

to times in our lives, when we feel isolated in “fighting the good fight” as we try to shift perspectives and bring about sustainable action in our communities. The work, at times, feels never ending.

I was reminded by my friend Dillon though, that it’s very easy to get focused on the work right in front of you, but in reality, there is a lot of movement building in our community and “all we have to do is look up.” I’m grateful for good friends and timely reminders that we are not in this alone.

In preparing for this newsletter topic, I was reflecting on all of the projects I’ve been involved in personally the last few years, that are continuing to grow. This summer, we advanced food forest community educational programming through “Grassroots in the Garden,” a program in partnership between the Seymour Park Food Forest and NEW Leaf Foods. The Brown County Community Garden program continues to engage citizens in growing healthy local food.

I’ve built new connections through participating as a student in the Field to Basket Program at Ukwahwa, a non-profit farm in Oneida, that focuses on restoring healthy relationships with food and traditional culture. We’ve been weaving black ash baskets and community. I’m grateful to have been able to teach some plant medicine workshops for their programming. Valentine Gardens is doing some amazing work surrounding sustainable agriculture and youth education.

Ok, so its not so gloom and doom after all.

I wanted to ask our board members to share what they were witnessing in this last year (or in the last 40 years), as it is through these successes of what is going well, that we can further nourish those initiatives to have them flow into the other areas of our lives.

These connections are essential in creating a web of community. I think back to my own 40 year history, when had it not been for certain interactions, I would not be resourced today to serve in the roles that I do in my own community.

In high school, one of the most important influences in my life was one of my teachers Kirby Kohler. It didn’t take long after he put what is now a dog-eared copy of *A Sand County Almanac* in my hand, to influence my course towards one of community and environmental stewardship.



Environmental Science teacher Kirby Kohler leading a wilderness trip of conservation-minded teens in Wyoming. Photo Credit: Crystal Brown

I would later join our environmental outdoors club, the Hodag Adventurers (I’m from Rhinelander folks...). Kohler gave the students experiences to engage in

environmental advocacy in this group. I remember my first public comment hearing was in the early 2000s when we voiced opposition to baiting deer, due to the emerging reports of CWD in southern Wisconsin. I had the opportunity to attend an Indigenous-led water protection ceremony and demonstration, where Gaylor Nelson, former governor and founder of Earth Day, was honored and present to paddle down the Namekagon River in opposition to a transmission line that threatened the wilderness that he had worked so hard to protect.

I know now that this exposure to advocacy and the political process so early on is quite unique, and I would say that Kohler was remarkable for his efforts. He offered mentorship when I took on establishing a recycling program in my high school. I faced some opposition from the building facilities leadership at the time, but Kohler taught me about coalition building and connecting with people where they are at, and through that teaching, I made friends with the custodians and gained their buy-in and support in procuring collection containers.



A young environmentalist making cardboard recycling containers for classrooms after advocating for a program at her school. Photo Credit: Crystal Brown

This last week, in light of the PFAS consumption advisories, the news has been waying heavy on my heart. But I am reminded in sharing this story, that my elders prepared me for this. I am grateful for my teachers who taught me to write and speak and use my voice. I am grateful for having been mentored on how to navigate opposing views and build consensus to develop collective action on issues, rather than trying to muddle through the work alone. I am grateful for the passion in my belly to share what I have learned with others and empower and resource them further. I am grateful to be privileged to do this work and be able to nourish these endeavors further through it.

As you read through this edition of our fall newsletter, I invite you to be inspired by what is being shared by our contributors, but to also take a moment to reflect on all of those things happening in our own lives and communities, that continue to call us to show up to action, and that could use some nourishment right now to sustain them. Share about them...lift them up, and by doing so, be uplifted yourself.

Inspiration for Our Times - Bill Hurrle

By John Hermanson

“Struggle as we may, ‘fixing’ will never make sense out of change. The only way to make sense out of change is to plunge into it, move with it, and join the dance.”

Alan W. Watts - *The Wisdom of Insecurity*

Bill Hurrle a former CWAC Board Member, writer, educator, builder, environmental building health consultant, renewable and conservation organizational state leader joined in the dance with colorful zeal and exuberance.

Unfortunately, Bill passed away in 2009, at what now seems to many of us that knew him, the young age of 68.

There is an August 1987 article in the *Green Bay Press Gazette* (GBPG) that is titled: “One man is almost an island. Renard Isle opponent refuses to give up lonely fight,” which explains the rather complex issue and Bill’s role in participatory democracy. “What I’ve done is force due process. A public hearing is due process,” he told the *Green Bay Press Gazette*.



Bill was an avid writer. His wife Beverly Watkins shared this clip of one of his articles featured in the Green Bay Press Gazette. Photo Credit: Bev Watkins

I remember being at the hearing regarding the proposed expansion of the 55-acre Renard Isle three-fold and Bill speaking as to why it would be a folly to do so. The argument that ultimately won and was presented by Bill was his convincing case that by increasing the size of the island, it would block the Fox River’s outflow that helps stir the east shore’s waters preventing or reducing oxygen-deprived waters and death zones.

I can imagine our friend Bill’s amused laughter reading about and seeing multiple pictures of contented sheep (GBPG’s May 24, 2024) from Woolly Green Grazers taking care of Brown County’s Renard Isle vegetation.

I suspect that if he were alive today, he would have helped the county figure out that they should have had grazing sheep sooner to help control the vegetation, provide a Bay Beach tourist attraction, and do it more economically and ecologically than trying to do it by hand with county employees.



Environmental Victories for Clean Water Action Council

By Charlie Frisk

I am going to focus on two environmental battles for which Clean Water Action Council (CWAC) was the bell cow in the fight for environmental justice. The first of these was the fight to clean up polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) pollution in the Fox River and Green Bay, CWAC’s first major action and one that 40 years later they are still known for. The second was the fight to prevent the Oneida Seven Generations Corporation trash-to-energy plant from being built.



The first time that most citizens in Northeast Wisconsin learned about the presence of PCBs in the Fox River was in late July of 1985 when the Greenpeace ship, “Fri,” visited Green Bay to

bring attention to toxic contamination of the Fox River and Green Bay.

The visit occurred when Greenpeace was at the peak of its fame as an environmental organization and the media flooded in from all over the country. The visit brought national attention to the pollution problems affecting the Fox River and ultimately led to the formation of the Clean Water Action Council.



Ironically the PCB contamination of the Fox and the Bay occurred because of an industry change that was done to help the environment. In the 1960-70s many of the paper companies in the Fox Valley shifted from using pulp logs to recycling pulp from used paper. This would have been fine except for the fact that mixed in with the paper being recycled was “carbonless copy paper,” which used PCBs in its production. Recycling that paper released the PCBs and they were entering the Fox in paper plant waste streams.

Studies conducted by Bud Harris, a professor at the University of Wisconsin-

Green Bay, and his students, found that bird eggs with high PCB levels had very low hatching rates and that many of the hatchlings had birth defects such as crossed bills that prevented them from feeding and led to starvation.

Two federal agencies, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), were both convinced that a cleanup of PCBs from the Fox River was necessary if fish and wildlife were to thrive in the system and in order for fish and game, such as ducks, to be safe for human consumption. The EPA believed that a Superfund designation was the best way to ensure a cleanup of the PCBs.

Arrayed against CWAC and other environmental groups and the two federal agencies, were the executives of several paper mill companies, Governor Tommy Thompson, and the Wisconsin DNR. The paper industry and the DNR stalled the cleanup for two decades by promises of a voluntary cleanup.

Becky Katers, President of CWAC, and other environmental groups refused to let the PCB issues fade from the public's consciousness. They wrote letters to the editors of local newspapers, circulated petitions demanding a cleanup of the PCBs, and lobbied politicians and government agencies to proceed with the cleanup.

Eventually public pressure led by CWAC, as well as a realization by the EPA that the promised voluntary cleanup was never going to happen, led the EPA and Fish and Wildlife Service to exercise their authority to require a cleanup.

The Fox River was never declared a Superfund site, but an agreement was made for most of the PCBs to be removed from the river and some less contaminated sites to be capped with sand and gravel. The cleanup was paid for by the paper companies most responsible for releasing the PCBs.

The actual cleanup took from 2003 until 2020. Crews dredged 6.5 million cubic yards of sediment from the river and capped 880 acres of river bottom, which cost over \$1.3 billion. It is considered the largest and most expensive cleanup of contaminated sediments ever.

The cleanup is considered a great success. Fish are becoming less contaminated, hatching rates for fish eating birds is returning to more normal levels, and bird defects in the offspring have declined dramatically. If you would like to know more about the cleanup, the book *Paper Valley, the Fight for the Fox River Cleanup* by P. David Allen and Susan Campbell provides an excellent history.

Another signature victory for CWAC was stopping the construction of the Oneida Seven Generations Corporation gasification incinerator in Green Bay. The plan was for the incinerator to convert garbage into energy. Despite the Corporation claiming that the incinerator would be pollution free, studies done on similar facilities in Europe showed them releasing particulate matter, volatile organic compounds, heavy metals, dioxins, sulfur dioxide, carbon

monoxide, mercury, carbon dioxide, and up to 18 different toxins.

The Seven Generations Corporation originally planned to build the incinerator in Ashwaubenon but the village council voted against giving them a permit. The Green Bay City Council voted in favor of granting the permit in 2011, and this is the point when CWAC, under the direction of Dean Hoegger, sprang into action.

Members attended city council meetings to testify against the incinerator while other members held up signs throughout the entire meeting detailing the pollution the incinerator would cause. Dean Hoegger met with the mayor and many council members to explain CWAC's concerns.

Eventually the city council voted to rescind the permit. Dean Hoegger summed up the victory, "If we had not convinced the city to rescind the Oneida Seven Generations conditional use permit, the gasification incinerator would have spewed out 18 different toxic emissions over northeast Wisconsin."



THE FIRST 40 YEARS

This spring, in anticipation of the annual banquet, Board President Dean Hoegger had compiled a list of the work Clean Water Action Council has accomplished in its first 40 years. Actions range from pushing for the clean-up of toxic chemicals affecting the Fox River and Green Bay, filing petitions for water and air pollution prevention efforts, educating on the reduction of solid waste, protecting wildlife, and advocating for the reduction of pollution caused by mining. We have engaged in education and outreach regarding energy conservation, public process rights and good government practices, and topics affecting human health and the environment. We have also worked with other organizations in our community and across the state to engage in coalition building to strengthen environmental advocacy. A complete list is on our website at www.cleanwateractioncouncil.org/about

Great Lakes Area of Concern: Great Strides for Green Bay and the Lower Fox River

By Brie Kupsky

In 1988, the last seven miles of the Lower Fox River and a 21 square mile area of the Lower Bay of Green Bay were designated as a Great Lakes Area of Concern (AOC). Decades of pollution had contaminated sediments in the river and bay and degraded water quality, and urbanization and industrialization resulted in the filling of hundreds of acres of coastal wetland and other important habitat for fish and wildlife.

Since designation of the AOC, one of the largest contaminated sediment remediation projects was completed in 2020 and marks one of the most important milestones for the program. The Lower Fox River PCB Cleanup encompassed a 17-year effort that followed decades of scientific investigation and countless partnerships that led to a total of 6.5 million cubic yards of dredged contaminated sediment and 1,055 acres of river bottom to be capped or sand covered.

Long-term monitoring following the cleanup has shown a 90% reduction in PCB concentrations in river water, 80-90% in sediments, and 65% lower PCB concentration in walleye tissue in certain areas of the river. This monitoring will continue to demonstrate the incredible success of the Lower Fox River PCB Cleanup project for years to come, and monitoring results can be found at <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/foxriver>.



This Green Bay aerial view captures the extent of the area of work for the AOC.
Photo Credit: Steve Seilo

The project has also contributed to a cleaner, deeper river and bay that ensures the continued vitality of the Port of Green Bay. According to the most recent Port of Green Bay Economic Impact Study, the economic activity created by the Port of Green Bay was \$217 million while supporting 1,620 jobs in Wisconsin. A healthy port will continue to sustain and grow jobs, income, and businesses for our community.

Completion of this work also marked a new era for the AOC, as much of the habitat restoration work had to wait until the sediment cleanup was done. Beginning in 2018, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

(WI DNR) worked with local, state, and federal partners to develop a list of 12 restoration projects that will enhance and restore habitat at several locations throughout the AOC. In 2024, this list was approved by the EPA Great Lakes National Program Office which administers the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) and can be accessed at <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/GreatLakes/GreenBay.html>. Most of the funding for these projects will come from GLRI and the Fox River Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA), achieving the goals of multiple partners and programs and providing many benefits to the local community.

Since the approval of the restoration project list, all twelve projects have been initiated through feasibility or design phases, with some scheduled for construction as early as winter 2025! The WI DNR anticipates most of the restoration work to be constructed by 2030, with several years of stewardship and monitoring to follow. This accelerated timeline has been made possible through countless partnerships with local, regional, state, and federal agencies and organizations.

The AOC Local Leadership Council is an example of a new partnership that's been established to help carry out this work, and includes representatives from the Village of Suamico, Village of Howard, City of Green Bay, Village of Ashwaubenon, City of De Pere, Village of Allouez, NEW Water, Ducks Unlimited, Brown County, and Outagamie County. Many of these partners are landowners where the restoration work will take place, and the group is committed to working together to help streamline restoration efforts, identify pathways for long-term stewardship, and elevating this effort through their respective communities.



Community members are engaged in a public meeting to present the Joliet Park AOC habitat restoration design to community members. Photo Credit: Brie Kupsky

DNR and partners helping lead the restoration projects have engaged many recreational and community groups to help inform the scope of these projects through public meetings and targeted outreach. Even with these efforts, many voices in the community have not yet been heard and has driven the recent re-establishment of an AOC community advisory

committee known as the Community Waters Coalition (CWC) with support from New North and the Fund for Lake Michigan.

The CWCs core mission is to empower our community to protect and revitalize the greater Green Bay watershed and ensure that all beings have a voice and presence in its long-term health for future generations. To begin to meet this mission, the CWC is engaging in community events and soliciting input from the community through a survey that can be accessed at <https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/100e487157d0427ba91e89448c19c3aa>.

These exciting partnerships and efforts are driving the AOC ever closer to “delisting,” which allows the AOC designation to be removed. Decades of passion and stewardship for waters in northeast Wisconsin is what makes this work possible, supports our community legacy and identity, and demonstrates that together, we can accomplish incredible things.

Guest Contributor: Brie Kupsky is the Green Bay Program Coordinator in the Wisconsin DNR Office of Great Waters. She oversees coordination of the Lower Green Bay & Fox River Area of Concern and is working to develop a new program focused on restoration of the Bay of Green Bay. Prior to working at DNR, Brie researched methods to restore wild celery, wild rice, and other native aquatic species through UW Green Bay's Environmental Science and Policy Master's Program. She spent three years bushwacking through the coastal wetlands of Green Bay to complete her research, making friends with all manner of critters and developed a fondness for leeches.



Brie attending a wild rice seeding event in 2016. Photo Credit: UW-Green Bay

Community Waters Coalition: One Water, Many Voices

By Crystal Brown

In July of 2024, there was a call for community members to participate in the development of a Citizen Advisory Committee that would focus on integrating the community's voice into environmental work in the Lower Green Bay and Fox River Area of Concern, and the Green Bay Conservation Blueprint. This initiative was a collaborative effort between the Wisconsin DNR's Office of Great Waters and New North, funded by a grant from the Fund for Lake Michigan. It was an opportunity for citizens to be involved in influencing decision-making processes and policy development for Area of Concern projects, as well as help influence the connection of the community with its surrounding waters.

In the summer of 2024, I participated in the information sessions and was interviewed, and in the fall joined what has now evolved into the Community Waters Coalition, a citizen advisory committee representing a diverse array of voices and backgrounds including members of both the Oneida and Ho-Chunk Nations and the education, agriculture, conservation, and health sectors. I have been serving as the chair of our group. At the end of this newsletter, I have shared an excerpt of my application that I submitted for this work, to share more of the “why” behind my participation.



Members of the Community Waters Coalition paddle Duck Creek in August 2025 to learn more of the restoration initiatives taking place in order to share these with the public.
Photo Credit: Community Waters Coalition

We've had the opportunity to form relationships with each other and our surrounding waters, engaging in site visits to the multiple Area of Concern projects along the Fox River and Green Bay, expanding our understanding of the work taking place which will help us further engage the greater public in supporting a restorative relationship with the surrounding land and waters. We have built relationships with DNR employees engaged in this work and are engaging the public at area events and through surveys to gather information on how they interact with the water. We are beginning to focus on the educational outreach we would like to implement in order to strengthen these community relationships and to increase inclusion and accessibility toward knowledge and experiences with this work.

Over the last year, our monthly meetings have been something I look forward to. Our members of the coalition are passionate and stewards of their communities. My point of view is expanded every time we connect, and we move forward in understanding how to engage the community in conservation work.

In mid-September, I'll be traveling to Toledo, Ohio, to participate in the Areas of Concern (AOC) Cross Agency Partnership Summit. It is a multi-day meeting focused on bringing together federal, state, and local stakeholders to enhance efforts around the clean up and restoration of the Great Lakes Areas of Concern. I am looking forward to what I'll be learning from the Maumee AOC tours and connections with other organizations, and will be sharing those findings with you all, as I represent my community.

Spills Law Is Upheld: WI Supreme Court Decides in Favor of Protecting Human Health and the Environment

By Dean Hoegger



Image courtesy of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

Clean Water Action Council of Northeast Wisconsin has engaged in many legal actions since its inception in 1985, beginning with the Fox River PCB clean up. Over the last 40 years, being a party to lawsuits and legal actions has been significant work for us. Some of our key actions are noted below.

Andersen v. WDNR went all the way to the Wisconsin Supreme Court in an effort to protect citizens' rights to public hearings. We won a case against Utica Energy for hundreds of days of water violations. We settled

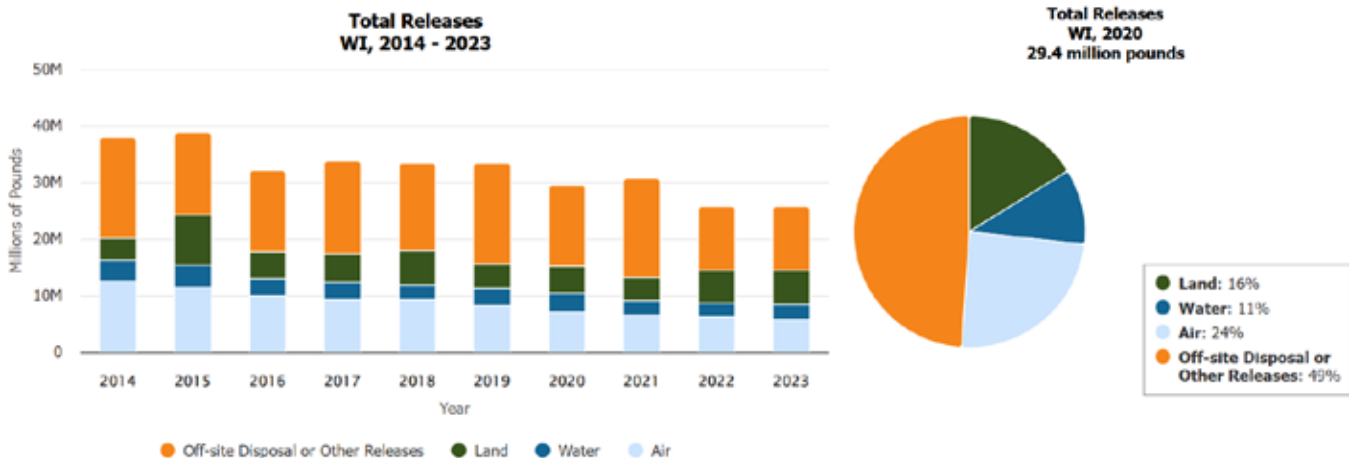
a lawsuit against Appleton Coated for air pollution permit violations, and we petitioned the Environmental Protection Agency for enforcement of the Clean Water Act and the Safe Drinking Water Act. The latter petition resulted in more protective manure spreading rules in much of northeast Wisconsin.

While these were significant actions, they all pale in comparison to the significance of upholding the Spills Law. While the initial lawsuit against the WDNR focused on its authority regarding PFAS testing and cleanup, the WDNR ultimately could have lost its authority to act against polluters of thousands of chemicals. It could also have nullified existing agreements and judicial orders for cleanup and damages from PFAS contamination. The idea that the Spills Law could be gutted and that we could return to a time when polluters weren't held accountable for cleaning up contaminated soil and water is unthinkable. Unfortunately, that's exactly what was at stake in this lawsuit.

So, what is the Spills Law? In 1978, the Legislature passed Wisconsin Statute 292.11 pertaining to hazardous substance spills. It requires immediate notification to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) of a hazardous substance discharge. It also requires responsible parties to restore the environment and minimize harm. For over 40 years the Spills Law gave

Toxic Release Inventory (TRI) of Chemical Releases in Wisconsin 2014-2023

The following charts represent releases of TRI-covered chemicals to the environment in the State of Wisconsin. A "release" of a chemical means that it is emitted to the air or water, placed in some type of land disposal, or transferred off-site for disposal or release.



the DNR authority over 80,000 registered chemicals and the thousands of new ones created each year. Few of these chemicals have been tested for their safety.

The bill also gave the DNR authority to require preventive measures and contingency plans to respond effectively to hazardous substance discharges.

The challenge to the Spills Law was brought by Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce (WMC) on behalf of a dry-cleaning company, Leather Rich, Inc. They brought a lawsuit against the WDNR, which was filed in February 2021 in a Waukesha circuit court.

WMC sought to limit the agency's ability to investigate environmental contamination and require responsible parties to clean up contaminated sites. Their claim was that the WDNR needed to establish pollutant level criteria for every chemical they sought to have jurisdiction. The process for establishing a pollutant level was through administrative law rulemaking. The rules would require approval by the Natural Resources Board and the legislature, a notoriously political process which could drag on for decades. And remember, thousands of new chemicals are created every year.

To have greater influence in this case, CWAC, and several other parties, petitioned the court to become a party to the lawsuit. The court denied our petition. Instead, Midwest Environmental Advocates (MEA) filed friends of the court briefs on our behalf in support of the WDNR's case. Unfortunately, WMC won at the circuit court level. Briefs were then filed requesting a stay of the decision until all appeals were exhausted, which the court granted. The Wisconsin Court of Appeals also found in favor of the WMC. As the case moved through the courts, MEA filed friends of the court briefs at every level. Our last hope for upholding the Spills Law and thereby protecting citizens from exposure to toxic chemicals was with the Wisconsin Supreme Court.

On June 24, 2025, the Wisconsin Supreme Court issued a ruling affirming the ability of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to protect Wisconsinites from toxic environmental pollution under the state's Spills Law! However, it is not time to rest. WMC is a powerful, well-funded lobby group who has previously challenged the WDNR's authority numerous times in court. With this loss, WMC will likely rewrite the Spills Law bill in favor of polluters and hand it to Republican legislators to enact.

Resources:

Call the 24-hour emergency hotline at 1-800-943-0003 for spills that require immediate reporting.

WisDOT's Contact List Leaks, Spills and Other Hazardous Materials Who do you contact? <https://wisconsindot.gov/Documents/doing-bus/eng-consultants/cnslt-rsrcs/environment/leaks-spillslist.pdf>

View the decision here: <https://midwestadvocates.org/wp-content/uploads/WMC-v-DNR-Supreme-Court-Decision-6.24.25.pdf>

Forming Connections Across the State: Wisconsin PFAS Coalition Summit

By Crystal Brown

On June 5, Clean Water Action Council Board President Dean Hoegger, Executive Director Crystal Brown, and Summer Intern Andrew Novy attended the 2025 Wisconsin PFAS Coalition Summit in Wausau, Wisconsin. This summit invited members of environmental non-profits and citizen groups to discuss concerns and action regarding PFAS contamination across the state. Groups and communities in attendance included: Clean Wisconsin, Wisconsin Conservation Voters, League of Women Voters of Wisconsin, River Alliance of Wisconsin, Midwest Environmental Advocates, Wisconsin's Green Fire, Citizens for a Clean Wausau, Oneida County Clean Waters Action, Sierra Club of Wisconsin, Save Our Water (SOSH2O) representing citizens from Marinette/Peshtigo, and citizens from the Town of Campbell.

The group has been meeting regularly via Zoom meetings to discuss issues and strategies and offer support to each other's organizations. During the summer months, there have been several calls to action regarding contacting elected officials regarding legislation or participating in sign-on letters, which CWAC has been a part of. The group intends to support communities that are afflicted by PFAS contamination, offering resources and lessons shared by communities that have already begun to navigate this issue. As we learn more about the recent PFAS Consumption Advisory in our community, it is reassuring to know these connections exist to support any work that is to be done.



Environmental organizations and community members join to discuss the issues and action surrounding PFAS contamination in the state of Wisconsin at the summit held on Rib Mountain in Wausau, Wisconsin on June 4-5, 2025.

Photo Credit: Clean Wisconsin

The Importance of Stream Monitoring in Northeast Wisconsin

By Debra Noel

As you drive or walk over a bridge or culvert, do you think about the water running below and all the land it winds through, where it starts and what flows into it? Do you wonder how clean it is or what lurks below the rippling surface?

There are volunteer monitoring programs that almost anyone can join and become a steward of the streams. Water Action Volunteers (WAV) is one such program that has online and in-person training to perform a series of baseline tests to determine the health of a stream in your area. Baseline monitoring consists of observations and tests like temperature, transparency, dissolved oxygen, flow velocity, biotic index—living macro invertebrates, crayfish, shell creatures, and invasive species that may be present. All of these parameters including what is there and what is not present, tell us how to rate the stream's health—Good, Fair, or Poor—which is vital to the aquatic life and the wildlife it supports, and the health of the body of water it empties into.



Debra Noel and WAV Volunteers. Photo Credit: WAV program volunteer

Around Northeast Wisconsin, the bay of Green Bay, which is the largest freshwater estuary in the world, and Lake Michigan are the receivers from most of the tributaries, but inland lakes are also important environmental ecosystems as well.

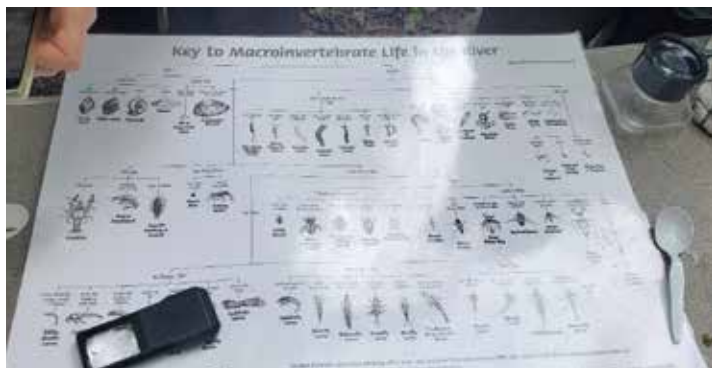


Chart of Biotic Index Life. Photo Credit: Debra Noel

One of the most important key elements negatively affecting our lakes and streams is phosphorus. Levels of phosphorus over 0.05 mg/L are considered impaired. Most of the streams in northeast Wisconsin are considered impaired because of high phosphorus levels.

Farmers want to use it and retain it in their soil for their crops, but the rain and snowmelt washes it away with soil it attaches to and into our streams then collecting in Lake Michigan, the bay, and inland lakes. In the bay of Green Bay there are dead zones caused by a lack of oxygen because phosphorus as a nutrient supplies massive algae blooms, that then die and decompose. This becomes a bacterium that consumes the dissolved oxygen in the bay creating a hypoxic environment “dead zone” where no aquatic life can survive. It can also block out light for native aquatic plants to survive.

So, we need to monitor and reduce phosphorus in all waters/tributaries entering our bay and lakes. A good book on this is Dan Egan's *The Devil's Element: Phosphorus and a World Out of Balance*. He explains this danger to our freshwater Great Lakes.

Most monitoring programs are set up for monthly testing May through October. Its purpose is to collect data to indicate the health of the stream and determine changes by calculating the Total Maximum Daily Limits (TMDL) for the various watersheds in NE Wisconsin.

Monitoring for nutrients, especially phosphorus, is part of the WAV program for volunteers and coordinators who have completed a full season of baseline monitoring. The volunteer can apply for up to three streams to collect/monitor for phosphorus. Samples will then be sent to a certified laboratory, and the cost is covered by Wisconsin DNR grants in some cases.

If there are changes in chemical, nutrient levels, and conditions of the stream that have negative impacts, the DNR specialists SHOULD make determinations for changes



Kewaunee River along the Ahnapee Trail. Photo Credit: Debra Noel

to the management plan for agricultural producers along the tributaries affected to reduce run-off. The farmer needs to comply voluntarily to make these changes and is compensated with government funds and guidance. Changes may include: creating a wider buffer zone along

drainage areas and streams, reducing manure spreading in certain fields that are prone to run off, increasing no-till practices, or planting fields in cover crops or hay fields. The best practice would be animals grazing in pasture rather than Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO), referred to as industrial farming. To go even farther, the DNR SHOULD stop issuing more CAFO permits and not allow increases to herd size.

Some individual practices can help our streams too:

- Try to have a more natural landscape instead of all lawn and use non-toxic weed killers and non-phosphate organic fertilizers.
- Plant native plants that are low maintenance and require less watering and reduce erosion, especially along lakes or streams.
- Cut down on beef and dairy products.
- Buy locally produced products from small regenerative farms.

If you see or suspect overspreading manure, spills, or heavy rain during, before, or right after manure spreading, notify the DNR Tip Hotline: 1-800 847-9367. We can all be aware and call if we see something that doesn't look or smell right in a stream, ditch, or standing water. Also notify your county, town, or city officials.

So, now you can see how important it is to have as much data and volunteers involved as a tool to reduce pollution. By monitoring our streams, we can help bring about change for the good of our beautiful precious lakes and streams, supporting aquatic life and the animals and people that depend on them.



WAV program director and volunteers monitoring the Casco Creek in spring training session. Photo Credit: Debra Noel

Resources:

See Link below for more info on the WAV Program: [Water Action Volunteers](https://share.google/8CYtK1eprkWJwuBHN)
<https://share.google/8CYtK1eprkWJwuBHN>

For Kewaunee County stream monitoring you can contact Kewaunee Co. WAV coordinator, Debra Noel at Ramsay4me@gmail.com

For Door, Brown and other Counties check this link or contact the WAV directors [2025-WAV-Local-Coordinators.pdf](https://www.dnr.wisconsin.gov/wav/2025-WAV-Local-Coordinators.pdf)

Clean Water Act Section 303(d): [Impaired Waters and Total Maximum Daily Loads \(TMDLs\) | US EPA](#)

Summer Internship: Cultivation Setback Monitoring and Cultivating Inspiration for Youth

By Andrew Novy

My summer internship through Clean Water Action Council of Northeast Wisconsin has offered me the opportunity to advance in my studies of environmental sustainability and protection practices for water resources. My name is Andrew Novy, I am a senior at UW-Green Bay, majoring in Environmental Science: Policy and Planning. I am an avid outdoorsman and strive to promote sustainability and natural resource protection.

I focused on buffer zone monitoring in Brown County. My job was to locate positive and negative examples of proper cultivation buffer zones between agricultural fields and streams. Crystal and I had worked on signs for farmers to display to recognize their best practices that were observed during my survey. Be sure to keep an eye out for them this fall! I also developed a data log for all monitored areas for future intern studies.



Buffer zones observed during cultivation setback monitoring efforts. Photo Credit: Andrew Novy

My favorite intern memory from this summer was our Bairds Creek Preservation Foundation (BCPF) Summer Camp outreach day. Crystal and I were invited to speak

to the young campers about water resource protection, harmful pollutants, and toxic algae. In addition to sampling Bairds Creek with the kids to see if harmful amounts of phosphorus and nitrogen were present, the kids also enjoyed watching me fly our CWAC drone. BCPF has already asked CWAC to return to next year's summer camps due to the positive feedback from campers and their team.



Andrew and Crystal present at the BCPF Summer Creek Camp. Photo Credit: BCPF

I would like to thank Crystal and all of the CWAC members for giving me the opportunity to further my growth in water resource protection, along with the chance to meet so many other wonderful conservation groups and individuals.

Feed the Robots

By David Verhagen

Time to feed the robots! They are relentless and have an appetite that never lags. Powered by artificial intelligence, these machines are being deployed along the conveyors at the Material Recovery Facility (MRF) in Outagamie County, sorting through everything that you put into your blue recycling bins.

They're not magic, but they work cheap and fast. They process the items we send their way so that most of it is remade into useful, new products. And they contribute to the success of the cooperative efforts of Brown, Outagamie, and Winnebago Counties (BOW) to handle our region's discarded materials.

BOW manages recycling, landfill, and hazardous waste operations, and in Brown County, they operate as an Enterprise Fund, using only revenue earned from their operations to fund all their activities, including upgrades such as AI powered robots. Their successful management has returned over \$3.3 million to their customers since 2009. It pays to recycle.



One of several High Speed Plastics sorting robots used in the Materials Recovery Facility processing our recycling. Photo Credit: David Verhagen

In addition to the curbside service, there are two other recycling programs they operate. Old tires, appliances, scrap metal, and lumber can all be brought to the Transfer Station on West Mason Street, or to the South Landfill just off Hwy 32/57 south of Greenleaf. There is a fee for most items, but it is nominal and ensures that your waste is handled responsibly.

More difficult items can be brought to the Hazardous Materials Recovery Facility on South Broadway Street.

They take items many people never think of recycling. For example, they accept all kinds of electronics; steel from paint cans, antifreeze, oil, computers, fluorescent bulbs, and batteries are some of the items that are directly recycled or reused. Items that are reusable (i.e. leftover paint) are placed in a Product Exchange Room and offered for free to anyone who will use them.

Most everyone wants a more sustainable economy. BOW staff makes it their profession. It is a business that we all have a stake in, and which depends upon our participation for its success. The MRC processes over 100,000 tons of materials each year, but that is dwarfed by the amount of trash that still gets buried in landfills.

Of course, recycling occurs across the community in addition to what BOW is doing. Most grocery stores now have bins near their entry where you can drop off your cardboard and your flexible plastics. Shopping bags, bread and produce bags, ziplock baggies, shipping envelopes, and practically any flexible plastic film wrapper you remove

from the things you bring home would clog up the machines that sort your blue bin recyclables. But the bins at grocery stores are just for those types of plastic. As long as they are clean, these lightweight flexible plastics can get recycled into the building blocks used to make brand new products.

Junkyards recycle most metals, including vehicles. Electronics are recycled by stores and by civic groups as fundraisers. Batteries can be brought to businesses such as Batteries Plus, as well as the Hazardous Waste Facility. Non-profits such as Goodwill bundle donated unsold clothes into bales that must be shipped out. A small proportion gets recycled, but most fabrics do not recycle well and wind up being dumped in landfills here or in foreign countries.

The Wisconsin DNR completed a study in 2021 that indicated more than 20% of the material in our state's landfills was food waste and other organic material. Currently they are trying to work out how to reduce this load and thus lessen the need for more landfills. It is one reason why many communities now have compost sites for residents to bring their landscaping debris. When someone solves the food waste dilemma, it will be a huge step forward.

As you can see, recycling is an industry, not just a public service. Where there is a profit to be made, recycling happens. The better we get at producing things made to be recycled, the closer we will come to sustainability.

<https://www.browncountyrecycling.org/> is the entertaining and extensive website to find out what recycles and how. No digging required. The site has graphic posters you can print from home to guide your recycling. They put meat on the bones of the "Reject, Reduce, Repair, Reuse, Recycle and Compost" philosophy.

Be careful, though. A general web search of "where to recycle plastic" will give you information that won't help much. Most of our country doesn't have markets to sell their recycled plastics. Northeast Wisconsin does. So search local. Shop local. And help develop northeast Wisconsin's road to becoming more sustainable.

Directors Comment: *"I've heard of "repair cafés" taking place in major cities across the US, and when I learned about this initiative from Jacob, I was thrilled by the idea of this spreading to our area. We can look to this group in Oshkosh as a way to bring similar events to our communities that center around sustainable living and building mutual aid."*

We're Stronger Now: Repair Cafés Mend Community

By Jacob Klaameyer

Everything wears out, but our first reaction shouldn't be to discard the broken. We look, listen, feel, smell, and probably don't taste what's worn down before deciding how to proceed. Sometimes all we need is a mend, a charge, a tweak, or a hand up and the problem is fixed.

Repair Café is a volunteer event where anyone can try to fix their items. Volunteers work together with attendees to reduce waste and consumption by sharing their skills and crafts. Everyone is invited to bring items such as clothes, furniture, tech, jewelry, bicycles, small motors, and more to be potentially repaired.



Participants at Repair Café Oshkosh. Photo Credit: Jacob Klaameyer

In May of 2025, Repair Café Oshkosh organizer Michael shared these results and reflections with all the volunteers and summarized the successes so far:

“Thank you for a great 7th Repair Café Oshkosh event. This time around we had 19 Fixer volunteers, and 52 visitors who brought in 83 items to get fixed—more than two-thirds of which were successfully fixed! Our success rate over all seven Repair Cafés is nearly two-thirds as well, with 657 items brought in since our first event in June 2023. Wow!!!

The Exit Surveys show a lot of the same awesome results as in previous events. People were overwhelmingly satisfied with their experience (5 Stars), and more than 80% of the respondents waited 30 minutes or less with the Fixer. One interesting change is that most people heard about the Repair Café from friends, which means the word is getting around! Also, we asked (on the survey) where people were coming from and while most said Oshkosh, there were about five from surrounding cities, and one person even came from South Dakota! In addition to having an item serviced, a lot of people also reported that they caught up with an old friend (11), made a new friend (8), and/or learned how to fix something (17). That makes my heart feel good!

Special shout out to Donna Stratton who, according to my records, has sewed and fixed at all seven Repair Café Oshkosh events! Super-Star Stratton!

We made \$120 from this event and donated it to the workers’ strike fund of UAW Local 291 at the Cummins plant on the UWO campus.

Further, the unquantified benefits include more conversations between neighbors, people feeling the joy of a new skill, a shared meal, and community goodwill.

Let us celebrate as we have one less problem. Fixed and reinforced, we’re stronger now.

Guest Contributor: Jacob Klaameyer is a community organizer in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, focused on actionable sustainability initiatives. Current projects include municipal ordinances that protect trees and cyclists, using foraging to encourage native plantings in public spaces, launching a tool library cooperative, advocating for homeless shelters, and creating forums for participatory democracy. Jacob is also involved with starting up the Oshkosh Tool Library.



Oshkosh Tool Library: Your Community Garage! Our mission is to provide equitable access to tools, encourage creation and repair, and foster community empowerment with education and cooperation. We’re open now and stay tuned for classes this fall and winter.

A Greener Future: Students Lead the Way at UWGB

By Peyton Zidlicky, CWAC Board Member

Green Bay communities are coming together to build a healthier relationship with our environment. This wave of positive change is flourishing at the University of Wisconsin – Green Bay, where a passionate group of students is proving that local action can have a big impact.

EPPA, the Eco Policy & Planning Alliance, is a club that brings together those interested in sustainability, urban planning, and environmental sciences. Last year, we showcased the power of hands-on projects. EPPA hosted events like upcycling workshops, where old, often unused items, were transformed into something new. We also had seed bombing activities to help grow native plants in the area. These events provided fun, accessible ways for students to engage in sustainable living.

The ambition of the club members extends beyond single events. EPPA members are involved with advocacy and long-term planning for the campus. Last school year, the club had three active committees including The Sustainability Living Learning Community, Campus Planning Project, and the Phoenix Innovation Park committee. I was a part of the last two. The Phoenix Innovation Park Committee worked to make sure student voices were heard in a major campus project. We created and distributed a survey to gather student and staff input, advocating for the campus community needs.

Another team began visionary work on the Campus Planning Project. Our idea was to transform an unused space on campus into a vibrant community garden and gathering spot. This project would provide fresh food, education, and a natural space for students and community members, strengthening the bond between people and their place. Unfortunately, this project was paused to address other pressing matters within the club. This coming year, I would





EPPA Survey tabling on campus to engage fellow students.
Photo Credit: Peyton Zidlicky

really like to work more on this project because I believe it would make a large positive impact on campus life.

Being both a member of EPPA and a board member of CWAC, I have the opportunity to bring these groups together. I think EPPA can grow its impact through collaboration and CWAC is perfect as we have similar goals. I envision these local environmental groups partnering together to host practical, skill-building workshops. Some ideas include making affordable and natural laundry soap, crafting herbal tea blends and education on the plants, and decorating wool dryer balls. These activities would empower students with sustainable life skills that are also easy on a college budget.



EPPA Students pack seeds for the Brown County Seed Library. Photo Credit: Peyton Zidlicky

This is where our broader community can play a crucial role. By offering your support, resources, or even just a collaborative spirit, established organizations can help nurture these student-led initiatives. Supporting the vision of a community garden or co-hosting a workshop does more than just complete a project; it builds a bridge between generations of advocates. It ensures that the inspiring work of caring for our environment and our health continues to flourish. The students of EPPA are ready to dig in. Let's help them grow.

Book Club: *Food Freedom*



You are invited to participate in a book club that is open to both CWAC members and the public. The first book in this series will be

Food Freedom: A Year of Growing and Foraging 100% of My Food by environmental activist Robin Greenfield.

This book highlights the journey of Greenfield who stepped outside of the destructive forces of the industrial food system, as he searched for more sustainable ways of relating to the earth through food, and building community along the way. Robin, who was born in

Ashland, WI, has dedicated his life to environmental activism and education to help others adopt healthier, sustainable lifestyles. He's been featured on many podcasts, television shows, and TEDx Talks. A limited number of books are available to share at no charge for this book club, which will begin on October 14. Join us and invite a friend! Email us to learn more details and to sign up: contact@cleanwateractioncouncil.org

More Light, Less Noise: Braver Angels

By Rick Adamski

The current political environment seems to be broken. To me, it appears that the loudest voice is perceived as a sign of strength, or a sign of knowledge. Conversations with anyone are restricted by the caution of avoiding anything that will be offensive and lead to an argument. Some of us want to provoke such arguments because maybe they believe that “fighting solves everything.”

I happen to believe that “the pursuit of the truth will set you free, even if you find it not.” Clarence Darrow is the author of that quote. Pursuing the truth is a lifelong journey for me. It is a part of my guiding principles. To pursue the truth, I must remain humble and curious. Humility helps me because I know that there are things that I believe are wrong. Curiosity helps me to be exposed to new ideas and concepts that I never was aware of.

My other guiding principle is the Golden Rule, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”

These two guiding principles have led me to explore the organization Braver Angels. They were created after the 2016 presidential election and have grown since then. They are dedicated to bridging the political divide in our country. They accomplish this by hosting classes, virtual discussions of current events, and arranging personal online meetings for people with different political views.

Wisconsin has just been affiliated with a chapter this year. There have been several meetings in Green Bay. Most of the organization's activities are present online. Two of the many classes offered by Braver Angels are, “Skills

for Bridging the Divide” and “Depolarizing Within.” They are challenging classes because I realized that I have many ‘tapes’ that I repeat to win an argument. It is hard to break those habits.

Braver Angels emphasize active listening. This skill requires us to truly listen and ask questions to clarify if what we heard is what they meant to say.

How does this apply to our mission at the Clean Water Action Council of Northeastern Wisconsin? My hope is that we can connect with many people that experience environmental pollution and want to find solutions. My hope is that meaningful change embraces all people affected. Each of us provides different perspectives and hopefully we can create new solutions from actively listening to others.

Science is an integral part of knowledge. Science is not exclusive to scientists, but all of us should participate in collecting observations of our natural world. Socrates said, “The unexamined life is not worth living.” All of us should strive to achieve these ideals of self-reflection and keen awareness. Whether we are struggling with PFAS contamination, excessive greenhouse gas emissions, groundwater, or surface water pollution, we all need to utilize our senses and the senses of others to come to solutions to these problems.

There is a story about aiming an arrow at a target. If a puff of wind occurs exactly at the time that the arrow is released, the path of the arrow may be deflected by a miniscule fraction of a degree. That is insignificant at the release point, but the arrow travels farther off target the farther it goes.

Politicians that believe in “my way or the highway” leadership model are leading the followers down a path without any self-correction or evaluation of new information.

One of my favorite podcasts is “Cautionary Tales.” The August 29th episode tells a tale like the analogy that I just described. Tim Harford relays the story of the Honda Point disaster of September 8, 1923. Seven US Navy destroyers crashed into the rocky shore off the coast of California. The tragedy was enabled by a speed trial with several destroyers traveling in tight formation from San Francisco to San Diego. There was fog involved. Information supplied to the lead commander were ignored because no one knew that an earthquake in Japan had affected the currents where they were travelling.

I want us to operate through our journey of life with more caution than what was represented by the captain of this naval flotilla. I want us to reach out to more people to learn about how our actions affect the environment and our public health. When we hear conflicting data, we should embrace the disconnect and struggle to understand it. Braver Angels may not be a savior of our current broken political climate. I hope that it can provide us with more light and less noise.

Resource: <https://braverangels.org/>

The Action in Clean Water Action Council

By Crystal Brown

I have now been in the role of Executive Director for three months, and what a summer it has been. I am grateful for the support of our CWAC Board Members, and especially grateful for that of our Board President, Dean Hoegger. As I figuratively get my feet wet navigating my new role, I’m literally getting my feet wet performing water quality sampling at Baird Creek with our interns and volunteers.

I’ve appreciated getting to connect with many of our members via phone, email, and in person, as well as the generous response from our recent renewal reminders. Your renewals and donations help us carry on our work in the community. Thank you for this support.

We’ve been making some adjustments to the formatting and frequency of our emails to make sure we send a comprehensive monthly update, yet deliver timely issue communications that are focused with what actions we all can take to address local environmental concerns.

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

Legal Actions

Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce (WMC) vs WI DNR - Victory

On June 24, 2025, the Wisconsin Supreme Court ruled to uphold the WI DNR’s authority to hold polluters accountable that fail to clean up contamination they cause. This case started in 2021 when WMC sued the WI DNR to limit the agency’s ability to do this important work. CWAC was a part of the case, with Midwest Environmental Advocates filing amicus briefs on behalf of CWAC and Citizens for a Clean Wausau, River Alliance of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Environmental Health Network, and Doug Oitzinger, a former mayor of Marinette and a current alderperson. In addition to state and local print and electronic media news stories, President Dean Hoegger was interviewed by WBAY on this important victory.

Gilbert Farms CAFO Permit - Door County

In August, CWAC submitted a formal request for a public hearing, on behalf of our members and the community, regarding the proposed permit to expand the Gilbert Farms by over a thousand animals in the community of Sevastopol. Board Member Debra Noel reached out to area organizations and elevated the attention of this issue, while Board President Dean Hoegger provided mentorship regarding the public hearing process. As of the time of submitting this newsletter for publication, a hearing date has not yet been sent, but members will be notified when it is, and what next steps there are to take. CWAC will continue to monitor notices for new water pollution permits and renewals and send alerts to our readers via email.

Sign-On Letters

CWAC has signed-on to three letters from July to September, in regards to both state and federal PFAS legislation, as well as a letter in opposition to the PERMIT ACT, which poses risk to the Clean Water Act.

Educational Efforts

I've appreciated the opportunity to engage our community through educational presentations, drawing on experience from my background in health care, education, and environmental education. I was able to represent CWAC at the following events:

- Food, Climate, and Policy Roundtable event organized by NEW Leaf Foods on the NWTC Campus in Green Bay on June 14.
- Baird Creek Preservation Foundation's Summer Creek Camp educating youth on water quality and sampling on August 7.
- Waters that Teach Environmental Educators Event hosted by NEW Water at the Jack Day Environmental Education Center on August 18.
- Environmental Coalition Partners Wild Edible and Medicinal Plant Hike at Christa McAuliffe Park in Green Bay on August 19, where we were joined by the Baird Creek Preservation Foundation staff and board members, along with City of Green Bay Staff and Green Bay Conservation Corp Crew (GBCC). Members of the DNR AOC Project team and Community Waters Coalition also attended, as well as CWAC Board Member, Charlie Frisk. The CWAC Board gifted the GBCC AmeriCorp Crew with membership, in recognition for their service and commitment to conservation over this last year.



Summer Intern Andrew Novy saves a crayfish from fishing line after showing children water sampling techniques at Baird Creek. Photo Credit: Crystal Brown

At the time of this publication, we will have also represented CWAC at the following events:

- World Peace Event in Appleton, on September 13.
- Bonnie Raitt Concert in Green Bay, on September 17.
- Areas of Concern Cross Agency Partnership Summit in Toledo, OH, September 16-18, with Crystal Brown representing not only CWAC, but also the Community Waters Coalition Citizen Advisory Group and the Green Bay/Lower Fox River Watershed and community.

We are currently working on scheduling a Neonic/Neonicotinoids presentation in collaboration with the NEW Master Gardeners this winter, as a result of public requests for this topic. We are also preparing presentations for the



Environmental community partners come together to learn what wild edible plant relationships have to teach us about community and our responsibilities to environmental stewardship. Photo Credit: Cailie Kafura

Green Bay Men's Club and Green Bay Saturday Farmers Market in October.

Additional PFAS Education Sessions

In light of the recent news of the WI DNR's PFAS Consumption Advisory for waterfowl in the bay of Green Bay on September 4, we are increasing our offerings of PFAS educational presentations and outreach to area anglers and sports groups. If your

organization or public group would like a presentation on PFAS health risks, or other topics, such as the focus of our summer newsletter, microplastics, please reach out to us via email to schedule at: contact@cleanwateractioncouncil.org

Actions to Protect and Monitor Water Quality

Cultivation and Runoff Monitoring Near Waterways.

We are pleased to report that we have continued to conduct summer monitoring of runoff from cultivation near waterways, with the help of our Summer Intern Andrew Novy.

Water Sampling at Baird Creek

We have continued to collect water samples at Baird Creek throughout the summer as part of the DNR's Lower Fox River Watershed Monitoring Program for water quality including levels of phosphorus. We will continue to do so through October. We trained volunteer Mary Platten and completed a successful handoff of the project between our Summer Intern Andrew Novy and oncoming Fall Intern Isabella Kramer.



Water Sampling Handoff: Crystal and Summer Intern Andrew Novy show Fall Intern Isabella Kramer the water sampling procedures we complete during summer and fall months. Photo Credit: Crystal Brown

Water Sampling at Casco Creek Continues

In 2024 board member Debra Noel had water samples tested from Casco Creek downstream of the Kinnard Farm where the Vacor manure treatment system is being installed and may be operational soon. Water sampling was done to obtain a baseline for water quality before the system goes operational. The system will treat the farm's liquid manure before being discharged into the creek. Water quality monitoring will continue in 2025.

Other Actions

CWAC Attends Meetings with Other Environmental Groups

In addition to my representation of CWAC at the Community Waters Coalition - Citizen Advisory Committee, during this summer, I attended area environmental presentations, conferences, and meetings to continue building connections with our partners to strengthen our actions in the community. These events included:

- Harmful Algae Blooms Conference hosted by NEW Water at UW-Green Bay
- Wild River's Act Anniversary hosted by River Alliance in Florence, WI
- Green Bay Local Leadership Areas of Concern Update Group
- Intertribal Manoomin Camp hosted by GLFWIC and UW Madison at the North Lakeland Discovery Center in Manitowish Waters.

CWAC's Non-Profit Status

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

THANK YOU TO OUR MEMBERS WHO RENEWED FOR 2025

If you have not renewed, please know that memberships are for a calendar year. To check your membership status, look at your address label which shows your last renewal year or in the body of the email for emailed newsletters. You can mail your membership donation with the enclosed form or go online to <http://www.cleanwateractioncouncil.org/membership/>.



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

Meet CWAC's New Intern: Isabella Kramer



Isabella Kramer is a junior at St. Norbert College, majoring in Political Science with a minor in Spanish. She is passionate about public policy, equity, and community-based advocacy. She has experience in environmental education, youth development, and

peer mentorship. Isabella is looking forward to working on community education initiatives during her time with CWAC. She values the opportunity to support outreach efforts and promote environmental awareness. Isabella hopes to attend law school and pursue a career in public interest law to advocate for systemic change and underserved communities.

In Closing...

By Crystal Brown

I want to share an excerpt from my application to join the Community Waters Coalition, the stories of which speak to my commitment to the water and community, and transfer into the ways I intend to be present for Clean Water Action Council. It will be some time before I get to meet all of our members, and I look forward to those opportunities over the coming year. In the meantime, I invite you to read this longer piece of how I intend to nourish what is going well in our work.

Excerpts from Community Waters Coalition:

Four years ago in August, we had a gathering on City Deck next to the Fox River. People from all over the state came to speak out about the impact on the water and the people affected by the Enbridge Line 5 project, as well as a call to water protection in general. It was an Indigenous-led initiative organized by Communities United by Water.

I remember a Water Protector, Sandy, getting up to address the crowd and simply started by singing, something that I had never heard before. People hushed as the Nibi (Water) Song poured from her mouth in Anishinaabe language.

*"Ne-be Gee Zah-gay-e-oo (Water, we love you).
Gee Me-gwech-wayn ne-me-goo (We thank you).
Gee Zah Wayn ne-me-goo (We respect you)."*

I think of her singing that song every time I walk, run, or ride my bike on that boardwalk...

After the rally, we all gathered to walk as a group to demonstrate our desire to protect the water. I got to help Sandy hold the banner for their group, and by my side was Brandon, a mere acquaintance at the time, but a man I would get to love like a brother and dear friend over the coming years, as we would net whitefish together and harvest rice and connect at future water protector gatherings.

Brandon offered a teaching at the time as we were crossing the Dousman Street bridge. He said that at one time, the Fox River was lined with wild rice and it had filled the bay, and people lived on the shores here and fished and harvested. I think of that every time I cross that bridge now, and see the rip rap, train tracks, and concrete warehouses.

Over the years, as I continued to deepen my relationship with the land and the water and following the seasons, I learned more lessons from others through listening and observing. I showed up when I could, and shared news when I couldn't, and ever increasingly made moves to live in a good way, that were gentler on others.

This last fall, while I was whitefish netting with Brandon, I was sharing with him how I had not yet been able to plant my share of wild rice to reseed or expand waters in order to give back. I had become overextended with the demands of balancing work and family health matters and the self-indulgent minor dramas of a break up...the human condition.

We all have the best of intentions in showing up, and yet we are all trying to survive our responsibilities in a society that doesn't prioritize moving slow and seasonally and communally. I am grateful for the areas of my life where I am privileged to resist this grind.

I was conveying to him how I was disheartened, and Brandon yet again offered another teaching to me, as we were standing under towering red pines along Trout Lake in northern Wisconsin. The snowflakes falling down, and the crack of wood and flames twisting upward. I described the bucket full of seed rice yet to be planted, and he said to me:

"Girley, just go and put it in the river. That water knows what to do with it far more than we ever will. The river remembers the rice."

Later that week I went to Duck Creek, to the landing not far from the 41 over-pass. The water was so very low... mud banks extending into areas I've paddled previously. I tried putting a handful in the water near the landing, seeing if it would go. It just floated off, bound to be bird food, but still doing good work. I put the remainder in a different location farther upstream, thinking of Brandon's words to me.

"The water remembers..."

Can we remember?

I doubtfully dumped my bucket amongst the rip rap and rocks that contain a once wild shoreline that had been teaming with wildlife many years ago. This change of seasons has come up quickly now, and it is time to once again prepare for wild ricing.

This past week I was able to take a friend with me to Duck Creek to test out his canoe paddling abilities, as I have great expectations of him this ricing season. I wanted to teach him how to pole the boat and practice showing him how I would knock rice, while in water that would simulate the depth of waters that we will be heading to this next

weekend. I would much rather have us tip in Duck Creek now, then to lose a boat full of rice several hours away from home later.

He did rather well, and was patient and attentive for my stories. I took him to the end of Duck Creek, that part just before it opens up to the bay. I was telling him about this very committee for the Area of Concern, and my desire to be a part of it, all the while pointing out painted turtles on the logs, and kingfishers careening overhead as the sun started to set lower in the sky.

The arrowhead plants along the banks are thick and fat...and all I could say to him was a wish that the water and sediments will one day be clean enough, that someone could come here and harvest Wapato. And then I saw a flutter westward in the falling sunlight...

A sora rail! A creature I call a "rice bird," as I have only seen them hiding in thick patches of wild rice on northern waters.

My friend saw a creature swimming in the distance, maybe a muskrat, a beaver, an otter? I looked north to catch a glance, and then there it was...a silhouette about 15 yards away. The creature had submerged itself by then, but something was growing on the water.

Even with the distance, I could tell it was wild rice just finishing up being in flower. We paddled closer and I examined the stalk, the hollow kernels starting to form at the top. Little patches speckled the water and the further west you looked, there was more. My heart was full of joy...there was rice in Duck Creek!

My elder and dear friend, Nick, once told me that wild rice is a good indicator of water health. For it to be there the water needs to be at a certain quality. Things are changing for the better.

I ended up posting a photo on my social media later that evening, sharing my joy. A good friend from up north, Jacob, reached out to me, asking me where I had found it... and after telling him it was on the Bay, he said:

"The whole lake community will prosper...Diversity abounds where the Manoomin grows."

Now I am not naïve to think that my hand full of rice had any type of contribution to what I saw that evening... No, I am certain I only fed geese. BUT that rice growing was certainly planted by someone who loves water and loves all of the people and the other creatures. And I believe in order to bring health to the water, we need to know it and love it and have a relationship with it that is so very intimate and nourishing.

I was brought up in a time when those connections were not the focal point of my culture, but I have had privilege to build relationship with the water and the land and be gifted experiences from others who love the water and have shared that relationship with me. It is my responsibility to be a part of the work that extends this invitation to build relationship to others. This work that we do is for the water and for each other.



SAVE THE DATE!

Tuesday, October 7, 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM

CWAC 40th Anniversary and Dean Hoegger's Retirement Celebration

Riverside Ballroom, 1560 Main St., Green Bay

Join the leadership team of CWAC and members for an evening of celebrating 40 years of Clean Water Action Council's work to protect the environment and human health, while congratulating Dean Hoegger on his recent retirement from his service as Executive Director. Enjoy hors d'oeuvres, beer, wine, and a cash bar.

RVSP by email or phone by October 1 – 920-421-8885 or contact@cleanwateractioncouncil.org

Wednesday, October 8, 6:00 PM – 7:00 PM

CWAC Presents: Protecting Your Family from PFAS

Brown County Library: Central Branch, 515 Pine St., Green Bay

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

Saturday, October 11, 7:00 AM - 12:00 PM

CWAC at Green Bay Saturday Morning Farmers Market

Washington St., Green Bay

Come visit with Crystal Brown, Executive Director of CWAC, at the Saturday Morning Farmers Market. She will be sharing information on our latest events, educational efforts, as well as being available to talk about the recent announcement of the PFAS Consumption Advisory for the bay of Green Bay. Grab a coffee and come chat!

Thursday, September 25, 4:30 PM – 7:30 PM

Fall Planet Potluck

Town Hall Bakery and Daily Special Café, 6225 WI-57, Sturgeon Bay

The season is a changin' and the Climate Change Coalition of Door County is having a potluck! Join us at Town Hall Bakery to celebrate the onset of fall and share a meal. This year, there will be a special guest, Emily Wood, Executive Director of the Door County Land Trust, who will share an exciting update on broadening conservation efforts to include working lands! Bring a dish to share and your favorite place setting. As always, there will be a prize for the best place setting! This is a family friendly event. Sign up to bring a dish at https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf1N_OEc-VX7Aek6Hu_3zjFb2o3IICdpmCY1-0YXTM-52GILg/viewform?mc_cid=913b1ec4c7&mc_eid=9654830fcd

Saturday, October 25, 8:30 AM – 1:00 PM

Door County Master Gardeners Association's 2025 Fall Seminar

Crossroads at Big Creek, Collins Learning Center 2041 Michigan St., Sturgeon Bay

After a 7-year hiatus, the Door County Master Gardeners Association's Fall Seminar is back! The Fall Seminar is an opportunity to take a deep dive into an educational topic and to socialize with local gardening enthusiasts. This year's topic is Gardening with Natives for Birds, Butterflies, and Bees and consists of two presentations AND lunch. David Garison Stevens, Curator-Longenecker Horticultural Gardens, UW-Madison Arboretum, will present Native Shrubs and Trees for the Birds and Bees, and Emily Stone, Naturalist and Education Director at the Cable Natural History Museum will present Why Monarchs Need Volcanoes. Register for \$10 at <https://doorcountytickets.com/organizations/door-county-master-gardeners>

Saturday, November 1, 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM

Wisconsin Society for Ornithology Annual UnConvention

UW-Green Bay's S.T.E.M. Innovation Center, 2019 Technology Way, Green Bay

Join the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology for a casual "birdy" day talking about monitoring birds, falconry and conservation, wild rice restoration, bird population studies, birdwatching, and more. Enjoy a wide variety of talks that include eBird for beginners or advanced eBird for current eBird users. This UnConvention is an opportunity to participate, engage, and network during the day. Registration includes morning coffee and box lunch. Tickets are \$25 for general admission and \$15 for students. To register for this event, visit <https://www.wsobirds.org/about-wso/news/1978-wso-unconvention-2025>



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The Sisters of St. Francis

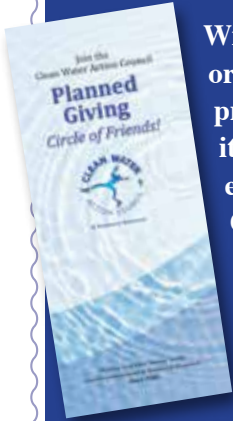
for supporting our student interns and public education efforts.

~

Mary Carlson

for her generous support of our work.

Join Our Planned Giving Circle of Friends



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

*Contact us for a
Planned Giving
Brochure*

Wondering what to do with your required minimum distribution?

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

What is a qualified charitable distribution?

Starting at age 70 ½ you can choose to gift up to \$108,000 annually directly to a qualified charity from most IRAs, with the distribution being tax free.

This type of gift is called a qualified charitable distribution (QCD). It's not only a powerful incentive for charitable giving, it also has tax benefits. QCDs count as IRA distributions, so they can be used to satisfy all or some of your required minimum distribution (RMS) for the calendar year.

What type of organization qualifies for my donation?

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

Office location:

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www.cleanwateractioncouncil.org



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

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

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To become a member of CWAC, go to
<https://www.cleanwateractioncouncil.org/membership/>

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