachate is produced along with very little odor.

One of the largest in-vessel sites in the U.S. is at Ohio State University. In 2009, Ohio State purchased a 2 ton system to manage the food waste within the University. It is a great example of how in-vessel composting can work on a large scale. According to studies done by Biocycle, Wisconsin has two in-vessel systems — one located at Columbia County's co-composting facility and one at Northland College in Ashland. This video is from Northland College's in-vessel composting site: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qMq_ZrQB_Os. It provides an inside look into what the facility looks like and how it works.

As in-vessel systems occur indoors, it is a great option for Wisconsin's climate and could be presented to local governments as a way to encourage more composting facilities throughout the state.

This was a quick look at the most common methods of community composting. Some cities might offer a pick up system or drop off locations for your food waste. The Wisconsin DNR offers a list of all waste facilities licensed in the state found here: https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Waste/Licenses.html. I encourage you to look into what your community has to offer.

Resources:

https://www.wisconsin.edu/waste-research/download/2010_student_reports/10%20WTW%20Peschke%20Composting.pdf

https://www.epa.gov/sustainable-management-food/types-composting-and-understanding-process

Shredded paper is no longer accepted by the Tri-County Recycling Facility. Now what?

By Carol Pearson

We all have those papers we don't want to put right into recycling. These papers include documents with personal information, address, financial information etc., so we shred them to maintain our personal security. We can no longer put those bags of shredded paper in our recycling bins as the Tri-County Recycling Facility will no longer accept it. Now what? Instead of putting it in the trash, try some of these ideas. These ideas will help you move toward a zero-waste household.

1. Collect the documents and wait for a local shred-fest to take them to for shredding.

2. Use it in your cat litter box. Put it under the layer of kitty litter, adding depth which the cats like. It will mean you will also use less litter and save money.

3. Fill empty toilet paper rolls with the shreds and use as kindling to start fires at the campground, fire pit, or fireplace.

4. Some animal shelters accept shredded paper and will use it for bedding or litter. Call ahead to see if your local one does.

5. Mix paper shreds in your compost bins/pile. NOTE: do not use shredded paper that is glossy or heavily inked like highly colored ads or glossy promo materials. They may contain metallic inks that act as toxins which would not be good to have in your garden. This also includes colored paper, colored ad inserts or glossy magazines. Most other inks are soy-based and safe to use.

6. Use it as mulch in your garden to prevent weed growth around your shrubs, plants or trees. Lightly water the paper after putting it in place. This will help prevent it from blowing around and help it form a matted layer of mulch. The paper mulch works great but might not be "pretty" depending on where you use it. You can add a top layer of bark mulch or grass clippings to dress the bed up. See note in #5.

7. When planting your garden, once planted, cover your seeds lightly with a thin layer of shredded paper. The paper will help retain moisture and protect them. Green or yellow bean seeds need lots of moisture to sprout. This method really works well for them. See note in #5.

8. Use the shredded paper to make paper-maché pots to use as biodegradable peat pots for starter plants.

9. If none of the above options work, you could take the shredded paper to Ecosource, 300 7th St., Green Bay. 920-435-2644. They are open from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM and there is no charge.

Q & A with Mark Walter, Brown County Resource Recovery

Compiled by McKenzie McDermott

We conducted an online interview with our 2018 Citizen Environmental Award Winner and banquet speaker, Mark Walter. We showed Mark a number of common items in most household waste. He gave us the most recent status of whether the items could be recycled and how best to do so. More information can be found at www.BrownCountyRecycling.org.

Item	Yes	No
Plastic Milk Jug	-High value item made from high density plastic -Keep cap on to guarantee the cap will be recycled and not sorted into trash	
Yogurt/Sour Cream Container	-And cap will be recycled on or off	
Juice Container/Water Bottle	-Easily recyclable -Make sure they are empty and keep caps on to guarantee caps will be recycled. However, the recycling market is flooded with these.	
Lettuce/Greens/Bakery Containers (clamshells)		-Made from a rigid plastic and is difficult to recycle -May have the same numbers as a water bottle, but are not accepted in curbside recycling due to difference in chemistry
Aluminum Soda Cans	-High value, easily recyclable -Will likely be reused within 60 days of it being recycled	
Metal Cans	-Anything magnetic can be recovered -Place lids inside cans and crush the sides of the can to guarantee small pieces will be recycled (bottle caps, aluminum tabs, can tops)	-Metals larger than a food can must be taken to a scrap yard (car parts, metal hangers, etc.) -Can be dangerous to put in curbside bins
Aluminum Pans/Foil	-If enough is collected, it can be brought to a scrap yard	-Not accepted in curbside bins due to strict requirements from buyers
Cardboard cannisters with metal interior & plastic lid	-Plastic lid can be recycled	-Difficult to recycle due to mixed materials -Not accepted for curbside pickup
Juice/Broth/Milk/Wine Boxes or Cartons	-Recycle without the cap -Paper fibers are a high value recyclable	
Cardboard Boxes	-High value, easily recyclable -Flatten before placing in bin	
Newspaper, Magazines including glossy coated.	-Recycle loose with other curbside recyclables -Glossy magazine paper follows the same guidelines	-Do not tie up bundles of paper -String can damage sorting process and is not recyclable
Frozen Pizza Box	-If there are no food particles, it is easily recyclable	
Cardboard Towel/Toilet Paper Tube	-Easily recyclable, high value item	
Envelope/mail (including plastic windows/staples)	-Sorted based on material -Can be recycled curbside	
Carpet		-Commercial carpet recycling exists, but is not available for community recycling or curbside pickup
Shingles	-Asphalt shingles can be recycled	Not fiberglass shingles
Plastic Laundry Detergent containers.	These are HDPE plastic and are readily accepted.	
Plastic grocery bags, and other plastic wrap,		These are not curbside recyclable due to sorting equipment by can be returned to stores. Bags that you cannot easily poke your finger through, such as inner cereal container bags are not, Be sure to remove from the cereal box.

Biden-Harris and the Environment: A Breath of Fresh Air

A CWAC Editorial by V.P. Charlie Frisk

For people who are concerned about environmental protection, January 20, 2021 was like going from the Dark Ages to the Renaissance in one day. The President who was leaving office famously said or did:

- "The concept of global warming was created by and for the Chinese in order to make U.S. manufacturing non-competitive."
- "It's freezing in New York — where the Hell is global warming."
- "It will start getting cooler, you just watch."

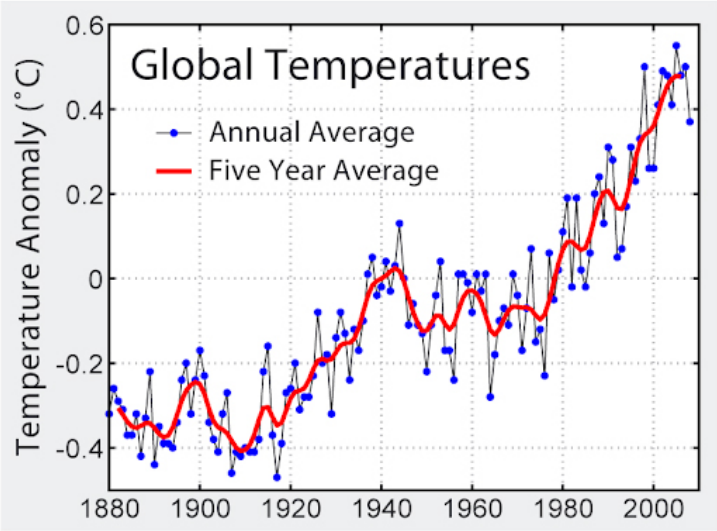


Image courtesy of NASA.

- Withdrew the U.S. from the Paris Climate Accord, an international agreement to combat climate change.
- Replaced Obama's Clean Power Plan, which would have limited carbon emissions from coal and gas-fired power plants, with the Affordable Clean Energy Rule, which had weaker regulations.
- Froze Federal fuel efficiency standards on new vehicles.
- Hired Andrew Wheeler, a former lobbyist for coal, and other fossil fuel industries as Secretary of the Environmental Protection Agency. Not surprisingly, Wheeler and his predecessor, Scott Pruitt, (fired for dozens of allegations of corruption) rolled back over 100 regulations on coal and other polluting industries.

In contrast President Biden has pledged to make the battle against global climate change a major goal of his administration. In the short time he has been in office he has already issued orders calling for:

- The U.S. to host a Climate Leader's Summit on Earth Day.
- Instituting regulatory actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Prioritizing environmental justice.
- Creating new offices in the federal government to coordinate a whole-government approach to climate change.
- Conserving 30% of the country's lands and waters by 2030.
- Creating a Civilian Climate Corps investing in a new generation of Americans working to conserve and restore nature and address a changing climate.
- Creating the position of "climate czar" who will be responsible for coordinating climate action across multiple federal agencies and Congress. Gina McCarthy, Commissioner of the Connecticut Dept. of Environmental Protection from 2004 to 2009, and currently president and CEO of the Natural Resources Defense Council, has been selected to fill that role.

President Biden is showing by his aggressive, pro-environment actions that he is taking environmental threats seriously. The most impactful thing that a President can do to protect the environment is to select pro-environment people to head up the government agencies in charge of protecting the environment.

Biden's selection to head the EPA is Michael Regan, who has been Secretary of the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality since 2017. Before that he worked for a non-profit the "Environmental Defense Fund," a national environmental advocacy group, and the EPA for nearly a decade under the Clinton and G.W. Bush administrations.

Regan has consistently been a strong advocate for clean air and water, and for fighting climate change. Hawley Truax, director of the Southeast office of the Environmental Defense Fund had this to say about Regan, "Secretary Regan recognizes the very real threat that climate change poses to lives and livelihoods. During Michael's tenure as head of the Dept. of Environmental Quality in North Carolina, the state has launched the most ambitious carbon reduction into clean energy plans in its history." Regan was confirmed on March 10, 2021.

Another federal agency that is involved in environmental protection is the Department of the Interior. Interior manages the National Parks, the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Bureau of Land Management, (the BLM manages more land than any other federal agency). The Secretary of the Interior is tasked with carrying out the department's mission to protect and manage the nation's natural resources and cultural heritage.

Our previous President's Sec. of the Interior, Ryan Zinke, opened more Federal lands for oil, gas and mineral extraction than any previous Secretary, before resigning due to multiple corruption allegations. His replacement, oil and energy industry lobbyist, David Bernhardt, continued the pro-extraction policies of his predecessor.

In contrast Biden has selected Deb Haaland a Native American and a former Representative from New Mexico to

head up the Dept. of the Interior. Biden said this of Haaland, "She will be ready on day one to protect our environment and fight for a clean energy future." Haaland said, "A voice like mine has never been a Cabinet Secretary or at the head of the Dept. of the Interior. I'll be fierce for all of us, our planet, and all of our protected land." All indications are that Haaland will put environmental protection and social justice, ahead of the profits of the energy and mineral extraction industries. She was confirmed on March 15, 2021.

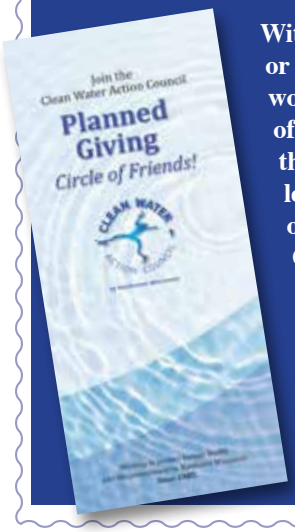
If one needs any further evidence that Biden is serious about environmental protection, his nominee for Energy Secretary is former Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm, a proponent of zero-emission vehicles. She was confirmed on February 25, 2021.

For the icing on the cake, Biden's environmental justice plan calls for strong action on an issue very important to Wisconsin residents. The plan calls for:

- Designating PFAS as a hazardous substance.
- Setting enforceable drinking water limits.
- Prioritizing substitutes through procurement.
- Accelerating PFAS research.

The past four years have been like trench warfare for the environmental movement, digging in and playing defense to stop damage, but knowing that progress on any front was impossible. Under Biden, we have a leader who has pledged to move the U.S. back into the position of being a world leader for protection of the environment.

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

The Action in Clean Water Action Council

By Dean Hoegger, CWAC president

Thank you to the many members who already renewed in 2021. Those renewals will help "keep our doors open," until our fall banquet fundraiser. ***Please save the date, Thursday, October 28, 2021 for the banquet.*** *Hopefully, the COVID-19 pandemic will be behind us by then.*

Membership renewal for 2021 began in December, 2020. To check your membership status, look at this newsletter label which shows your last renewal year. Emailed newsletters include the last renewal year in the body of the email. Membership donations provide funding for most of our operations, and we also offer the opportunity to sponsor a newsletter or an intern, beginning at the $250 dollar level.

You can mail your membership donation or join CWAC with the enclosed form, or go online to http://www.cleanwateractioncouncil.org/membership/.

Read below about the actions we have taken in the last three months.

Be sure to contact us if an environmental issue arises in your community. CWAC is here to support citizen action.

Legal Actions

The Petition to the EPA for Corrective Action for Administration of the Clean Water Act

The petition was first filed with the Environmental Protection Agency in 2011. Two CWAC board members are petitioners to correct 75 deficiencies with the way Wisconsin administered the CWA. Within a couple of years, many of the problems were corrected. However significant operational failures continued such as a lack of funding and staffing, extensive permit backlogs, and inadequate enforcement.

It was hoped that working with the Evers administration would result in resolving these final issues, some requiring statutory fixes. However, the administration's attention to PFAS contamination and other water quality issues may have been a barrier to success. While filing a legal action called a declaratory judgement has been considered, the hope is now with the EPA under the Biden Administration now forcing Wisconsin to fix the deficiencies. We will keep you updated.

Photo courtesy of https://www.rivernetwork.org/

CWAC commented on pollution permits, sent letters to government officials and elected representatives.

We monitor notices for new water pollution permits and renewals, and especially regarding requests for variances. Variances are usually requested when the polluter is not meeting requirements of the current permit. We published the notices for northeast Wisconsin in our *Weekly Update*. At times, we attend hearings and/or submit comments.

We commented on the Back Forty Mine tailings dam permit, which comments from northeast Wisconsin residents are still being sought. Go to Action Alert – Coalition to SAVE the Menominee River, Inc. (jointherivercoalition.org).

Other comments included the Brown County Clean Energy Plan, we were represented by Midwest Environmental Advocates (MEA) at the state Natural Resources Board Meeting for comments on mining law revision, working with the Waukesha Environmental League we commented on a permit for a portable gasification incinerator permit in Butler, Wisconsin, and we reviewed the notice of changes to Wisconsin Storm Water Permit requirements for which MEA also commented. We signed on to a letter from Sustain Rural Wisconsin Network to the DNR regarding "Support for Environmental Impact Statement Request for Roth Feeder Pigs Proposed Expansion" adjacent to the Kickapoo River.

Assembly District 1 Reprehensive Joel Kitchens held a listening session in February at which we commented on the need to ban coal tar pavement sealants and for continued efforts to ban nitrates in ground water.

Please monitor the emailed Weekly Update for permit renewals, variances, and hearings for rule changes. Previously approved variances have included much higher levels of pollutants, often at prior exceedance levels.

CWAC promotes ordinances to ban manure spraying.

CWAC continues to offer presentations to residents and town officials. Thus far, at least 17 northeast Wisconsin towns and cities have passed a ban. If your town has not passed an ordinance, contact us to help get a ban and protect your family from this health threat. Virtual presentations are available. With manure pits nearing capacity during the winter months, the threat of manure spraying could increase. Has your town passed a ban for this health threat?

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

CWAC monitors for plowing violations.

The plowing or cultivation setback is only five feet from a stream bank, a very modest distance. Violations create a greater risk of soil and nutrients entering the watershed and finding their way to Green Bay and Lake Michigan. Contact us if you observe a suspected violation, which will be easier to observe again as snow melts and streams overflow their banks.

Our staff did extensive monitoring in Brown, Door, and Kewaunee counties in 2020. This spring we will focus on Manitowoc, Calumet, Oconto and southern Brown counties. We are seeking the use of a drone or a drone operator to assist with this effort.

Citizen Complaints

Many of our more extensive actions, some requiring legal work, resulted from a follow up of citizen complaints. Keep us in mind if you have an environmental concern for which you need support.

Water Sampling

For the fourth consecutive year, CWAC participated in the WDNR's Lower Fox River water sampling program with the third year of water sampling and stream assessments for Baird's Creek on Green Bay's east side. Phosphorous levels for August, September, and October were found to be 0.160 MG/L, 0.069 MG/L, and 0.075 MG/L, respectively..

We will begin sampling in May. Volunteers are needed.

Educational Efforts in the Community

Newsletter Outreach

The winter newsletter, CWAC Continues to Fight for Mining Protections was sent to 550 members in January and distributed electronically to many citizens opposing the Back Forty Mine. 75 copies of the spring 2020 newsletter, Protect Your Family from the Threat of PFAS Contamination was mailed to a leader of the LWV-Upper Mississippi River Region-Interleague Organization, which will be having a conference with a focus on PFAS.

Health Forums

Contact us if you have suggestions for topics or speakers. **We are seeking business or member sponsors for individual health forums at the $200 level**, either full or in part. Forums will be held online until they can be presented in person. Let us know if you will be a sponsor or can find a business sponsor. Past presentations included topics on indoor air quality, reducing breast cancer risk, toxic chemical exposures, endocrine disrupting chemicals, diet and health, safe lawns, climate change, and fluoridation of municipal water.

We are collaborating with Wisconsin Environmental Health Network (WHEN) and Wisconsin Physicians for Social Responsibility for future presentations.

Presentations and Exhibits

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we are now live on the Zoom platform for presentations. We hope to be doing in person exhibiting this summer. We also have presentations on our website via YouTube. One is *The Threat from Micro-plastics in Clothing*. Another is *The Hazards of Coal Tar Pavement Sealants*. They can be found at https://www.cleanwateractioncouncil.org/resources/

In February, we hosted a Zoom presentation about

the Back Forty Mine given by Al Gedicks with 55 people attending and more watching the video found at https://youtu.be/cilsGzrf1-g

The WHEN online conferences are now being enhanced with follow up discussion hosted by CWAC on Zoom featuring local leaders and experts on the topic. Marinette County's Save Our H2O leader Jeff Lamont led a discussion on PFAS contamination in his county. Anti-fluoride activist Brenda Staudenmaier followed up WHEN's Fluoride and the Developing Brain presentation with an update on the federal lawsuit challenging the EPA's position on fluoridating municipal water.

See the Weekly Update for details about the final WHEN conference presentation on March 25 regarding endocrine disrupting chemicals.

For Lifelong Learning Institute members, CWAC President Dean Hoegger will give a presentation, *Moving Toward Zero Waste*, on April 25.

Here is a list of current presentations that can be given online. Many of these will be available soon via You Tube. The presentations can be tailored to your group's geographic location, age, and available time. Also, contact us if you would like us to promote or co-sponsor your event or presentation.

- Citizen Action to Protect the Waters of Northeast Wisconsin
- Communities on the Road to Zero Waste
- The Health Hazards of Burn Barrels
- The Health and Quality of Life Hazards from Manure Spraying
- The Health Threat from Coal Tar Pavement Sealants
- Micro-plastic Pollution from Clothing

Outreach through Newspaper and Radio

CWAC sends press releases to local media and is often contacted to comment on developing environmental issues.

Website Updates

Past newsletter issues can be found at the website as well as updated articles and additional resources at https://www.cleanwateractioncouncil.org

CWAC provides interns with valuable experiences.

We provide our interns with valuable experiences and strategies for managing a non-profit organization. We invite them to attend area conferences and meetings, provide them with networking opportunities in environmental fields, encourage them to research and write for our newsletter and website, invite them to attend board meetings, and to represent CWAC at meetings with partner organizations. We are currently accepting summer semester internship applications.

We are thankful for five 2021 intern sponsorships by Marge and Ken Bukowski. Contact us if you would like to learn more about sponsoring a student intern.

Attendance at conferences and meetings with other environmental groups.

We attend biweekly meetings with the No Back 40 Mine group, monthly meetings with directors of other state environmental groups, and as issues arise, such as the state budget, we attend strategy meetings to address the issue. We also have attended the WHEN conference presentations and Congressman Gallagher's Save the Bay group.

Get Our Weekly Update by email.

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

Not receiving the Update? Send us an email request. It is sent out once a week via BCC email.

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.

Please follow us on Facebook.
Click here for our page: ***Facebook***

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

CWAC Annual Banquet and Silent Auction

SAVE THE DATE!
Thursday, October 28, 2021

MARK YOUR CALENDAR! Meetings, Events and Happenings

Watch at your own leisure

Sold Down By the River Film

View at: https://vimeo.com/326445998?fbclid=IwAR3cuyp1j0yHtzaq6-5qfzdeHZ_nONKSbKsMRlFbdEaGF88tiECx14Y2T9w

In the state of Wisconsin, third world water conditions have become an epidemic, brought on by factory farms and big agribusiness. Legislators seem to put the interests of their corporate donors over the health and safety concerns of their constituents, and they continue to support bills that protect big business and polluters. This disturbing trend has been happening across the United States.

April 1, 10:00 AM and April 8, 10:00 AM

Winter enrichment lecture series

Register at: https://arboretum.wisc.edu/learn/adult-education/winter-enrichment/winter-enrichment-registration/

April 1

Using Markets to Achieve Conservation: Examples from the Field. Dominic Parker, Associate Professor, Agricultural and Applied Economics, UW–Madison. Register by March 28.

April 8

Climate Change, Reality versus Development: Global South and Worldwide Perspective. Marie-Josée Paula Houénou, specialist in climate change and environmental law and strategies, and city advisor, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, and a 2018 Mandela Washington Fellow at UW–Madison. Register by April 4.

April 17, All Day

Annual survey of Sandhill and Whooping Cranes Counting Event

To participate in the Crane Count you first need to contact your County Coordinator to be assigned a site and receive additional instructions.
https://www.savingcranes.org/education/annual-midwest-crane-count/

Each year in mid-April, over 1,000 volunteers travel to their local wetlands and favorite birding locations to participate in the Crane Count. This annual survey of Sandhill and Whooping Cranes spans over 90 counties in seven states of the upper Midwest, including Wisconsin and portions of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Ohio and Minnesota.

April 21, 11:00 AM-12:00 PM

Leading climate change scientist to give presentation

Katherine Hayhoe, atmospheric scientist, identifies as an Evangelical Christian and is a lauded climate change communicator, will give a presentation via Zoom. The program is a collaborative effort of the Climate Change Coalition of Door County and Citizens' Climate Lobby. At this time, the Zoom link is not available, but will be sent in the *Weekly Update* or can be found at https://www.climatechangedoorcounty.com/

Katherine's biography can be found here: http://www.katharinehayhoe.com/wp2016/biography/

May 1, 6:00 AM-Noon

Oshkosh Bird Fest

Menominee Park, 520 Pratt Trail, Oshkosh
http://www.oshkoshbirdfest.com

Rain or shine! Free! Fun for the whole family. Bring your binoculars. Nothing is for certain during this pandemic and things could change, so we are scaling back and planning activities that allow for social distancing and ask that you please wear a face mask, for our safety and yours. We look forward to seeing everyone!

May 1, 9:00 AM-12:00 PM at any of 60+ cleanup sites

Fox-Wolf Watershed Cleanup 2021

Find a cleanup site location and register here:
https://secure.qgiv.com/event/20wcle/

Each year hundreds of volunteers visit one of 60+ sites coordinated throughout our watershed to remove garbage and debris. The annual cleanup aims to build a sense of community and increase understanding of the environmental stewardship necessary to improve water quality in our region.There are 60+ cleanup sites located along the Fox River, the Wolf River, Lake Butte des Morts, and Lake Winnebago.

May 4, 12:00-1:00 PM

Protecting Wisconsin's Forests from Invasive Species

Presented by the College of Natural Resources,
UW-Stevens Point
Register at: https://wcee.asapconnected.com/CourseDetail.aspx?CourseId=238787

Wisconsin's forests are under threat from invasive insects, diseases, plants, and worms. Mike Hillstrom, a DNR Forest Health Specialist, will discuss the invasive pests causing the most damage currently and how to manage them, as well as new pests to watch for and report. June is Invasive Species Action Month, so help students plan now for what they can do to prevent invasive species in Wisconsin.

May 20-23

2021 New Leaf Garden Blitz

https://www.facebook.com/events/746239519420292?active_tab=about

New Leaf Garden Blitz empowers residents of Green Bay to grow food and be part of a sustainable urban agricultural system. This year, volunteers will safely come together to build and install 75 raised bed gardens throughout the Green Bay area over the weekend of May 20-23, 2021.

June 2, 11:30 AM-3:30 PM

Biodiversity and Climate Crisis Summit - On the road to UN COP26

https://www.eventbrite.com/e/biodiversity-and-climate-crisis-summit-on-the-road-to-cop26-tickets-142094168483?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch&keep_tld=1

This International online event will take us closer to the UN Summit, and it's about generating a wider dialogue on Climate Action. Come and join us at this important event where we will have a local and global dialogue between the general public, scientists and representatives of different UK Government Agencies.

Meet Our Interns

McKenzie McDermott is a senior at the University of Wisconsin – Green Bay and is majoring in Environmental Policy and Planning with a policy emphasis. She has previously interned with Planned Parenthood Advocates of Wisconsin where she found her passion for community organizing and social justice.

In addition to her internship with the Clean Water Action Council, McKenzie is the Clean Energy Fellow with Wisconsin Conservation Voters and is working to address climate change through a clean energy future.

In her free time, she enjoys reading, volunteering, hiking, trying new recipes, and meeting new people. After graduation, she hopes to continue advocating for environmental and social justice issues at a nonprofit organization.

Katie Hieb is a sophomore at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, studying Environmental Policy and Planning. Katie, is currently in The Wisconsin Wildlife Federation's Conservation Leadership Corps Class 8. In her free time, Katie enjoys kayaking, hiking, and spending time with family and friends. After graduation, she hopes to use her knowledge from this internship to obtain a career in local government or a non-profit organization.

Earth Week Cleanup Projects

Co-Sponsored by Clean Water Action Council

UWGB Campus-Wide Cleanup

Join us for an Earth Day cleanup event to support the Public Environmental Affairs Council (PEAC) and Round River Alliance.
April 22nd from 2-4 pm

Baird Creek Cleanup

Join us as we clean up Baird Creek and surrounding areas with the Baird Creek Preservation Foundation.
April 24th from 8:30 am – 12 pm

Courtesy of Baird Creek Preservation Foundation

To RSVP, please email us at contact@cleanwateractioncouncil.org to receive event details. Both events will follow social distancing guidelines. Please bring gloves and wear clothes/shoes that can get dirty.

*The Food Waste Composting Workshop is made possible by the **Nau Foundation Fund of the Greater Green Bay Community Foundation** and another dozen contributors who helped us purchase the composters.*

This newsletter sponsored by The Paul, Barry & Tanner Family Fund of the Greater Green Bay Community Foundation.

Contact us to sponsor a future newsletter.

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( ) Non-member donation of $ _____for_____

( ) Other $_____

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

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☐ joining or leading one of the committees ☐ other

Send check or money order to:

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P.O. Box 9144
Green Bay, WI 54308

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Your contributions may be tax-deductible. ***Thank you!***

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A307 MAC Hall, UW-Green Bay
2420 Nicolet Drive
Green Bay, WI 54311

www.cleanwateractioncouncil.org

Find us on Facebook or updates on hearings and current or upcoming events.

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BOARD MEMBERS

Dean Hoegger
President & Executive Director
Door County
920-495-5127

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Katie Hieb
McKenzie McDermott

NEWSLETTER

Dean Hoegger, Editor

Bev Watkins, Graphic Design
https://www.beverlyjanedesign.com

CONTACT US

By phone: 920-421-8885
If you leave us a message, we will try to get back to you within 24 hours.

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

By e-mail:
contact@cleanwateractioncouncil.org

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

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RENEW YOUR
MEMBERSHIP
FOR 2021
and ASK A FRIEND
TO JOIN!

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For previous newsletters, go to: www.cleanwateractioncouncil.org