



WSNetwork News

February 15, 2004

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

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WSN groups select 2004-05 priority issues

WSN member groups selected the network's new priority issues for the coming year at the WSN conference Feb. 7. Click [here](#) to review them.

Arrowhead-Weston Line

WSN issue chair: Logan Edinger, Save Our Unique Lands, edinger@centurytel.net

SOUL purchases land in A-W line's path

SOUL of Wisconsin has recently acquired close to one acre of land in the Town of Midway, directly in the path of the proposed Arrowhead to Weston Transmission Line. SOUL, Inc., has a branch group in the Duluth area, known as SOUL of Midway. This land transaction firmly cements the relationship between the two states in regards to the transmission line, as both are more than ever invested in the struggle to stop this project. SOUL's concerns not only relate to an environmentally favorable look at low voltage upgrades, local generation, coupled with both electrical efficiency and renewable resources. SOUL contends that this project will set both states on a course that will lead to an entrapment for ratepayers, as they are forced to fund bulk power transferring projects through their states, but will provide no immediate benefits for the local customers. This is certainly the case in Minnesota with the Arrowhead-Weston Project.

"We are awaiting utility contact to inform SOUL that our land is being sought for a right-of-way", stated Tom Kreager, President of SOUL. "While we anticipate the contact will come from Minnesota Power (MP), we are unsure about who actually is financing the offers, as MP had told their shareholders in 2003 they were no longer financing this project. We are, however, 100% committed to standing with the Minnesotans who continue to say no line." The American Transmission Company (ATC) is not a utility in Minnesota, but will own and operate the line. This is but one of many controversial issues surrounding this project. Local offers for land in this area have begun to be made, and many of the landowners have reported being offered over 50% less than the current

valuation of their land. Residents nearby the transmission line corridor have expressed concern about the devaluation of their property, and the ability to resell property nearby such a corridor. Some assessors have indicated valuations of total properties may be reduced by 37%.

SOURCE: SOUL, Tom Kreager (715) 693-3143

DNR Independence & Public Intervenor Office Restoration

WSN issue chair: Caryl Terrell, Sierra Club —
John Muir Chapter, cterrell@execpc.com

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Fair Motorboat Gas Revenue Allocation

WSN issue chair: Peter Murray, WI Assn. of
Lakes, ptmurray@wisconsinlakes.org

Farm Manure Management & Polluted Runoff Enforcement

WSN issue chair: Caryl Terrell, Sierra Club —
John Muir Chapter, cterrell@execpc.com

Workshops set for farmers expanding livestock operations

Wisconsin livestock and poultry operators who want to expand their farming operations are invited to attend one of three workshops in March to learn how they can plan an expansion that protects the environment and avoids costly mistakes. Such advance planning will help them obtain necessary permits more efficiently, state water quality officials say. “We want to work with farmers to give them the information they need to have a successful, smooth transition, and to help them head off potential problems,” says Russell Rasmussen, who directs the WDNR Bureau of Watershed Management. “Planning for water quality protection and effective manure management will allow operations to get their permits as efficiently as possible while helping protect the environment and address public concerns.”

The sessions will feature information on manure storage facility siting, water quality considerations, and local and state permitting processes, says Kristi Minahan, who is coordinating the workshops. Representatives from DNR, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection, and county land conservation departments will be on hand to discuss these issues and to answer producers’ questions. The workshops will primarily be geared toward operators who may reach the threshold of 1,000 animal units, the size at which a state water quality permit is required. One thousand animal units roughly equals 710 dairy cows, 1,000 beef cattle, or 2,500 hogs. The number of poultry triggering the threshold varies by operating system. Growing numbers of farmers are seeking these permits, known as Wisconsin Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (WPDES) permits, as they see expansion as a way to survive low commodity prices and other forces contributing to a decline in Wisconsin farms. Farmers with smaller operations are not required to obtain a WPDES permit but are welcome to attend the workshops and can speak with county conservationists about local permits that may be needed.

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To register, or for more information, contact Kristi Minahan at the DNR at (608) 266-7055. The workshops, which run from 10:30-3 p.m., will be held on the following dates and locations:

- **March 3, Fitchburg**, at the Fitchburg Community Center, 5510 E. Lacy Road.
- **March 16, Wausau**, at the Wausau State Patrol Headquarters, 2805 Martin Ave.
- **March 18, Appleton**, at the Columbus Club, 2531 N. Richmond St.

SOURCE: Kristi Minahan, WDNR, (608) 266-7055.

BACKGROUND ON WPDES PERMITS

In 2003, DNR received 20 completed applications for new WPDES permits from farms wanting to expand to 1,000 or more animal units. A total of 126 permits were issued in Wisconsin at the end of 2003.

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Activists tried for trespassing on non-compliant farm

In Muncie, Indiana, in a trial that some say is meant to intimidate public participation in regulating factory animal farms, two environmental activists are being tried for trespassing. Able Alves, an associate professor of history at Ball State University and his wife Carol Blakney now face up to \$5,000 in fines. Two months before the alleged trespass, the two filed a complaint against the Seldom Rest Farm with state regulators, which resulted in the farm being accused of housing 150 hogs in an unpermitted structure and of allowing manure from that structure to run into a ditch. At the time of the alleged trespass the couple had returned to the farm with a camera to document compliance. They were then spotted and charged with trespassing. While the trial is expected to be decided soon, analysts see this behavior as representing explicit intimidation tactics meant to discourage citizen watchdogs. A recent Water Keepers newsletter quoted an expert saying, these “trespass charges are similar to Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation and are a form of ‘legal harassment. Litigation is...increasingly utilized to intimidate people who cannot be influenced through pressure from employers or professional associations.” According to the Water Keepers newsletter, Seldom Rest co-owner Kaye Whitehead is chairman of the Delaware County Republican Party and president of Delaware County Farm Bureau. More at <http://www.thestarp.com/articles/3/013590-3593-004.html>.

SOURCE: Scotty Johnson, sjohnson@defenders.org.

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Forest Fragmentation

WSN issue chair: John Schwarzmann,
ECCOLA eccola@newnorth.net

Legislators call for mercury reduction in Wisconsin, Midwest

Five Wisconsin Legislators held a news conference calling for a reduction in mercury releases to the environment in combination with legislators in five other Midwestern states. In Wisconsin, the measures include the reduction of mercury emission from coal-burning plants, a ban on the installation of mercury thermostats in new construction, and a request that the DNR formulate a plan to increase public awareness on the hazards posed by mercury pollution while increasing efforts to reclaim mercury from products that are currently being shipped to landfills. The full news release can be found at <http://www.thewheelerreport.com/releases/Feb04/Feb4/0204lawmakersmercury1.PDF>.

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

MMSD working with dentists to capture mercury

Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD) Commissioners have approved a first-of-its-kind program in Wisconsin that, through the help of dentists, will be a significant tool in preventing mercury pollution from getting into Lake Michigan. Mercury found in Wisconsin rivers and lakes is primarily caused by air pollution. Wastewater treatment plants have very stringent limits on the amount of mercury that can be discharged from the plant. Dental offices are the largest source of mercury discharges to wastewater treatment plants, which are not designed to remove mercury from sewage. Used for fillings, dental amalgam is 50 percent mercury. When dental work occurs, vacuum systems remove waste amalgam from the mouth and deliver it into the sewer system. MMSD's new program will require approximately 500 dentist offices in the District's service area to install amalgam separators, devices that capture amalgam so that it can be recycled or disposed of properly.

SOURCE: MMSD.

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Groups ask DNR to adopt emergency waterway rules

Twenty-eight conservation and environmental groups have written a letter to WDNR Secretary Scott Hassett asking the DNR to propose emergency rules for the February Natural Resources Board Meeting restoring the environment regulatory standards to protect public rights in navigable waters that were removed from Chapter 30, Wisconsin Statutes, by the Legislature in 2003 Wisconsin Act 118, (which has been referred to as the Jobs Creation Act of 2003).

Specifically, the letter asks the DNR to adopt emergency rules for activities that were exempted from getting DNR permits such as the placement of certain structures, culverts, and material on the beds of lakes and streams and the removal of material from the beds of waterways. The letter requests that the rules require that the exemptions not harm fish and wildlife habitat including fish spawning, natural scenic beauty and water quality, impede navigation or in any other way harm Constitutionally established public rights in navigable waters.

“It is critically important that these rules be in place to protect the very important near-shore fish habitat especially those areas of our lakes and streams that are spawning and nursery areas for walleye and other fish,” stated Tom Soles. Executive Director for Walleyes for Tomorrow. “Our organization has spent untold amounts of money to increase fish populations in this state and we do not want to see valuable fish habitat destroyed throughout the state because the Legislature removed public rights protections from the statutes.”

SOURCES: George Meyer, Wisconsin Wildlife Federation (608) 516-5545, Steve Hiniker, 1000 Friends of Wisconsin (608) 320-5569 and Caryl Terrell, Sierra Club-John Muir Chapter (608) 256-0565.

GROUPS SIGNING DNR LETTER

The following organizations have signed the petition to the Natural Resources Board asking for emergency rules to restore navigable water protections lost in the recent Job Creation Act:

Wisconsin Wildlife Federation,
Walleyes for Tomorrow,
Wisconsin Trout Unlimited,
Wisconsin Association of Lakes,
Sierra Club,
1000 Friends of Wisconsin,
Midwest Environmental Advocates,
Wisconsin Division of the Izaak Walton League,
Clean Wisconsin,
River Alliance of Wisconsin,
Wisconsin Wetlands Association, Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters,
Wisconsin Audubon Council,
WISPIRG,
Lake Superior Binational Forum,
Trout Unlimited-Green Bay,
Brown County Conservation Alliance,
Door County Environmental Council,
ECCOLA,
Soul of Superior,
Concerned Citizens of Newport,
Mining Impact Coalition of Wisconsin,
AWARE,
Northern Thunder,
Northeastern Wisconsin Beagle Club,
Random Lake Association,
The Woodlands, and
Rock River Coalition.

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Latest tests show explosives residue in Badger-area wells

New test results confirm that explosives are present in at least two residential wells on Keller Road in the Township of Sumpter. The Army has offered free bottled water to these families. Local residents are demanding that Badger Army Ammunition Plant expand testing to ensure that all other nearby drinking water wells are safe. Officials from the WDNR, U.S. Army at Badger, and Army Headquarters held a private teleconference call last week to discuss test results that confirmed dinitrotoluene (DNT) contamination is present. Several other nearby homes were also tested but no contamination was reported. DNT is a chemical used in the manufacture of munitions and is classified as a probable human carcinogen by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The homes on Keller Road are located more than 500 feet from a plume of contaminated groundwater flowing from Badger south to the Wisconsin River and finding DNTs this far east is inconsistent with the known plume location. It is possible that another site could be a contributing source. The Settling Ponds — a 60-acre site that stretches across the entire width of the plant — is an example of another nearby source of DNT contamination in the environment. Moreover, some areas inside Badger contain primarily shallow wells leaving a significant gap in information about water quality in deeper aquifers. For these reasons, CSWAB believes broad base testing is the only way to ensure that human health is fully protected while the Army and WDNR try to figure out exactly what is happening.

SOURCE: Laura Olah, Citizens for Safe Water Around Badger, E12629 Weigands Bay S Merrimac, WI 53561 (608)643-3124 info@cswab.org.

Illinois study links seagull droppings to beach water E. coli

A Feb. 16 story in the *Chicago Tribune* reports that a new study used DNA to identify seagull droppings as the top source of E. coli bacteria in water samples collected last summer. Human waste, most likely from sewage spills, came in second. The study is the latest attempt to grapple with a high number of swimming bans every summer. There were 178 beach closings in Lake County (Illinois) last year. Chicago had 130.

SOURCE: *Chicago Tribune*.

AG office settles with Barron County hazardous waste discharger

Attorney General Peg Lautenschlager has announced that her office has reached a settlement in Barron County Circuit Court with an Ohio corporation over alleged violations of state wastewater and hazardous waste handling regulations that occurred at its Chetek, Wisconsin, manufacturing facility. The settlement was reached with Parker-Hannifin Corporation, 6035 Parkland Boulevard, Cleveland, Ohio 44124. Parker-Hannifin operates a metal finishing facility at 1715 Parker Drive, Chetek, Wisconsin 54728

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

WSN and FMR start Milwaukee-area 'Green Bay Lunch' series

Mark your calendars for the first "Green Bay Lunch." Friends of Milwaukee's Rivers and the Wisconsin Stewardship Network are proud to announce that the monthly Green Bag lunches will kick off on February 27 from 12:15-1 p.m. Every fourth Friday of the month, we will be offering environmental discussions covering a variety of environmental issues. Watch your e-mail for upcoming topics!

The topic for February will be the Milwaukee Environmental Consortium: From Concept to Consortium. The MEC is the new home for FMR and will be the location for the Green Bag lunch each month. Please join us for this informal discussion about Milwaukee's new Environmental "hub" and the resources that it offers. Learn about how the Consortium came to be and tour our eco-friendly space!

Lunch will not be provided but there are numerous take-out options within walking distance of the MEC. Please feel free to bring your lunch with you. We are located at 1845 N. Farwell Ave., Suite 100, Milwaukee. For any questions or concerns, please feel free to e-mail or call (414)287-0207 ext. 28. The Green Bag lunches are facilitated by Friends of Milwaukee's Rivers and co-sponsored by the Wisconsin Stewardship Network. Thank you!

SOURCE: Robyn Calvey, Membership Coordinator- Friends of Milwaukee's Rivers and Southeast Wisconsin Regional Coordinator for the Wisconsin Stewardship Network, 1845 N. Farwell Ave. Suite 100 Milwaukee, WI 53202 (414) 287-0207 ext. 28 Robyn_Calvey@mkeriverkeeper.org.

Human health and environmental exposure conference June 4

A conference entitled "Making the Connection: Human Health and Environmental Exposures" will be held June 4, 2004, at Grainger Hall at UW-Madison. Conference presenters include Ted Schettler, MD, Boston Medical Center, author of *Reproductive Health and the Environment and In Harms Way: Toxic Threats to Child Development*. Also appearing will be WI State Senator and registered nurse Judy Robson. For information, contact Kerry Schumann at (608) 358-4040.

WLCV seeing administrative assistant

The Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters, a young and quickly growing non-profit organization based in Waunakee, WI, seeks an Administrative Assistant to assist with duties related to the development and maintenance of membership. Compensation is \$10/hour for 20 hours/week. Hours are flexible. Send resume and cover letter to: Anne Sayers, Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters P.O. Box 455 Waunakee, WI 53597 Ph: (608) 850-4585 or contact anne@conservationvoters.org.

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MBA scholarships being offered to nonprofit workers

The School of Business at the University of Wisconsin-Madison is offering a two-year scholarship for its Executive MBA Program to a qualified applicant who works for a state not-for-profit organization. The scholarship covers 75 percent of program fees, which are \$25,000 per year for the two-year program. Applicants must meet the criteria for the program and be employed full time by a not-for-profit Wisconsin organization. The Executive MBA Program is a rigorous program, designed for mid- and upper-level managers. It meets on Friday and Saturday every other weekend for two academic years. The program admits 30-35 students each fall. The application deadline for fall 2004 is June 1; applicants are urged to begin the process promptly. Applications are reviewed by the program's admissions committee.

SOURCE: Constance Rieben, (608) 265-2034, crieben@bus.wisc.edu.

Ecological Footprints workshop Feb. 21 in River Falls

A workshop entitled "Calculating the Environmental Impact of People, Cities, and Nations: A Workshop for Planners and Citizens" will be held Feb. from 9:00 – Noon in Room 129 in the Regional Development Institute at UW-River Falls. The workshop will be led by Dr. William Rees, 2004 Visiting Professor at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. The workshop is for local planners, leaders of local environmental organizations, and other interested people on how to use ecological footprints in local and regional planning. Space is limited to 25 participants, so registration is required.

SOURCE: Dr. Marguerite S.E. Forest, Assistant Professor, Department of Geography and Mapping Sciences, UW-River Falls (715) 425-3264 marguerite.forest@uwrf.edu.

Lakeshore Natural Resource Partnership seeks ED

The Lakeshore Natural Resource Partnership seeks an executive director who will work throughout the Lakeshore Basin located in Manitowoc, Kewaunee, Door, and parts of Brown and Calumet counties. The LNRP is primarily a granting organization designed to foster partnerships, promote forums for discussion, and support activities advocating a balance between land use and natural resource management, conservation, and protection. For further information, contact John Roberts, LNRP President at (920) 901-0596 or john.roberts@datcp.state.wi.us.

Theology of stewardship workshop March 13 in Madison

Lake Edge Lutheran Church and the Au Sable Institute are hosting a one-day workshop to explore the theology of stewardship and the sacredness of science March 13 at the Lussier Heritage Center in Madison. For more information, call (608) 222-7339 or ktrent@lelc.org.

