Clean Water Action Council

OF NORTHEAST WISCONSIN

Celebrating 38 years of working to protect public health and the environment in Northeast Wisconsin

WINTER 2023-2024

Some of the places we love in NE WI and our work to protect them.

Jacques Yves Cousteau: "People protect what they love."

High school students enjoy a special place at Baird Creek. Photo by Charlie Frisk.

Introduction

by CWAC President Dean Hoegger

Since 1985, CWAC has worked to protect what we love in NE WI. Our first effort focused on enforcing the Clean Water Act to reduce point source pollution going directly into the Fox River. This followed years of pushing Wisconsin to sign on to the PCB cleanup plan and ensuring that PCB removal was not substituted with capping the contaminated sediment. Today, the Fox River water quality is greatly improved, and fish and birds are thriving!

In the 1990s, the Crandon Mine threatened the pristine Wolf River and the Fox-Wolf watershed. CWAC worked with other environmental organizations to make the project less viable for Nicolet Mining Company, who sold the mine site to the Mole Lake Ojibwe and Forest County Potawatomi. The Wolf River was saved!

When Utica Energy in Winnebago County was found to be violating their pollution permit, CWAC became a petitioner in the case to protect the waters of Sawyer Creek, a tributary of the Fox River. In 2009, the suit brought an end

to years of violating effluent limitations for temperature, total suspended solids, zinc, oil and grease, and phosphorus. Sawyer Creek was protected!

Review of pollution permits sometimes reveals violations as it did in 2012 regarding Appleton Coated LLC. We believed the company was in violation of its total maximum daily load for phosphorus and total suspended solids sent to the Fox River, already designated by the EPA as impaired. The case was eventually settled out of court, which lent support to the idea that when it comes to point source pollution, citizens can have a significant impact on protecting the waters we love.

Unfortunately, that is not the case when it comes to protecting our water resources from non-point pollution, which is a pollutant that does not directly enter a waterway. Farm manure is a typical pollutant that is placed on the land and then seeps into the groundwater or enters surface waters. Kewaunee County and its resources, loved by many of our members, was one place significantly impacted.

As a result, CWAC became a petitioner to the EPA for enforcement of the Safe Drinking Water Act. With a significant investment in time and travel, CWAC participated in a year of local meetings. That followed another year of participation in the DNR's Technical Advisory Committee for revising NR151 administrative rules for manure spreading in karst areas, found in many northeast Wisconsin counties. While the revisions are providing improved water protection, this may be offset by continued expansions of concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs). A CAFO moratorium is needed to improve the water quality of Kewaunee County's rivers and the lower Fox River, all of which are on the EPA's impaired waters list.

Working at the local level, CWAC was able to help area residents in 17 towns to pass bans on manure spraying using center pivot sprayers and other irrigation spraying equipment. The bans not only protected water resources, but also the quality of life in these towns. Protection from excessive odors and the spreading of pathogens was achieved!

CWAC's most recent effort to protect water resources from non-point pollution focused on ending the use of coal tar pavement sealants containing polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs). This toxin wears off blacktop surfaces where it can run into streams and other water bodies causing harm to aquatic organisms. Through educating the public and helping citizens pass local ordinances, CWAC is reducing this threat!

Protecting what we love is not an easy task. Consider supporting our work by being on the pollution permit monitoring team or making a donation to support the work of a student employee or a student intern. Call or email us for details.

Read this issue to learn about some of the places that our members and friends love in northeastern Wisconsin and want to protect.

Hidden Gems of Shawano County

By Dean Schoenike, Guest Writer

When one first thinks of the recreation opportunities in Shawano County, the 6,200-acre Shawano Lake or the 15,000 acre Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) Navarino Wildlife Area comes to mind. However, hidden throughout the county are small hidden gems to discover.

If clean, flowing, and scenic water is what you are looking for, the Red and Embarrass River is a good choice. Two very nice sites to visit are The Rock, a local name for a town park on the Red River, and the Cowyard Rips on the Embarrass River.

The Rock, about 5 miles east of Gresham on Butternut Road, is a beautiful rapids on the Red River. The town park has a nice parking lot and requires about a 1/4 mile walk down an access road to the river. The rapids are a popular swimming, fishing, kayaking, and relaxing location used year-round. So, grab your binoculars and lawn chair and enjoy a sunny afternoon.

The Cowyard Rips on the Embarrass River is an interesting, secluded place to start a spring outing. The "Rips" about 3 miles east of Pella, at the end of Forest Lane off Valley View Road, is a WDNR Fishery Area. The area is a pine hardwood forest providing access to the Embarrass River. Access is provided by a 1/4-mile logging road to the river. Just make sure to watch for a fork in the trail about 1/4 of the way in, take the right fork. Small arrows help direct you to the rapids. The area is a great location for bird watching, smallmouth bass fishing and if you are visiting in spring, a good location to observe spawning sturgeon in seclusion.

Two other fun locations in Shawano County are the **Jung Hemlock-Beech Forest** and **Kroenke Forest**. These are two of six WDNR Natural Areas in Shawano County. The locations

of these sights can be found on the WDNR Natural Area website.

The Jung Forest is an old-growth climax forest of hemlock and beech with the tree size indicating some of the stand being between 180 and 230 years old. The woodlot doesn't have any distinct trails, but being a climax forest, it doesn't have excessive under growth so exploring is easy. Interspersed in the hemlock stand are small woodland bogs with wonderful bog plants. Being an old growth forest, it is a fun place to reminisce about what the forest of the area looked like in years past.

Kroenke Forest is one of the newer Natural Areas purchased in the Shawano area. The woods consist of oak, maple hardwoods with a small seepage lake as the main attraction. There are a variety of trails throughout the property, and it is a popular location for snowshoeing. The lake is surrounded by a beautiful stand of cedar and hemlock. A story has it that years ago an old wooden dugout canoe was found in the lake.

So now you have some new or old places to visit in the Shawano area. They are great places to explore in any season, so put them on your calendar. **When you do visit, think about the generosity and the foresight the previous landowners had in preserving such beautiful and unique areas and the importance of advocating for clean air and water.**

Dean Schoenike is a retired WDNR Fishery Technician of 35 years. He was responsible for assisting with the management of the fish and aquatic resources of Shawano, Waupaca, and Southern Oconto Counties.

Appreciating and Protecting a Small Town

By Dean Hoegger

I live in an idyllic town of 114 square miles in southern Door County. It is a town that provides many calendar photos of picturesque bluffs with soaring eagles, woodland and wetland wildlife, cows and horses grazing, and of course amber waves of grain. While there is no lack of corn, soybeans, and alfalfa, what is missing is the stench of liquid manure. CAFO manure rarely makes it into the town.

The town has only one remaining dairy farm and its owner, Glenn Dart, stated he will not allow CAFOs to spread liquid manure on his fields. This farm is supported by income from a small herd of 35 cows, and at times the iconic "Eggs for Sale" sign posted by the road that brings in extra income. Dart has been on the town board for over 20 years. In the beginning years he said he was there to represent dairy farmers when family farms were common.

Crop farming dominates the rural landscape along with some beef production, orchards, and produce. One former dairy farm now specializes in strawberries, garden vegetables, eggs, and preserves sold on site. The fall display of pumpkins and squash is a child's delight as straw bales are there for the climbing, making for photographic opportunities. Owners Fred and Mary Malvitz raised four daughters on the farm. They said they sold the dairy herd

The Malvitz Bay Farm made the transition from dairy farming to fruit and vegetable farming. Earlier in the season, their strawberries are an important cash crop.

when they could no longer afford the farm upgrades required by the county.

While farming dominates the landscape, water is a significant recreational resource in this town. Little Sturgeon Bay is a major body of water fed by numerous small creeks, underwater springs, and wetlands. In addition to Wave Pointe Marina and the Carmody Park boat launch, there are numerous water access points for launching canoes, kayaks, paddle boards, and sailboards, as well as shore fishing. Just beyond the town's border lies Haines Park with a pristine sandy beach and shallow waters that are perfect for families with small children.

Winter attracts multiethnic crowds for ice fishing: Eastern Europeans from the Chicago area, Hmong families from the Fox Valley, and other anglers from across the state. Area waters take on the appearance of impromptu villages with the sounds of children and barking dogs in the air. Fortunately, most ice augers are now electric and quiet. Cross country skiers and snowshoers often make their way across the snow-covered ice. The occasional snowmobile does little to take away from this picturesque scene where the sunrises and sunsets are spectacular!

CWAC has worked to protect this town, which was one of the first to pass a ban on manure spraying. Our participation on the DNR's NR151 Technical Advisory Committee helped reduce the amount of liquid manure that can be spread on karst topography where fractured bedrock lies beneath a few feet of soil. **If we can keep CAFOs out of the Town of Gardner, it will continue to be a special place!**

The Joy of Streams

By Charlie Frisk

There is magic in water, especially when the water is flowing in a stream. There are few things I enjoy more than sitting on a streambank watching water flow over a riffle. It stimulates many senses; sight, sound, smell, and probably some I am not even aware of.

Whether I am sitting by a roaring waterfall or a quiet riffle, I find the experience to be stimulating and calming at the same time. My favorite place for stream watching is in the **Baird Creek Greenway** on the east side of Green Bay. Baird Creek has been attracting people to enjoy its beauty for as long as people have lived in this area.

The Puan, ancestors of the Ho-Chunk, were living in the Baird Creek area when the first Europeans arrived, and probably appreciated the beauty of the stream as much if not more than we do today. The waterfalls of Baird Creek have

been photographed thousands of times just for their beauty, but also for wedding parties, graduation photos, family photos and engagement photos.

The Neville Museum has many black and white photos in their files of people in the late 1800s-early 1900s enjoying the waterfalls of Baird Creek. Although the falls only drop 2-3 feet high, they are included in *The Waterfalls of Wisconsin* by Troy Hess.

In the book, *The Wind in the Willows* by Kenneth Grahame, Rat says to Mole, "There is nothing – absolutely nothing – half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats". I personally would modify that quote to say, "There is nothing – absolutely nothing – half so much worth doing as messing around in streams." Although I love canoeing, I don't think the boats are necessary, but the stream is. The boat is just a way to enable a person to see more of the stream.

There is nothing like messing around in a stream to make an adult of any age feel like a kid again. Whether it is just wading around attempting to catch frogs or crayfish, or using nets to catch and study fish and macro-invertebrates (little aquatic insects, crustaceans, or mollusks) the hours spent in a stream are not subtracted from your lifespan, in fact I think they add to it.

Author Charlie Frisk guides students in a creek exploration.

The foremost goal of the CWAC, keeping the water in our streams and lakes clean could not be more directly tied to enjoying our time messing around in streams. Studying fish and macro-invertebrates is way more interesting in streams with clean water, because the better the water quality, the higher the diversity of fish and macro species. Streams with clean water are healthier, more beautiful, and more fun to be around whether you are just sitting on the banks or participating in activities on the water.

There are a lot of great reasons to support CWAC; one that is highly important to me is that CWAC works to protect the streams that I love.

Lower Green Bay Offers a Wealth of Birding Opportunities

Jim Johnson, Guest Writer

"Wow!", is what I think when birding the **West Shore Wetlands** and the **Cat Island Causeway** on lower Green Bay. The whole area has become a super-hotspot for birders from all over Wisconsin. The Hurlbut Street Ponds, Ken Euers Nature Area, Duck Creek Delta, Cat Islan Causeway, Harbor Lights Boat Launch, Sensiba State Wildlife Area, and many small areas to the north have become destinations for birdwatchers.

Ken Euers Westland Preserve, which includes the Ken Euers Nature Area, has been the number one hotspot for birds for the last two years. Quite an accomplishment because of all the skilled birdwatchers who visit the area.

The **Cat Island Causeway** attracts many rare migrants because of its location in the middle of the lower bay. It is a prime destination because it has recorded 250 e-bird species over the year. Ken Euers Wetland Preserve comes in as a close second.

The lower bay and its associated wetlands have become an almost unbelievable spring stopover site for waterfowl. Swans, geese, ducks, grebes, etc. have been seen in numbers that are unprecedented. In April, rafts of ducks can approach numbers of 20,000 in view at one time. This area is a great place to observe migratory waterfowl due to the abundance of invasive species in the form of mussels and small fish. The diversity of plants is one reason why a large number of families of birds live in or visit the area.

Shorebirds, ibis, herons, bitterns, rails, gulls, terns, cormorants, and pelicans give us a mix of birds that can build up to huge numbers during migration or nesting season. The whole area on the lower bay can attract songbirds, warblers, vireos, flycatchers, swallows, wrens, thrushes, sparrows,

A migrating long-tailed duck.
Photo courtesy of Sue Ascher.

blackbirds, and much more. Rarities are the norm.

Ken Euers is open for all to visit year-round. The Cat Island Causeway is open all year from the first gate at the end of Lineville Road to the second gate about two thirds of a mile to the south. From that point there is restricted access where only authorized entry is allowed. Piping Plover Surveys, Natural Resources Foundation field trips, and research are examples of ways that people can access the restricted area. What is very surprising is that every one of the aforementioned locations is better for birds than it was decades earlier. Cleaner water is a big part of the reason.

Bird watchers who have the time to linger and visit multiple areas, can see as many as 100 or more species in a day of birdwatching. Most areas have trails that are easily walked. If one plans their itinerary well, it will be a day that will reward you with an avian experience that will long be remembered.

Small mammals, frogs, insects, snails, and mussels compliment the birds that are seen.

If one visits the areas between the hotspots, lots of birds can be seen. A small ditch, a brush pile, or even a dead tree can give you a good look at Mother Nature's wonders. The West Bay Shore Wetlands and Cat Island Causeway are fabulous examples of ecosystems that are improving. Take the time to visit and you will enjoy!

Jim Johnson has been an amateur birdwatcher since 1967. He has been leading the Bay Area Bird Club field trips and the Green Bay City Birds Walks since 2011. Birding is his passion and escape.

Enjoy the Ice Age Trails in NE Wisconsin

By Debra Noel

The **Ice Age Trail** system started with an idea by Ray Zellner in 1958 to protect the glacial landscape formations before these areas could be bought and developed. He wanted quiet non-motorized access to these areas to leave nature as undisturbed as possible. The Wisconsin Glacial Period about 12,000 years ago left the most notable glacial formations than in any other state.

"Nowhere can the work of the glacier be seen or studied to better advantage than in Wisconsin," he said. He proposed an Ice Age National Park with trails for visitors to observe and study the moraines, eskers, and other land formations the gigantic glacier sheets left behind. Ray died before his dream became reality, but many other hard-working volunteers fulfilled his vision.

The first drawn trail section created by volunteers was in **Northern Kettle Moraine State Forest** within Fond du Lac and Washington Counties. Today the Ice Age trail system is 1 of 11 National Scenic trails with over 1,000 miles throughout 30 counties in Wisconsin. The Eastern terminus is in Door County's Potawatomi State Park, while the Western terminus is across the state in Interstate Park, St Croix Falls. What better way to explore Wisconsin's natural beauty while protecting native plants and wildlife. Protection can increase with more awareness and participation.

These Ice Age Trails are made possible, built, maintained, and funded mostly by volunteers and donations. They are managed by a partnership of the National Park Service, Wisconsin DNR, and the Ice Age Trail Alliance. The trails traverse many ownership types including, private land, city parks, county forests, state parks, and national forests. The off-road trails are marked by a yellow vertical bar.

NE Wisconsin Sections

A large portion of The Ice Age Trail runs through Door, Kewaunee, Manitowoc, Sheboygan, and Fond du Lac. Most of the trail is meant for hiking and snow shoeing, but there are sections for multi-use and road links meant to connect people to communities. From the rugged bluffs of Potawatomi Niagara Escarpment overlooking Sturgeon Bay, to the foot paths winding through Point Beach State Park and along the shores of glacier created Lake Michigan, the trail has many miles near the Great Lake's shoreline. An interior trail section in northern Kettle Moraine State Park has formations that make a hilly landscape with beautiful vistas overlooking ravines, diverse forests, meadows, and small glacial lakes. Kettle Moraine State Forest lives up to its name.

Winter hiking or snowshoeing on the Ice age trail is peaceful, with no bugs and seeing wildlife tracks in the snow makes it a special time to get out on the trail. Glacial formations and other interesting sites are more visible in winter.

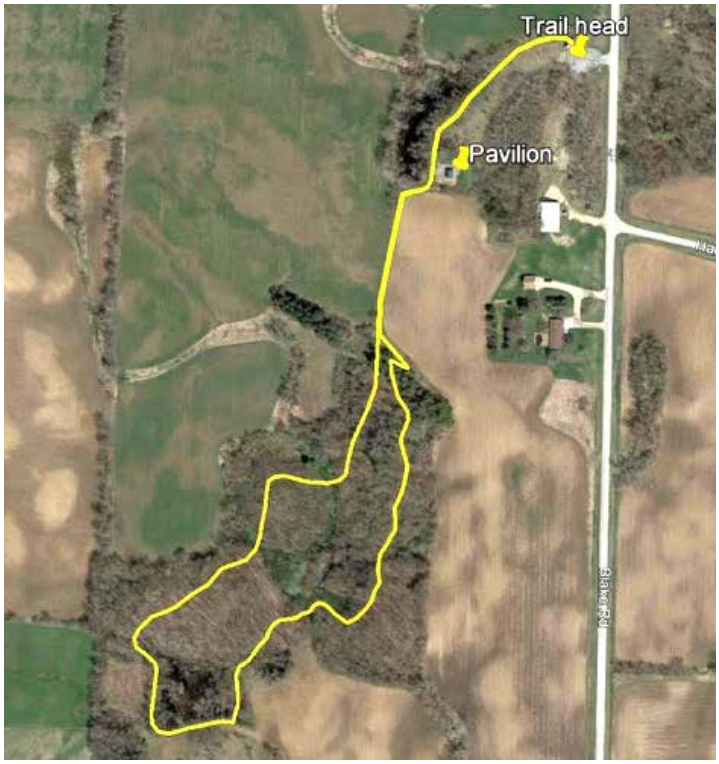
There are short and long trails for most individual abilities to bird watch, discover, explore, and unwind mentally and physically. Rustic shelters and campground sites are available and, in some areas, allow winter camping. Some avid hikers set out to hike the entire 1,200 miles at their own pace and earn a badge or club recognition.

You can become a member, sign up for newsletters, or follow them on Facebook (Ice Age Trails Alliance, or Ice Age Trails). See the website for more info and maps: Ice Age National Scenic Trail Wisconsin | Ice Age Alliance (iceagetrail.org).

Resources:
proposedpark.pdf (wchf.org)
Raymond Zillmer | Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame (wchf.org)
Ice Age Trail – Wikipedia.
Ice Age National Scenic Trail (U.S. National Park Service) (nps.gov)
https://p.widencdn.net/qskygm/KMSF-Northern-Unit_Ice-Age-Trail-Distances_PR-275

The SBCC Trail Is a Place to Linger

By David Verhagen



You may not find it on any map, but there is a nature trail just east of Greenleaf worth your visit. It is a project of the Southern Brown Conservation Club (SBCC), now affiliated with the Isaak Walton League of Brown County.

The trail was conceived in 1988 and built by volunteers in 1989. The Club has continued to develop the trail, adding signage and boardwalks, a pavilion for social events and school groups, as well as new construction to improve handicap access.

It is a small parcel, and its looped trail can be hiked in less than an hour. But that would do it an injustice. There are ponds and wetlands, uplands and a wooded trail that have been planted with a wide variety of trees native to Wisconsin.

There are some steep climbs along the loop which might challenge some hikers. But there are benches placed strategically along the trail as well, often in places where one can best absorb the surrounding environment.

We especially like to linger during the spring and fall migrations. If we are lucky and time it right, flocks of (migrating) birds fill the air with song and flight as they drop into this safe place. Late in the day is the best time to find them arriving, filling the trees and feeding from the numerous ponds.

The SBCC Trail is still privately owned land and should be accessed with full respect for its owners. Nonetheless, the trails and signage are all well maintained and a sight better than many public parks we have visited outside of Wisconsin. It is nested within an area of rolling hills atop the Niagara Escarpment, and adjacent to the Holland State Wildlife Area. You need to hike beyond the pavilion along a grassy corridor between farm fields to arrive at the preserve. You can get the history and more about this trail at https://sites.google.com/view/southernbrowncountyiwla/conservation-trail.

The Clean Water Action Council has not had any direct impact upon this site. But our work monitoring stream setbacks and supporting sustainable farming practices contribute to protecting islands of diversity such as this. In addition, quiet time spent in places such as this fuels the passion necessary to remain vigilant in defense of our waters, wetlands, and natural areas.

The SBCC Trail can be found off Hwy 96 approximately three miles east of Greenleaf. There is a sign at the intersection with Blake Road. Go south on Blake for just over two miles to find the parking area and entry.

It is close enough to bicycle from the Green Bay area. Sportsman Drive is a popular cycling route east of De Pere that leads into Blake Road. There is little traffic on Blake Road and no reason to hurry. Blake is a rolling ride atop the escarpment with views extending far across the valley below. It will put you in the right frame of mind to appreciate this little preserve further down the road.

Cultural Connections Anchored Through Family Ties

By Rachel Weber, Fall Intern

Long Tail Point is a sand spit located in the bay of Green Bay. Today it is part of the Green Bay West Shores Wildlife Area and is home to waterfowl and migratory birds. Before it was established as a wildlife refuge, it was the site of three lighthouses, including the old stone tower that still stands today. The first time I saw a picture of the old stone tower at Tail Point, I was convinced I had been there. I was recounting a memory that was not mine, yet was as clear as if I had been there yesterday. Alice Weber was a prolific painter who documented life on the island so beautifully that her work is still the backdrop to all Weber households.

The lighthouses were positioned to welcome ships through the channel after they had made it past "Death's Door" of the peninsula. The need for these beacons of light was a result of a bustling commerce industry where ships brought, among other things, coal, cement, and stone to the cities connected to the Fox River.

Every summer for almost 30 years, Andrew and Alice Weber lived on Long Tail Point where they raised my grandfather Ralph, along with his siblings, in the big white house that once stood where the sedge meadows and cottonwood copses flourish today. They had wood heat, no electricity, and manned a rowboat to get around.

My great grandparents were the last generation of lighthouse keepers until the automation of lighthouses in 1936. They chose a life that inspired generations beyond them. For instance, my grandfather Ralph, worked the very

Photo of living quarters, courtesy of Adris Robinson (Weber).

ships his father helped guide through the channel. He had a decorated career with Reiss Steamship Company. He was the third mate of the William A. Reiss in 1943 and ended as Captain of the John A. Kling in 1976. His ships navigated through the Great Lakes to Nicolet Papermill in De Pere.

Green Bay used to have Sea Scouts and a sailing club but abandoned those activities along with the need for lighthouse keepers. There are still opportunities to reinspire a connection to the water. For some it may be efforts to promote waterfowl habitat, others it is a desire to preserve fishing opportunities.

Green Bay has plans for a Bay Beach restoration project. It would have been easy for the city to sell the area to developers, but it has chosen to promote its coastline as a place for people to gather. None of this would be possible without the PCB cleanup efforts, and we will continue to face challenges regarding runoff and PFAS in the bay as well as invasive species.

The Great Lakes are a nexus for community connections. I revere the history that has been recounted to me. It has an allure that proliferates through generations so that when I look out towards the water, I feel a sense of stewardship to the islands and the water that surrounds them.

Blissing Out on the Offshore Waters of Door County

By John Hermanson

I love to be by and on the water. My favorite place to paddle in Northeastern Wisconsin is **Door County** with 300 miles of shoreline.

I choose to paddle a kayak here because of wind and waves, as well as the playful nature of paddling solo in a kayak. Safety and experience are a concern especially on big cold bodies of water where wind strength, direction, and wave height require an eye on the weather and an accurate assessment of your own paddle skills. Risk reduction can be found by knowing the shoreline, taking guided tours, joining the Northeast Wisconsin Paddlers Club, or chumming along with trusted experienced friends.

Along with the joy of kayak paddling, Door County offers sights of snowy egrets, blue herons, strings of commuting cormorants, elusive Bonaparte's gulls, vocal ravens, and an occasional peregrine falcon. The Bayside offers the Niagara Escarpment's bluffs with Northern White Cedar, Eastern Hemlock, and Northern White Pine, while the Lakeside offers the Mink River Estuary, a boreal forest, an old beach ridge, and swale topography along with rare orchids and the Hine's Emerald Dragonfly.

I am concerned about shoreline water levels and increasing water temperatures that appear connected to a volatilely changing climate.

In 2020 water levels were at a near historical high resulting in shorelines being reinforced with rock or concrete. This activity has left fewer options for paddlers to find escape routes in troublesome situations, although the recent quick drop in water levels has helped, for now. Waves tend to bounce off these fortified structures creating reflective waves that make paddling more challenging.

Secluded public launch site on North Bay

As water temperatures are projected to rise by as much as 7 degrees F by 2050, I am also concerned about blue-green algae and water-born bacteria. An oversized agriculture system, poor lawn practices, and urban runoff threaten water quality. Along with air and water temperature rising, there is the threat it causes to Door County's lakeside boreal forest.

Other culprits effecting the health of Lake Michigan include invasive species such as zebra and quagga mussels that have changed the food web of the lake. There are attempts to restore a healthier lake system as described in the attached link regarding mussel remediation. https://www.interlochenpublicradio.org/show/points-north/2022-10-14/trying-to-solve-the-mussel-mayhem-in-the-great-lakes

One of the consequences of the shift to increased water clarity is that Cladophora, a green alga that grows on submerged rocks, logs, or other hard surfaces at depths of more than 30 feet, breaks free from the lake bottom, and litters the shoreline and shallow waters. Cladophora can be very unpleasant to paddle through on the water's edge once it has rotted.

We are very lucky to live where we do and I am determined to help preserve the quality of our environment for valued outdoor water recreation for myself, other locals, and visitors to Northeast Wisconsin.

Appleton Parks on the Fox River. My playgrounds!

By John Gosling

I was raised in Appleton, in between three parks—Pierce, Alicia, and Lutz. **Pierce Park** is one of the major parks in the city, while **Alicia Park** is a small, tucked away neighborhood park overlooking the Fox River, and **Lutz Park** sits directly upon the river. The Fox River is one of the only rivers in the world that flows north, because of how the glacier formed it and the rest of the Great Lakes region.

Over my life, I have enjoyed Alicia, for its natural wiffle ball field, originally made into an ice rink. The park offered us spring, summer, and fall usage, before later becoming a neighborhood playground where we spent summers in organized play as an Appleton youth. Pierce was the original place for Appleton's Fourth of July multi-day civic celebration dating back to the early 20th century. This is where we played, went sledding and agreed to meet under the massive pavilion. It is also where we brought our kids to play, play and play some more!

The view from Lutz Park.

Welcome to the Appleton Park System! We here in Appleton love our parks, even the city's logo has a park element! With the Fox River running through the city, the building and expansion plans include walkways and parks lining the river on both sides. Even now, I have enjoyed the recently created Peace Park, which features a running path that connects to Telulah Park, on the south side of the city. Other parks along the river include the Vulcan Rest area, near a converted Paper industry building and below the Thomas Edison House powered by hydroelectric power.

Appleton is making great efforts to transform the entire river area to be walkable, bike-friendly and the center of the city. Not only does this plan preserve the downtown area as eco-friendly, but it will also draw more residents to the "hub" of the city, the Fox River. Let us all enjoy, preserve, and value this natural gift of ours!

Enjoying the Cofrin Memorial Arboretum

Lauren Felder

As a student at UW–Green Bay, I spent a good amount of my free time in the **Cofrin Memorial Arboretum**. Prior to 1975, the land was mostly agricultural land, but founding Chancellor Edward Weidner proposed a plan for the arboretum and trail system in the early 1970s. His plan was made possible by a donation from the Cofrin family. Now, the arboretum is 290 acres of restored natural area that includes a prairie, woodlands, Mahon Creek, the Niagara Escarpment, and an oak savanna restoration plot.

Green Bay. Photo courtesy of UW-Green Bay.

I grew up in a rural area with ready access to forested hiking trails and a lake, so I felt at home in the woods on the shore of Lake Michigan. I love to hike and would often hike down to the lakeshore in the warmer months if I needed a break from studying. It was incredibly calming to find a quiet spot by the lake and listen to the waves break against the shore for a while. Watching the sunset over the lake was a particular favorite activity of mine.

Hammocking also became fairly popular while I was at UW–Green Bay and it was common to see groups of students in hammocks reading or even studying outside. Students also use the arboretum to learn. I remember parts of the arboretum being roped off for tree studies and seeing groups of ecology or biology students taking samples from the creek or cataloging plants in the section of the arboretum containing the prairie grasses.

Because of the campus's proximity to protected land, we would often see animals out and about on campus that you wouldn't necessarily see as often on an urban campus. Turkeys and geese often blocked our paths to class, and it was common to see those same birds with their offspring after the snow melted in the spring. Possums, raccoons, deer, songbirds, and squirrels were also never far away. Hawks, eagles, and owls occasionally made themselves known as well.

The arboretum even hides a couple of architectural gems. Across the street from the main campus is the

lakeshore, which is home to Lambeau Cottage. This may not be "hidden" per se, but I didn't know about it until I came across it while hiking one day. Curly Lambeau had the cottage built in 1941 and has been part of university property since the 1970s. It was restored in 2005 and now serves as a place for informal gatherings and a space for learning.

An actual hidden gem tucked away in the arboretum is the Shrine of St. Anthony Padua. This small, chapel-like building is nearly 100 years old and carries on the legacy of the Le Mieux family, who originally built the shrine as a place for Father Ed Le Mieux to worship and pray.

Historical information from: https://www.uwgb.edu/cofrin-memorial-arboretum/

Renew Your Sense of Conservation at Cathedral Woods

Paul Werner, Guest Writer

Majestic and magnificent. Serenity and solace. Spiritual and sacred. Enormous and emotional. These are some words that might describe your reaction when visiting Cathedral Woods. This is a special place in Oconto County near Lakewood, but there really are no words to describe what you will see or feel when you visit this area.

Cathedral Woods, which is also called Cathedral Pines, is a forty-acre remnant of an old-growth forest. It is part of a much larger forested area managed by the Chequamegon–Nicolet National Forest. A super-canopy of red and white pines with an understory of hemlock trees grow here. The trees have been dated back between 1735 to 1740. The trees here are older than this country. Other forest species are a combination of yellow birch, white ash, sugar maple, basswood, and beech. It's special.

Visiting this place, you can imagine what an old-growth forest once looked like before clear cutting took place in the late 1800s. Some people recognize the scientific value of a place like this, others recognize the legacy value, others recognize the spiritual value, and some others recognize the historical value of vising this stand of an old-growth forest. Regardless of the value you recognize, you may also find it indescribable.

When you visit this old-growth forest remnant, you will come upon a trail leading you into the heart of this special place. You will encounter trees with enormous girth and height. Unimaginable girth and height. You might begin thinking how insignificant you are compared to these giants. You might consider how these giants have survived so long, or you might consider how to preserve special places like this.

Upon visiting Cathedral Pines, you might have a renewed sense of conservation or an invigorating desire to share what you have experienced. You may be like me and fail to find the proper words to express the magnificence of this special place. But, you might want to start with something like the following: "We are losing this special old-growth forest due to environmental factors, storms, old age, and disease."

The giants in this old-growth forest remnant are dying. In the past few years, lightening, windstorms, and disease have taken some of the white pines leaving a void in the super canopy. Words are easy to come by for this: devastating, deteriorating, despoiling. The young white pines and hemlocks appreciate the additional sunlight, and they will probably survive to grow old. But what is old?

Giant white pine. Photo by Paul Werner

White pines grow to over 250 years: hemlock over 600. We won't be around to see this happen.

You can make a difference. Visit the Cathedral Pines natural area. Share your insights and feelings about this area with others. Share the solace you find. Share the majesty you discover. Share the mystery. Share with others how you can imagine this forest 200 years from now. Imagine the giants and the girth and the height. Imagine the centuries of oxygen generating capacity of the trees. Imagine things that words cannot describe.

Paul Werner is an assistant teaching professor for Entrepreneurship at the UW-Green Bay Cofrin School of Business and is a CWAC member.

The Action in Clean Water Action Council

By Dean Hoegger, CWAC President and Executive Director

It is time to renew your membership!

If you have not done so, please renew your membership for 2024. 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, and maybe a little more if you forgot in 2023.

To check your membership status, look at your address label which shows your last renewal year. Emailed newsletters include the last renewal year in the body of the email. Please consider a more generous gift if you forgot to renew in 2023. **Membership donations are critical as they account for nearly half of our operational funds. Employee salaries are paid from a trust fund, our Packers' concession stand, and grants, not from membership donations.**

You can mail your membership donation with the enclosed or attached 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 signature block. Please know that you do not need a PayPal account to pay with a credit card, and a monthly donation is an option.

We are thankful for members who wish to sponsor any of the following starting at the $250 level: Newsletter ($800), intern ($500), rent ($2500), or student administrative assistant salary ($11,500). Please indicate the purpose of your donation.

We would like to thank the members who have volunteered to help with our Packers concession stands, water sampling at Bairds Creek, and mailing the newsletter. There are many volunteer opportunities with CWAC. Contact us to discuss the ways you can volunteer to help us protect human health and the environment.

Please consider joining our Planned Giving Circle of Friends to bequeath a donation to CWAC from your estate. See the planned giving mini poster in this issue.

Below are the actions that member donations supported in the last three months.

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

Legal Actions

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

Our Effort to Ban High PAH and Coal Tar Pavement Sealants Continues

These sealants contain polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), which are known to be a serious health threat. According to the Army Corps of Engineers, children living near surfaces treated with this sealant have a 13-fold increased risk of developing certain cancers. Lifetime exposure can result in a 38-fold higher risk of cancer.

We gave presentations this fall to the Door County Green Tier Committee and the Sister Bay Village Trustees. The towns of Gibraltar and Jacksonport passed bans on this hazardous product. We hope more municipalities do so as well, especially to protect children living near parking lots treated with coal tar pavement sealants. We are seeking more presentation opportunities, including in the Appleton area. According to Representative Joel Kitchens, the state will not ban the product, at least not in the next few years. He encouraged us to seek local bans through village and town ordinances.

Contact us to help get an ordinance passed in your community. Click this link for a slide presentation on the topic: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_zyTSpzvwbk

CWAC Alerts Readers about Pollution Permits, Hearings, and Files Comments.

We monitor notices for new water pollution permits and renewals, and then alert over 1,200 readers via our emailed Weekly Update. Email us at contact@cleanwateractioncouncil.org to receive the privacy protected emailed update sent once a week.

CWAC alerted citizens about the expansion of a southern Door County farm that would qualify it as having CAFO status.

Passing a manure spreading ordinance in Door County

We were asked to join the efforts by some Door County residents to have the county pass an ordinance like Kewaunee County's Chapter 30 manure spreading ordinance. We met with Door County Conservationist Greg Coulthurst and exchanged emails with Kewaunee County Conservationist Davina Bonness. Both indicated there was little difference between the tools the two counties use to manage manure spreading. The one main difference was that Kewaunee County had a calendar moratorium for spreading, disallowing it from January 1 through April 15. Door County's moratorium disallowed spreading when it could not be incorporated in the soil due to frozen or saturated soil.

We were advised by Door County's corporation council that an ordinance adoption would require passage by all municipalities in the county. Since both counties are primarily governed by NR 151 rules for manure spreading, and the ordinance advocates failed to provide a list of advantages for an ordinance adoption, we declined to support this effort.

We are, however, hosting a presentation on passing county and town moratoriums for CAFO expansions. See the event in Mark Your Calendar and on the poster in this issue. Register soon!

Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce vs the DNR is waiting for a court decision.

The case is still before the State Court of Appeals, and we expect a ruling any day. We are currently supporting the DNRs role in protecting the public from PFAS and other chemicals by submitting friend of the court briefs. We are now holding our breaths for a ruling in favor of the DNR and the citizens they protect. Loss of the DNR's authority would likely significantly increase pollution by a host of chemicals no longer regulated by the spills law.

Informing members about PFAS legislation, SB 312.

At our PFAS conference panel discussion, Senator Wimberger touted the bill as protecting innocent landowners as he does to the media. However, he fails to mention that it protects the polluters and severely limits the DNR's authority. It would limit the DNR's ability to take enforcement action against the entities responsible for contamination and erode the spills law, which the DNR has used to protect the public for decades.

Private well owners with contaminated wells would also be competing for funding with the owners of commercial and industrial properties. It likely will shift costs from polluters to taxpayers.

The Assembly will take up their version of the bill in January. Continue to make your voice heard and insist that polluters not be protected!

The Petitions to the EPA for Enforcement of The Safe Drinking Water Act and the Clean Water Act.

The EPA took no recent action on these ongoing petitions. It is likely that meetings with EPA will be held in 2024.

Educational Efforts in the Community

CWAC Hosts PFAS Conference

We hosted the conference, "PFAS: A Growing Health and Environmental Concern" on October 27 at UW-Green Bay. Neary 50 people attended the day long conference featuring excellent presenters and a panel discussion which included area legislators. We received a lot of TV media attention on WLUK and WGBA, which brought more attention to the issue. The conference was professionally recorded by Kurt Denissen Productions and is now on our website at https://www.cleanwateractioncouncil.org/resources/, and we showed the videos "PFAS and Hunan Health" and "PFAS and Fish Advisories" at the Brown County Central Library on November 30.

CWAC Presented "Using Local, State and Federal Laws" at "Water: Every Drop Counts" conference.

CWAC gave the keynote presentation at the Appleton conference in Appleton at the Fox Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship. We shared many newsletters, added people to the *Weekly Update* list, and gained several new members. Kewaunee County environmental advocates and CWAC members Nancy and Lynn Utesch promoted the film "Sold Down the River" and discussed the problems Kewaunee County residents are facing with continued CAFO expansions. See the conference video at https://www.wnpj.org/post/2023-fall-assembly

CWAC President Dean Hoegger with Nancy and Lynn Utesch.

Food Waste Composting

We presented a food waste composting workshop at the Brown County Library Southeast Branch on October 18. We have composters available for $60 and will provide individual or group instruction on how to compost food waste. Two food waste composters were also sold at the office leaving five remaining. A perfect gift for someone who has everything!

CWAC Partners with Breweries

We exhibited at Zambaldi Brewery on October 4 and will receive a donation from the brewery for sales that night. We helped Title Town Brewery introduce Clean Currents Lemongrass IPA October 17 with a CWAC crowd and our hosting our exhibit. For every Clean Currents sold, CWAC will receive a $1 donation.

These Presentations Are Available from CWAC

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

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

Newsletter Outreach

The Fall 2023 newsletter was sent to 550 members in September. There are a limited number of printed newsletters remaining if you would like to distribute them to a friend, group, or organization. Newsletters are also available on our website at: https://www.cleanwateractioncouncil.org/newsletter/

Get Our Weekly Update by Email

Each Tuesday we email the *CWAC Weekly Update* with Actions, Permits, Jobs, Events, In the News Updates, and Resources. Send us your information by Monday evening for posting the following day. 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* emailing list. Emails are sent via BCC to protect your privacy.

Outreach through Newspaper and Radio

CWAC sends press releases to local media, and we are often contacted to comment on developing environmental issues. Dean Hoegger was interviewed for a Door County Daily News radio story about PFAS.

Website Updates

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

CWAC Provides College Students with Valuable Learning Experiences.

We provide our interns with valuable experiences and strategies for managing a non-profit organization. Rachel Weber, our fall intern, will take over the administrative assistant position held by Gracyn Holcomb this past year. Gracyn will graduate this month and then consider her post graduate options including law school. We will miss her and her many contributions to our work!

Other Actions

Water Sampling for Lower Fox River Water Quality Monitoring

We began water sampling at Bairds Creek in May and finished in October. The Fall Newsletter has a summary of the data for the last seven years.

Stream Monitoring

We examined cultivation near bodies of water that we observed this past year while monitoring for winter manure spreading. With the fields being snow covered, it was difficult to see if the setbacks were being followed. We are pleased to report there were no new violations. When violations are found, it often results in better future monitoring of the site, as in the case of Wequiock Creek, which required a follow up complaint by CWAC to get the conservation easement maintained at 35'.

This 35' conservation easement along Wequiock Creek absorbs runoff and suspended solids from the cornfield on each side of the creek. Unmitigated corn fields can send significant amounts of soil and phosphorus into nearby streams.

CWAC Seeks Donations for Our Student Administrative Assistant Position.

We are again fundraising at Packers games. Members and board members have volunteered their time to operate a concession booth. However, our profit from the games is down about 75% due to only being given four products to sell and no light beer. So, we will be falling short of our goal of $11,500 for the annual student salary.

Please consider a donation to help us make up the $6,500 difference.

CWAC Attends Meetings with Other Environmental Groups

We attended many of the monthly meetings with the directors of other state environmental groups and network with other state and national organizations.

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, and our support is needed.

CWAC's Non-Profit Status

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

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

https://www.facebook.com/cleanwateractioncouncil

Have you renewed your membership for 2024?

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

It is marvelous to see how the Fox River has become a treasure in the past thirty years. - A CWAC editorial by board member Dave Verhagen

One of the things many small business owners do is volunteer to serve on civic committees. I served on a Chamber of Commerce economic development committee for the Village of Little Chute focused upon community and business relationships.

For example, we worked on a project developing economic policy to guide development in the Village. Among the exercises we used to develop our program was one in particular that I want to share with you.

This exercise involved partnering with Onalaska, a small city just outside of La Crosse. Onalaska sits on the Mississippi River, and the river is central to many things in that community. They were also interested in economic development and proposed that each committee send a delegation to the other's community to provide an outsider's "first impression" to their hosts. Little Chute was focused on its Dutch heritage and focused on getting an authentic, working windmill built in the center of town. Our committee was hoping that our visitors from Onalaska could help us see ways to build upon the windmill to promote our Village.

What happened was that the visitors from Onalaska were deeply puzzled that the Fox River, which flowed the length of Little Chute (and well beyond) was virtually ignored in the Village's current and planned development. People leading our community didn't generally see the river as anything of value. But, as the visitors pointed out, the Fox River was Little Chute's *most valuable resource*. They could not afford to ignore it.

Little Chute had a blind spot regarding the river. But to be fair, so did the rest of the communities along the banks of the Fox. If you understand a bit of the history of the Fox, you might understand why.

The lower Fox River, from Lake Winnebago to the bay of Green Bay, hosted the largest concentration of paper mills on one river anywhere on Earth. Or they did in the living memory of many residents of the region. These mills located on the Fox for many reasons. Wisconsin's great north woods meant plenty of raw materials nearby. It took a lot of water to transport logs to the mills. It takes a lot of power and water to make wood pulp, process it, and dry it into useable paper. The many rapids and waterfalls along the Fox were dammed and harnessed to provide power and drive the machinery of industry.

The Fox provided another thing that was never highlighted in histories of the Fox Valley. It provided an easy, inexpensive place for many mills to discharge their spent process waters from manufacturing paper products. And there were a lot of mills dumping a lot of process water.

It didn't take long before all the game fish disappeared from the river. Efforts to reintroduce game fish failed, as the planted fish could not survive its turbid waters any better than the native wildlife.

Swimming in the river waters was discouraged such that none of the parks along the river included a swimming beach. Bay Beach in Green Bay once had one but the city had to close it when water flowing from the Fox became a serious health hazard.

The parks did have boat launches, but my recollection includes giving our boat a hard scrubbing after we pulled it out of the river to remove a stubborn film of green adhering to its hull.

On hot days the river smelled. There were huge insect swarms from time to time. Algae floated atop the waters much of the summer such that sitting by the water's edge was less than endearing.

It is no wonder that the residents of Little Chute and other communities along the Fox had blinders on regarding its value. For most of their lives, the river was a degraded asset regarded as more an open sewer than a resource.

But by the time the visitors had arrived from Onalaska, things had begun to change. The Fox River had been the subject of the largest Environmental Protection Agency Superfund Cleanup in history. The cost was to eventually top a billion dollars. The governor and legislature at the time fought the cleanup on the basis of its cost in dollars and in jobs. The Department of Natural Resources was ordered by Governor Thompson to fight the cleanup and would not cooperate with the EPA to determine the costs of the pollution to Wisconsin residents nor the means to remedy it.

The cost of remediation was the inflection point. The mills said the cleanup was too expensive to merit what benefit could be obtained. They further claimed that they may even have to close up shop and leave the state because of those costs. Taxpayers also stood up to complain about government spending on luxuries such as the environment.

Only the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Office in Green Bay set about determining the cost of the river's pollution to the residents of northeast Wisconsin. When the costs included what was NOT being done with the river in Little Chute and every other community along its banks, the costs rose dramatically. The governor and the mills wanted those costs ignored, as it was not a business expense that would normally be on their books. It was a real, legitimate, cost, just not theirs.

But property values (and taxes) suffered because of the degraded waters. Resorts and condominiums never got built because no bank would loan the money to build near the mess that the river had become. Low value businesses piled up along the cheap shoreline. Parks and recreational opportunities (such as suggested by the Onalaska visitors) never came into being, and never brought with them the

spending by the people who would be drawn to a river that might provide respite on hot summer days. Music festivals and civic celebrations that raise funds for local charities had no place along the river for attracting crowds of people. And an entire industry of water recreation did not flourish along the Fox.

And if you have never seen it, you never know what you are missing. Change takes time. It was a ten-year fight just to come to a decision to begin the Fox clean up. And it took over twenty more years to get the work done. Incrementally each year, the river healed just a bit. Discrete signs of health emerged each year. But if you lived in the affected communities every day, the change was too slow to notice. Until some well-intentioned visitors came in and pointed out how the river would be a great spot to plan for people to get together.

It was a revelation. Today it is a marvel to look back at how the Fox River has developed in the past thirty years. Fishing is back and boats crowd the river north of the De Pere dam every spring when the walleye are running. Pelicans ply the shore, enjoying the fishing themselves. Riverwalks and parks have spring up the length of the lower Fox. Festivals and civic events fill the calendar throughout our warmer months.

None of this flowering of economic and social activity was even dreamt about before the cleanup began. It was literally beyond imagination. So, as you enjoy a moment on the City Deck or any of the hundreds of places along the banks of the river where you can now eat, walk, drink, boat, fish, birdwatch, and generally soak in the good life, take a moment to appreciate the small number of malcontents who are watchdogs over our environment.

They are not the bad guys that many big business leaders and politicians like to claim. They are instead, a small voice against the tide of exploitative behavior, using the levers of democracy to help us restore and maintain what is ours by birthright.

Rowing on the Fox River. Courtesy of La Baie Verte Rowing Club.

A Change in Office Staffing

Gracyn Holcomb (left) joined the CWAC staff as the administrative assistant in late 2022. Now she is graduating with a double major in Democracy and Justice Studies with an emphasis in Criminal Justice and Political Science. Her work at CWAC has sparked an interest in pursuing a career in environmental law. We wish her all the best as she moves on.

Rachel Weber (right) is moving from intern to administrative assistant beginning in January. She is pursuing a degree in Environmental Policy and Planning and hopes her continued work with CWAC will provide opportunities to positively impact our community and environment.

The administrative assistant position is generously funded by donations and our volunteer efforts, such as working Packers game concessions. Please consider donating to the Student Administrative Assistant Fund.We need an additional $5,300 for 2024.

~~ Thank you! ~~

Christine and Dave Kellems and Melissa Roulo

For supporting the student administrative assistant fund.

PLEASE DONATE IF YOU CAN!

Meet Our Spring Semester Intern

Jenna Strei is a second-year student here at UW-Green Bay. She is pursuing a degree in Environmental Policy and Planning with minors in both Global Studies and Political Science. Jenna has always held a passion for environmental issues and climate change, looking to make a difference. She is eager to learn more about water quality issues working with the CWAC. With her interests, education, and experience at CWAC, Jenna looks forward to pursuing a career in sustainability and environmental policy.

CWAC Accomplishments in 2023

- Hosted the conference, "PFAS: a Growing Health and Environmental Concern" which included a panel discussion with area legislators.
- Provided educational materials and presentations about the hazards of coal tar and other high PAH pavement sealants throughout Door County where two towns banned the products and others agreed to make residents aware of the health hazards, especially to children.
- Held educational programs including "Food Waste Composting" and "Using Local State and Federal Laws to Protect the Waters of NE WI."
- Provided food waste composters at cost.
- Hosted the CWAC Spring Banquet and Fundraiser featuring guest speaker DNR Secretary Adam Payne.
- Exhibited educational materials at area events in Appleton, Green Bay, and Sturgeon Bay.
- Hosted a presentation by Emily Tyner, about the National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERR) and the benefit of Green Bay receiving this designation.
- Inspected over 200 sites for winter manure spreading and reported potential violations.
- Monitored for plowing setback violations and submitted photos for potential violations to area soil and water conservation offices.
- Worked closely with area soil and water conservation offices regarding manure spreading compliance.
- Monitored for pollution permit compliance and made comments on pollution permit renewals, expansions, and variance requests.
- Completed water quality sampling May-October at Baird Creek for the DNR's Lower Fox River Watershed Water Quality Monitoring Program.
- Monitored area outdoor events for compliance with recycling laws and sent letters to local governments and businesses.
- Published quarterly newsletters about protecting special places in NE WI, PFAS and health, concerns about biosolids, and the impact of fall elections on the environment.
- Emailed the Weekly Update each week containing information about recommended actions, water pollution permit notices for renewal and variances, events, and links to important news stories and updated Facebook with 6-10 weekly posts.
- Continued to be a party to Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce's lawsuit against the DNR by filing friends of the court briefs to the state court of appeals. If the DNR loses the case, it would take away its authority provided in the Wisconsin Spills Law over PFAS and other chemicals.
- Continued to be party to two petitions to the EPA under authority of the Clean Water Act and the Safe Drinking Water Act.
- Provided training for two student interns and a student administrative assistant.
- Operated a concession stand at Packers games to raise money for a student position as administrative assistant.

TELL YOUR LEGISLATORS TO FIX SB 312

After nearly a year of legislative efforts, or lack thereof, the Wisconsin Senate passed a version of SB 312 that favors polluters over citizens impacted by PFAS contaminated wells. When Senator Wimberger spoke on the panel discussion at our PFAS conference, he touted the bill as protecting innocent landowners. He failed to mention that it severely limits the DNR's authority over PFAS. Read the comment below by Peter Burress of Wisconsin Conservation Voters and then take action.

"Despite months of feedback from their constituents, Senate Republicans passed a version of SB 312 that puts polluters before impacted community members. As passed on the Senate floor, SB 312 would limit the DNR's ability to test for PFAS and limit their ability to take enforcement action against those responsible for contamination. This would degrade Wisconsin's spills law, a tool that has protected Wisconsinites from pollution for decades. SB 312 would also force private well owners to compete for funding with commercial and industrial properties. It would also create a process through which polluters could qualify as an "innocent landowner," and therefore not be subject to DNR's enforcement authority. This would shift cleanup costs from polluters to taxpayers, who should not be on the hook for a corporate polluter's mess. We are grateful to Senate Democrats who stood with impacted people and rejected this pro-polluter scheme. It's time to go back to the drawing board and focus our efforts on the need immediately in front of us – getting funding to communities impacted by PFAS contamination as quickly as possible. That means supporting funding for impacted municipalities and private well owners, without polluter loopholes tied to those programs."

Take action:
https://conservationvoters.org/support-pfas-action

MARK YOUR CALENDAR! Meetings, Events and Happenings

MEETINGS & HEARINGS:

December 15, 11:00 AM
PFAS External Advisory Group
Virtual

The PFAS External Advisory Group is a collaborative forum for the DNR to solicit constructive feedback on PFAS initiatives in Wisconsin. This group is staffed by the DNR. Members include stakeholders, community members and interested parties from both private and public sectors. All meetings are open for the public to attend.

Register for the Zoom meeting: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_rCv48hg5QFG3lYtGNXv8ww#/registration

January 3, 1:30 PM – 3:30 PM
Proposed Rule Revisions NR 140 (DF-17-22) Public Hearing
Virtual

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) announces that it will hold a public hearing on a permanent rule to revise Ch. NR 140, relating to setting numerical standards to minimize the concentration of polluting substances for certain Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) in groundwater.

Register for the Zoom meeting: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZcqd--vqTkoGtS0lnqsoDPsBCN2kOd_ygx_?_x_zm_rtaid=e-g4y_

For more information contact: DNR140GroundwaterQualityStandards@wisconsin.gov

SAVE THE DATE!

Silent Auction, Dinner, Aquatic Invasive Species Talk & Music

Thursday, April 25, 2024

EVENTS:

Now through April 20, 2024
1st, 3rd, and 5th Saturdays, 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM
Market on Military
Green Bay Plaza, 725 S. Military Ave, Green Bay, WI

A smaller version of our last winter market will be held in the Green Bay Plaza (725 S Military Ave. the former Catherine's) starting in November and going through April. Based on our survey, your favorite local market vendors will be here! Be sure to support them!

For more information: https://militaryave.org/news/market-on-military/

December 16, 2023, 1:00 AM – 11:59 PM
Oshkosh Audubon Christmas Bird Count

On the annual Oshkosh Audubon Christmas Bird Count (CBC), observers record all birds seen or heard within a fifteen-mile diameter circle around Oshkosh on one day (24-hour period) in mid- to late-December. In addition to the count day, species seen during the count week (3 days before and 3 days after the count day) but not recorded on the count day are also included in the results. The Oshkosh Christmas Bird Count has been conducted every year since 1964. The final results are submitted to the National Audubon Society.

Anyone can participate in the bird count. The amount of time that you wish to commit is up to you. You can watch your feeders/yard for an hour or all day. For the more dedicated birder, surveying one of the 7 county areas in the count circle is also an option. As a volunteer you will be required to record the number of each species seen or heard; time spent watching; distance travelled and document unusual species and numbers.

If you are interested in participating, contact Tom Ziebell for more information and to discuss the area you intend to cover at cziebell@new.rr.com or at 920-312-1976.

December 23, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
Tracking Hikes – Paradise Springs
Paradise Springs Nature Trail
Easy 0.5-mile paved trail. W374 S8640 County Rd. N, Eagle, WI

Tracks are everywhere! On the ground, in the snow, even underwater, tracks show us where wildlife has traveled. Join us for a hike to find and identify tracks! What will you find?

For more information, please contact Steven.Puleo@wisconsin.gov, or call 1-608-419-8203.

Save the Dates: Workshops for Advocates: Use the Clean Water Act to Protect Your Local Waters

Join River Network, Midwest Environmental Advocates, and River Alliance of Wisconsin to learn how to use the Clean Water Act to protect and restore your local waters.

You'll get an overview of Clean Water Act programs and how they fit together. Local advocates will share real-world case studies on how they used the CWA to protect their waters and communities. Workshops include interactive exercises and an overview of how to use River Network's recently updated *Clean Water Act Owner's Manual*.

January 17, 2024, 4:00 PM – 5:30 PM
Topic: WPEDS Permitting Program Implementation
Featuring speaker, Rob Lee, staff attorney with Midwest Environmental Advocates.

February 14, 2024, 4:00 PM – 5:30 PM
Topic: CAFO Regulation and Wetland Regulation
Featuring speakers, Adam Voskuil and Rob Lee, staff attorneys with Midwest Environmental Advocates.

March 21, 2024, 4:00 PM – 5:30 PM
Topic: Clean Water Acts TMDLs and Nine-key elements plans
Featuring speaker, Bill Davis, a senior legal analyst with River Alliance of Wisconsin

Registration information will be found in the *CWAC Weekly Update* in January

February 1, 2024
2024 RENEW Wisconsin Summit
Monona Terrace & Convention Center, 1 John Nolen Dr, Madison, WI

The RENEW Wisconsin Summit aims to propel the state into a stronger, healthier future powered by clean energy. "Unleashing the Power of Wisconsin's Clean Energy Potential" gathers industry experts, policymakers, innovators, and community leaders dedicated to accelerating the transition to clean energy sources. This annual event features an exposition hall, breakout sessions, and industry professionals discussing the current and future opportunities for advancing renewable energy in Wisconsin.

For more information and register: https://www.renewwisconsin.org/renewable-energy-summit/

Feb 13, 2024, at 6:30 PM
CWAC Hosts Adam Voskuil for a Review of Local Regulations for CAFOs in Wisconsin and Moratoriums on New and Expanding CAFOs
Via Zoom

Adam Voskuil is a staff attorney at Midwest Environmental Advocates, a nonprofit environmental law center. For over four years, Adam has focused on the intersection of agriculture and clean water in Wisconsin, particularly concentrating on large, industrial-agricultural operations (CAFOs) and their effects on surface and ground water.

In recent years, a number of local governments have adopted measures to address the impacts of CAFOs on the environment. This presentation will review those efforts and discuss one of the most common starting points for local governments that are considering regulating CAFOs within their borders: a moratorium. As more cities, towns, villages, and counties in Wisconsin are passing CAFO moratoria, it's important to understand when and how moratoriums are passed.

Register at https://www.eventbrite.com/e/a-review-of-local-regulations-and-moratoriums-for-cafos-in-wisconsin-tickets-769844414367?aff=oddtdtcreator Or use the QR code on the poster (see pg. 18).

February 20 – February 24, 2024
29th Annual Wetland Science Conference
Radisson Hotel & Conference Center, 2040 Airport Dr, Green Bay, WI

Join other scientists and professionals of the wetland and water community of Wisconsin and the upper Midwest to share your wetland research, restoration, management, or outreach program; learn new identification and assessment approaches and techniques; hear about approaches to incorporating wetlands into watershed & community planning; discuss the latest in wetland science, planning, and protection issues; and look ahead to the future of wetland science and practices in Wisconsin and the Midwest.

The 3-day in-person conference, which regularly draws more than 350 attendees, will include plenary sessions, topical oral sessions, a poster session, workshops, working groups, and field trips to area wetlands. The conference will also offer many opportunities for networking and student engagement.

For more information:
https://conference.wisconsinwetlands.org/

February 27 and 28, 2024
25th Annual Fox-Wolf Watershed Conference
Radisson Hotel & Conference Center, 2040 Airport Dr, Green Bay, WI

Join us at one of Wisconsin's largest watershed Conferences! Past attendees have included stormwater engineers, professors, community leaders, government entities, local elected officials, concerned citizens, and more!

For more information: https://fwwa.org/what-we-do/conference-2024/

Save the Date: April 25, 2024, 5:00 PM – 9:00 PM
Clean Water Action Council Annual Banquet
Riverside Ballroom, 1560 Main St, Green Bay, WI

Please contact us at contact@cleanwateractioncouncil.org or (920) 421-8885, if you have an item you would like to donate for the silent auction.

A Review of local regulations for CAFOs in Wisconsin and seeking moratoriums on new permits and expansions.

An online presentation by Adam Voskuil, attorney at Midwest Environmental Advocates.

Register online*

February13, 6:30PM

Adam Voskuil is a staff attorney at Midwest Environmental Advocates, a nonprofit environmental law center that combines the power of law with the resolve of communities facing environmental injustice to secure and protect the rights of all people to healthy water, land, and air. For over four years, Adam has focused on the intersection of agriculture and clean water in Wisconsin. In particular, Adam concentrates on large, industrial-agricultural operations called concentrated animal feeding operations or CAFOs and their effects on surface and groundwater.

Midwest Environmental Advocates

In recent years, a number of local governments have adopted measures to address the impacts of concentrated animal feeding operations, or CAFOs on the environment. This presentation will review those efforts and discuss one of the most common starting points for local governments that are considering regulating CAFOs within their borders: a moratorium. A moratorium is a temporary suspension or prohibition on an activity. In this context, a CAFO moratorium has the ability to put a pause on CAFO development for a short period of time as the local government considers its options for regulations.

* https://www.eventbrite.com/e/a-review-of-local-regulations-and-moratoriums-for-cafos-in-wisconsin-tickets-769844414367?aff=oddtdtcreator

CWAC Merchandise

available at our office or local delivery

Tote Bags: $8 or 2 for $14

Hoodies: $40 or 2 for $70

Tank tops: $12

Organic cotton t-shirts: $15 or 2 for $25

Composters

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Gifts of Securities, including appreciated stocks, bonds or mutual fund are another way to reduce your tax burden. They can be outright or a Charitable Gift Annuity. No donor info is transmitted with a stock transfer.

Grant from a Donor-Advised fund (DAF) allows recurring gifts. It is an investment account used for charitable giving to manage your tax situation.

A Charitable Gift Annuity (CGA) is often referred to as a "split gift" because a portion is an immediate donation, and a portion is invested to for future income payments. You must be 65 or older. A CGA may be funded by cash donations, securities, or gifts of personal property.

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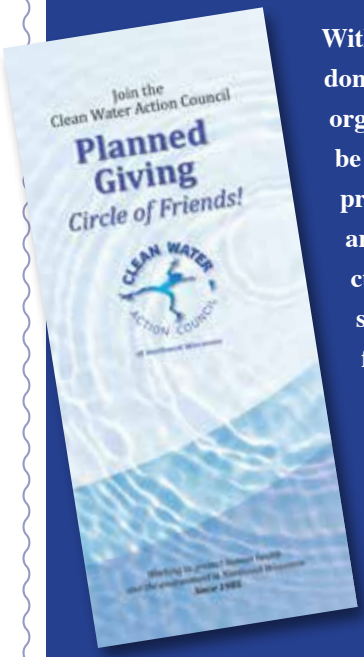

Without planned giving donations or legacies, our organization would not be able to do the work of protecting human health and the environment at its current level. Please consider supporting our endowment fund at the Greater Green Bay Community Foundation with a gift in your will or bequest.

Contact us for a Planned Giving Brochure

Join or Renew Your Membership to Clean Water Action Council for 2024!

☐ Renewal ☐ New Member Date_____

( ) $25 Individual ( ) $50 Sustaining **(this amount would really help)**

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( ) Other $_____

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

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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

☐ joining or leading one of the committees ☐ other

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

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TIME TO RENEW for 2024!

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