



WSNetwork News

February 15, 2003

News on issues of common interest to Wisconsin's sporting, conservation, and environmental communities.

Click on these WSN priority issue section links or scan the Acrobat bookmarks on the left:

- [Arrowhead-Weston Transmission Line](#)
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New 2003 issues adopted by WSN member groups

These issues will change in the next issue of *WSNetwork News* to reflect the issues vote at the WSN's Feb. 15 conference. Click [here](#) to see the results of the WSN's issue selection vote at our Feb. 15 conference.

Arrowhead-Weston Transmission Line

DNR Independence and PIO Restoration

Factory Farming

Forest Fragmentation

Higher funding proposed for land legacy program in FY 2004

For fiscal year 2004, the President's budget will propose \$90.8 million for the Forest Legacy Program. The \$90.8 million request is a \$21 million dollar increase over fiscal year 2003. Forest Legacy is a program administered by the Forest Service that grants funds to the states to purchase

Attention 501(c)(3) nonprofit groups that lobby: new bill may change your splits for "grassroots" and "direct"

We have learned from the Alliance for Justice that the rules for nonprofits who engage in lobbying may be changing in an important way. Groups who lobby have to track their "grassroots" and "direct" lobbying, paying attention to the percentage of time devoted to each. These rules may change. Click [here](#) for more.

conservation easements on private lands. It helps insure that large chunks of private and industrial lands remain intact.

SOURCE: U.S. Forest Service, January 1, 2003.

Update on Land Legacy funding for Wisconsin

Last fall, the WSN and ECCOLA helped organize a trip to Representative Dave Obey's (D-WI) office to urge the Congress and President to increase support for the Land Legacy Program. Joining the WSN and ECCOLA were representatives of cross-country skiing, snowmobile, and logging organizations, and the Wisconsin DNR. The diverse assemblage of participants all shared one thing in common. We don't want to see the Northwoods chopped up into small pieces through residential development.

It appears that the support for the Forest Legacy Program by the WSN and many other groups is working. Last year, the Wisconsin DNR announced that it protected 35,000 acres in Oneida and Lincoln County with \$5million in funding from Forest Legacy funds. The DNR has plans for another 35,000 acre easement for this year if funding comes through. According to the Forest Service, the United States loses almost 4,000 acres of open space of which about 2,000 acres of forestland every day.

SOURCE: John Schwarzmann, eccola@newnorth.net.

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Groundwater Protection

WAL, others push Governor on motorboat gas tax update in budget

The Wisconsin Assn. of Lakes alerted people across Wisconsin to contact Governor Doyle's office to ask that his budget include an update of the motorboat gas tax formula that directs gas taxes from DOT to DNR.

"Please contact Governor Doyle and let him know you would like to see a continued commitment of motorboat gas tax revenue into a special water resources account and that you support an increase in the formula from 50 gallons of gasoline/motorboat/year to 75-100," their alert stated.

"This current estimate of motorboat gas tax used annually is 75-100 gallons/boat/year and should be updated accordingly. Raising the motorboat gas tax formula from 50 gallons/motorboat/year to 100 would result in an addition of \$8.5 million a year to the Water Resources Account. This is not a new tax, but a reallocation of existing gas taxes collected."

SOURCE: WI Assn. of Lakes, dsefton@execpc.com.

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Coalition to monitor Florida water issues

A story in the St. Petersburg *Times* on Feb. 4 says, “Environmentalists have formed a coalition to keep an eye on legislation they believe threatens supplies of water and to promote bills to better protect its purity. Among issues the Florida Water Coalition will follow are efforts to privatize public water supplies. The group also wants to make sure developers consider wildlife as existing or competing water users when they apply for permits.”

SOURCE: SERC *Wildlines Report* Vol. II, No. 6, February 10, 2003, wildlines@serconline.org.

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Reports on water privatization available

Water privatization can be a confusing term, but it is used primarily to describe the management of public water utility functions by private companies under contract with local governments. More information is provided in the following reports.

The Water Barons, released on February 3, 2003, is an international investigation by the **International Consortium of Investigative Journalists**, which is a project of the Washington-based **Center for Public Integrity**. The report was supported by grants from the Park Foundation, Inc. and the Fund for Constitutional Government. The **Pacific Institute for Studies in Development, Environment and Security**, located in Oakland, CA, has also published a report about water privatization entitled “The New Economy of Water.” This report was released in February of 2002. A 10-part story, the report covers privatization issues in various countries, including the U.S. To read the report, visit the **Center for Public Integrity’s web site**.

Another report entitled “The New Economy of Water: The Risks and Benefits of Globalization and Privatization of Fresh Water” looks at the dangers and benefits of water privatization, offers case studies from around the world, and sets forth principles designed to help guide privatization deals. To read the report, visit the **Pacific Institute’s web site**.

No more cheap water?

According to “AZWaternews,” cheap water could become a thing of the past as supplies dwindle. If you are lucky enough to be on a water system, it may not seem like it when you write the check to pay the bill every month, but water is cheap in the West. Not only do Arizonans pay some of the lowest residential rates in the nation, the state’s farmers tap into reliable, subsidized sources that allow them to survive a shifting economy.

All that could change soon. Years of growth and a lingering drought are straining resources and giving weight to arguments that water should be treated as a valuable commodity, even if that means consumers wind up paying more. SRP collects about \$10 per acre-foot from its municipal customers, a rate that hasn’t changed much in years. The Central Arizona Project, a \$4 billion canal that brings water to Phoenix from the Colorado River, charges cities about \$105 per acre-foot.

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Starting this month, SRP began to reduce the amount of water it delivers by one-third to help protect its drought-battered reservoirs. That means most cities will have to use more groundwater or more CAP water. In two or three years, several urban Phoenix Indian communities will control much of the surface water available for future growth. Although some of tribes say they intend to keep the water to revive long-dormant farms, water experts believe the right price would pry loose some of the supplies. Tribes have been reluctant to talk price publicly, but one attorney told a group of city officials that the cost could start as high as \$1,100 per acre-foot. An acre-foot is about 326,000 gallons, or enough to supply a five-person household for one year. Source: Arizona Republic, AZ WaterNews

SOURCE: WDNR "Basin Briefs," Feb. 5, 2003.

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Mercury Reduction

AB 23 introduced to ban sale of mercury thermometers

Wisconsin Assembly Bill 23, as introduced, would ban the sale of most mercury thermometers. This is a companion bill to the bill in the senate, SB 10. The history and text of the bill is found at <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/2003/data/AB23hst.html>.

SOURCE: John Reindl, Reindl@co.dane.wi.us.

Mercury-free vehicles legislation introduced in Rhode Island

Rhode Island legislators have introduced H 5356 the Mercury-Free Vehicle Act in the Rhode Island General Assembly. The bill would reduce mercury in the RI environment by removing mercury from end-of-life vehicles, create a collection and recovery program for mercury switches removed from vehicles in the state, and establish systems to deal with mercury storage and the phasing out of mercury in future vehicles models. The bill is being supported by Clean Water Action and the RI Auto Recyclers Association. For more on mercury legislation, visit <http://www.serconline.org/mercury/index.html>.

SOURCE: SERC *Wildlines Report* Vol. II, No. 6, February 10, 2003, wildlines@serconline.org.

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California AG sues grocers over lack of mercury warnings

An Environmental News Service story dated January 27 notes "California's Attorney General recently filed suit against five grocery chains to force them to post warnings about the presence of mercury in the fish they sell. Under California's proposition 65, a ballot initiative passed in 1986, businesses must provide clear and reasonable warning of exposure to known carcinogens and reproductive toxins. Mercury and methylmercury, which can cause neurological damage, both fall in this category, and are both found in fish. Undercover testing by two environmental groups

found high levels of mercury in fish from the five stores, prompting the suit. Attorney General Lockyer also cited public health agency warnings against consuming large amounts of tuna, swordfish and shark because of the high levels of mercury they contain. These fish are especially dangerous to pregnant women and nursing mothers. For more on how your state can deal with the dangers of mercury, please see <http://www.serconline.org/mercury/index.html>.

SOURCE: SERC *Wildlines Report* Vol. II, No. 5, February 3, 2003, wildlines@serconline.org.

Metallic Mining

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Shoreland/Wetlands

WI Trout Unlimited publishes polluted runoff toolkit

The Wisconsin Council of Trout Unlimited has published a polluted runoff toolkit for their members to use in helping implement Wisconsin's new polluted runoff rules. The toolkit focuses on two areas of action:

- reporting possible problems based on trout fishers' unique perspective of getting off the beaten path to view potential runoff problems areas not seen by others and
- working with land owners to correct problems in the same cooperative manner TU does when they work with land owners to conduct stream improvements and seek streamside easements.

The toolkit has many useful tables on funding programs. It also brings together all the WDNR and DATCP fact sheets on the nonpoint rules. The toolkit is available online at www.WisconsinTU.org.

SOURCE: Jack Bode, jbode@gklaw.com, Wisconsin Trout Unlimited.

WI Academy's Year of Water web site is up and running

The Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters' Year of Water web site is now up and running at www.wisconsinyearofwater.org. Many of the pages are still under construction (the calendar needs some formatting work still). I will be sitting down with the designer next week to go through page by page with refinements, so let me know tomorrow (or by e-mail) if you have suggestions.

SOURCE: Shaili M. Pfeiffer, Waters of Wisconsin Associate, Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters, 1922 University Avenue, Madison, WI 53726-4099, (608) 263-1692 x21, smpfeiffer@wisc.edu.

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Wisconsin wins national volunteer award

The Wisconsin Earth Team, the volunteer arm of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), won the National Volunteer Service Award presented at the National Association of Conservation Districts meeting in Orlando recently. The Wisconsin Earth Team has enrolled 205 volunteers who contributed 26,000 hours last year assisting with natural resource work throughout the state.

Wisconsin earned the award for creative use of volunteers to help conserve land and water resources. Most noteworthy is the NRCS Conservation Internship Program. Last summer, NRCS enrolled 31 student interns to work with farmers and landowners on wildlife-habitat conservation programs to establish native grasses, shrub habitat and riparian buffers. The interns received scholarships upon completion of 500 hours of work. Money for the scholarships was donated from 10 different conservation organizations and agencies. For more information on the Earth Team or Conservation Internships, check the NRCS website, www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov under Jobs/Internships and Earth Team Volunteers.

SOURCE: Renae Anderson, NRCS, (608) 276-8732 x 227 renae.anderson@wi.usda.gov.

New guide for stakeholder involvement

EPA is pleased to announce the publication and release of a new guide entitled “Getting in Step: Engaging and Involving Stakeholders in Your Watershed.” The guide, which is the second in the popular “Getting in Step” series, features information on how to generate interest and participation in watershed assessment, planning, and management. A web-based version of the new guide (along with the previous “Guide to Effective Outreach in Your Watershed”) is posted on the EPA’s server at: <http://www.epa.gov/owow/watershed/outreach/documents/>

SOURCE: WDNR “Basin Briefs,” Feb. 5, 2003.

New EQIP under new farm bill proposed by USDA

USDA has proposed its new EQIP rule under the new Farm Bill, with a 30-day comment period. A seven-page summary of the rule is located at: http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/farmbill/2002/pdf/EQIP_rule_sum_030130.pdf. The entire rule (36 pages, including the preamble, which is also worth reading) is at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/farmbill/2002/rules/eqip030130.html>

The preamble states the following 4 national priorities for use of the EQIP funds: “NRCS has identified the following National priorities”:

- Reductions of nonpoint source pollutants;
- Reduction of emissions;
- Reduction in soil erosion and sedimentation from unacceptability high rates on highly erodible land; and
- Promotion of at-risk species habitat recovery.

One other interesting note: The Farm Bill States that EQIP will be funded at \$1 billion in 2004. Just today, USDA announced that the President's budget proposal for 2004 will be \$850 million. However, there is a separate administration proposal to fund technical assistance. There has been a huge dispute involving USDA, OMB and other government offices regarding whether TA should be funded out of the programs (EQIP, CRP) or be over and above the authorized amounts for those programs. You can expect major fights about this, but the bottom line is that the Administration's proposal is for \$850 million to go on the ground, way more than we've ever seen before.

SOURCE: WDNR "Basin Briefs," Feb. 5, 2003.

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Comments sought on IJC Great Lakes diversion report

The U.S.-Canada International Joint Commission is asking the public to comment until March 3 on its forthcoming report on preventing diversions and protecting Great Lakes water quantities. The report could have a significant impact on proactive efforts by the region's provincial, state, and federal governments to protect basin waters from export, diversion, and misuse. Find preliminary materials prepared for the report on the IJC's Web site at www.ijc.org/pdf/tf_finale.pdf. Find also a 2,000-page report issued by the IJC on the same issues at www.ijc.org/boards/cde/finalreport/finalreport.html.

The comment deadline is Monday, March 3. Please take a look at the task force materials and write the commission about these or any other concerns and recommendations you may have related to the materials or the commission's eventual final report. Be sure to include in your comments a description of any water quantity problems you know are occurring in your area.

You can reach the Canadian section of the commission at commission@ottawa.ijc.org, or by calling Fabien Lengellé at (613) 995-0088. You can reach the United States section at commission@washington.ijc.org, or by calling Frank Bevacqua at (202) 736-9024. For more information, write Reg Gilbert at reg3@glu.org or call (716) 886-0142.

SOURCE: Reg Gilbert, reg@glu.org.

Michigan environmental groups lobby for wetlands

The Associated Press on Jan. 17 reported, "Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm promised during her campaign that she would protect crucial wetlands, taking steps to buy threatened areas with revenue from an expanded bottle deposit law if necessary. Yet even with that pledge in place and key lawmakers, environmental groups and state bureaucrats intent on beefing up protection of Michigan swamps and bogs, the outlook for Michigan wetlands is murky. The state's general fund, which supports environmental programs, is estimated to be \$158 million in the red this fiscal year and facing a shortfall of more than \$1.5 billion in the fiscal year that starts October 1. Environmentalists agree that despite the demands on general funds, wetland protection should be

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a priority.” For more on protecting wetlands, please see <http://www.serconline.org/wetlands/index.html>.

SOURCE: SERC *Wildlines Report* Vol. II, No. 5, February 3, 2003, wildlines@serconline.org.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

League compiles Supreme Court voter’s guide

The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin [has compiled a] nonpartisan “Voters’ Guide” for the Tuesday, February 18, 2003, Primary Election. This Guide includes only the responses from the three candidates for Wisconsin Supreme Court. The Guide that will be published for the statewide April 1 elections will additionally include responses from the candidates for three Appellate Court districts, all of which are uncontested races. Also in that edition, we hope to include information on the statewide referendum for an amendment to the State Constitution regarding the right to hunt, fish, trap, etc. known as the “Sporting Heritage” amendment. This will include wording of the referendum and pro/con background information on the amendment. View the guide at www.lwvwi.org.

SOURCE: WI League of Women Voters, Beverly J Speer, genfund@lwvwi.org.

NRCS intern program seeking participants

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service is seeking student interns to work on conservation activities this summer. The Conservation Internship Program offers internships in a number of counties around the state. Through partnerships with conservation groups, such as Pheasant Forever and the Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association, interns may receive schol-

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arships upon completion of 500 hours work. For more information about Conservation Internships, check the NRCS website, www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov under Jobs/Internships.

SOURCE: NRCS, Renae Anderson, NRCS, (608) 276-8732 x 227 renae.anderson@wi.usda.gov.

Senate finance committee approves new lobbying rules

The Senate Finance Committee has approved S. 256, the CARE Act of 2003, which includes a provision that would eliminate additional limits on charities that encourage citizens to speak out about legislation. Under current law, charities organized under Section 501(c)(3) of the federal tax code can lobby as long as that lobbying remains a small part of their overall activities. 501(c)(3)s can choose to calculate those limits as a percentage of their charitable expenditures. However, current law limits these charities to spend only one-fourth of their overall lobbying expenditures on “grassroots lobbying” — the attempt to get members of the general public to speak out on legislation.

While continuing to maintain the lobby limits, the provision approved gives charities the discretion to spend their total allowable lobbying budget *on any combination of direct and grassroots lobbying*. Brought together by the Alliance for Justice along with Charity Lobbying in the Public Interest, the group includes a collection of strange political bedfellows, including Focus on the Family and Gun Owners of America, along with Natural Resources Defense Council and Planned Parenthood Federation of America. Joining these groups are other national organizations including the YMCA of the USA and the American Heart Association. The Alliance for Justice will continue to provide updates on the status of this legislation. The coalition supporting this legislation spans the political spectrum.

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WSNetworkNews is published twice monthly by the Wisconsin Stewardship Network, Inc., a network of Wisconsin hunting, fishing, conservation, environmental, and other groups with an interest in protecting and preserving Wisconsin's natural resources.

The WSN's Board of Directors consists of representatives from the following organizations: Concerned Citizens of Newport, ECCOLA, Federation of Fly Fishers, Izaak Walton League of America, Lake Superior Greens, Madison Audubon Society, Muskies, Inc., Northern Thunder, Pheasants Forever, River Alliance of Wisconsin, Save Our Unique Lands, Sierra Club — John Muir Chapter, Wisconsin Association of Lakes, Wisconsin State

B.A.S.S. Federation, Wisconsin Conservation Congress, Wisconsin's Environmental Decade, and Wisconsin Trout Unlimited.

The WSN's mission is to build a cooperative network that strengthens Wisconsin's stewardship ethic for the betterment of its people and natural resources.

Editorial contributions to this e-newsletter are welcome. Send news of your group's activities relating to the WSN's priority issues to State Coordinator Todd Hanson at wsn@chorus.net.

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WSN groups adopt 2003 statewide priority issues

The WSN's member organizations voted new statewide priority issues at the WSN's annual conference Feb. 15 at UW-Stevens Point. Member groups were given the chance to vote for 8 of 10 issues on the ballot, with the top vote getters becoming the network's focus for 2003. Each member organization was given one vote. Of the WSN's 48 member organizations, 37 group representatives were present to cast ballots. The vote totals and issue statements adopted include:

(32 votes) Arrowhead-Weston: "The WSN opposes the Arrowhead-to-Weston transmission line."

(31 votes) Farm Manure Management: "The WSN supports full implementation of the Clean Water Act's goal of zero discharge of animal wastes and excess nutrients to ground and surface waters from livestock facilities."

(36 votes) DNR-PIO Restoration: "WSN supports restoration of the Office of the Public Intervenor in the Dept of Justice with the legal powers and staff lost in 1995 and restoration of the independent DNR Secretary appointed by the seven-citizen Natural Resources Board."

(33 votes) Forest Fragmentation: "The WSN will promote public policies that prevent forest fragmentation by producing a database of critical private lands to help land trusts better target areas for conservation programs, defending the integrity of our last remaining natural areas in the forest plans for state and federal forests, urging our elected officials to support the Forest Legacy & Stewardship programs, and working with concerned citizens to protect our public forests from ATV abuse."

(34 votes) Mercury Reduction: "The WSN supports a 90% reduction in mercury emissions

from coal-burning power plants and other large industrial sources to help make fish from Wisconsin waters safe to eat for everyone in the future."

(36 votes) Metallic Mining: "The WSN will work to protect Wisconsin's natural resources from unsafe mining practices, including opposing the Crandon mine as currently proposed, working to strengthen mining laws, being actively involved in the ongoing permit process, exploring options to purchase the mine site, and will maintaining mining as a statewide issue."

(28 votes) Motorboat Gas Tax: "The WSN supports adjustment of the motor gas tax allocation formula to reflect average annual consumption of 100 gallons gasoline per motorboat in the 2004-2005 biennial budget, with the allocation targeted primarily toward the traditional mix of activities funded by the Water Resources Account, including grants to local entities for lake, river, and wetland planning, protection, and restoration."

(28 votes) Shoreland Zoning: "The WSN supports improving shoreland habitat protection at the statewide level by participating in the DNR rewrite of NR 115 and strengthening local shoreland ordinances."

The two issues not gaining member support included:

(15 votes) Year of Water Celebration: "The WSN supports celebrating 2003 as the 'Year of Water' by engaging in efforts to educate the public on the need for legislation to protect Wisconsin's waters."

(26 votes) Polluted Runoff Implementation: "The Wisconsin Stewardship Network supports the effective implementation of the new state rules to control polluted runoff by the end of 2004."