



WSNetwork News

April 15, 2002

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

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Arrowhead-Weston Transmission Line

More counties oppose power line use of public lands

According to a story in the April 12 *Spooner Advocate*, "It could be said there was electricity in the air on Wednesday, as representatives from Douglas, Washburn, Sawyer, and Marathon counties gathered at Northwest Regional Planning Commission in Spooner to discuss the proposed 345-kilovolt power line scheduled to run from Arrowhead near Duluth to Weston near Wausau. The message from the counties? A united and resounding 'no.' Although the line has been approved, said county officials and foresters, there are still many avenues available to protest and block it.

The story notes that "last year the Washburn County Board voted unanimously against the line coming through the county. Douglas County Forestry administrator Richard Moore reported that his county had also denied access to the line crossing county forest land, or approximately 13 miles of the route, and the county board took a stance against the line in October 1999. More at <http://www.thewheelerreport.com/papers/0412spoonerunite.htm>.

SOUL organizing September citizen energy forum

SOUL is putting together an event called the Citizens Energy Forum set for Friday, Sept. 13. We are currently soliciting a guest speaker, or possibly two, with a time for an informal gathering. Saturday, Sept. 14, groups will gather together discussing various topics divided into categories of interest. These are all working sessions:

ELECTRICAL ENERGY

1. Coal or gas fired plants
2. Distributed Generation
3. Wind/Solar
4. Conservation
5. Delivery of services-Natural Gas/Transmission

FUELS

1. Petroleum and alternative fuel sources
2. Diesel and biodiesel
3. CAFE standards and automobiles

SOURCE: Linda Ceylor, hillsidedairyfarm@yahoo.com.

Judge dismisses SOUL/WED appeals

A Marathon County Circuit Judge on April 1 granted on a technicality a motion by attorneys for Wisconsin Public Service Corp. and Minnesota Power to dismiss appeals by Save Our Unique Lands (Soul) and Environmental Decade of the Wisconsin Public Service Commission's approval of the Arrowhead-Weston high voltage transmission line, but an appeal by the Citizens Utility Board (CUB) remains.

The dismissal by Judge Vincent Howard was on a technicality, according to SOUL spokesman Roger Steffen of Hawkins, and both parties have the right to refile their appeals, but SOUL and Environmental Decade will now combine their appeal with CUB's. Attorneys for WPSC and MP argued successfully that the appellants had not given proper notices (by certified mail) to all the parties involved.

Authorities investigating Baldwin Dairy manure spill

State and local authorities are investigating a spill of 3 million gallons of manure from the Baldwin Dairy operation, according to a March 26 article in the Eau Claire *Leader-Telegram*. The manure was spread on 195 acres of cropland on March 13, 14, and 15. The manure applicator (Barry Serier, part owner of Jon De Farms, and under contract from Baldwin Dairy) tried to plow the manure into the soil, but the soil was frozen at a depth of 3 inches, so much of the manure flowed off the property into Girard's Creek, a seasonal waterway that flows into the Kinnickinnic River. According to a second story on the incident on the Wisconsin Ag Connection Web site, there was no evidence that any fish were killed from the contamination, but efforts are continuing to monitor a 10-mile area around Jon De Farms. The Wisconsin Ag Connection story can be accessed at <http://www.wisconsinagconnection.com/story02-wis2.cfm?Id=354>.

SOURCE: WDNR "Basin Briefs," 3-27-02

Shawano farm cited for manure spills

A Shawano County farmer and two others have been cited for alleged manure spill violations, according to the March 20 Green Bay *Press-Gazette*. Charges have been filed against Bradley C. Brunner, Christopher Hartleben, and Seth Berg for alleged manure spills on November 6, 7, and 9, 2001 into an unnamed stream on Brunner farm near Cecil. The spills were confirmed by water tests, and a fish kill was observed in the stream, which empties into White Clay Lake. Brunner said he walked the edge of the field in question with authorities and saw pools of liquid in the field. "But I found absolutely no runoff," he said, adding that a 50-foot buffer strip separates the field from the stream. Brunner said his own cattle are not allowed near the stream but that he had seen cattle on two smaller farms adjacent to his own enter the waterway. A court date of April 1 has been set in the case. Each of the 12 separate charges filed against the three men carries a fine of \$407.40.

SOURCE: WDNR "Basin Briefs," 3-27-02

Indiana adopts tougher livestock and poultry waste runoff rules

From the March 20 Fort Wayne (IN) Journal *Gazette*: Tougher standards for controlling livestock runoff and poultry manure in Indiana took effect on March 10 and "not a day too soon," according to a report prepared by the U.S. Geological Survey. A Survey study found that manure washing off from farm fields contributed to traces of dozens of potentially harmful chemicals that escape filtering systems at wastewater treatment plants. The substances include veterinary antibiotics, which the authors of the study believe may find their way into drinking water. More at <http://www.fortwayne.com/mld/journalgazette/news/editorial/2898326.html>.

SOURCE: WDNR "Basin Briefs," 3-27-02

DNR Independence and PIO Restoration

Frustration at Conservation Congress hearing

I...attended the Conservation Congress hearings last evening in Winnebago County. I also introduced resolutions on both the appointment of the DNR Secretary and the Public Intervenor position. As usual they were well received but there was skepticism as to their worth. People are discouraged to the point of giving up on government because those who are currently in office do not listen to their constituents. I reminded them that they will have an opportunity to fix that in the fall elections. There were also resolutions introduced on the mining issues. They were greeted with the same skepticism.

SOURCE: Thomas Deer, troutricks1@yahoo.com.

PIO restoration gets big support at Congress meeting

Conservation Congress votes went well. Biggest margin of the night was intervenor issue 76-0 then DNR 75-0.... Even the energy issue was almost unanimous and in the upper 60s. Anything WSN supported was mandated down here, biggest votes of the night. The only time hands went up to be counted at the front table were for the main WSN added resolutions. Mandate is the only word that applies.

SOURCE: Dave Wisnefske, Pheasants Forever, WSN Board of Directors.

Story recounts political arm twisting of DNR's Meyer

A story by Ron Seely in the Wisconsin State Journal on April 3 recounted an incident of arm twisting of former DNR Secretary George Meyer by Senate Majority Leader Chuck Chvala. The complete text of the story follows:

In his 32 years with the state Department of Natural Resources, George Meyer — who is leaving the agency Friday — said one of the strangest and most unsettling moments of his career came in the winter of 1999 in a Madison hamburger restaurant.

Over lunch at the now-defunct Dotty Dumpling's Dowry, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Chvala, D-Madison, told Meyer, then DNR secretary, that he would hold up Meyer's Senate reconfirmation unless the secretary found a way to deny permits for the company trying to build a controversial zinc and copper mine near Crandon.

Meyer, who started at the DNR in April 1970 as a law clerk and led the agency as secretary from 1993 until he was replaced in February 2001, plans to teach at Lawrence University in Appleton in the fall.

In an interview Wednesday, Meyer said the meeting with Chvala is one of the most striking examples of how attempted political manipulation of the environmental regulatory agency has become a dangerous threat to the department's effectiveness.

Chvala, whose office was contacted several times Wednesday, did not return calls for comment on the meeting with Meyer.

Although Meyer said he had actually arranged the meeting with Chvala to talk about a number of legislative issues, Chvala surprised him with the threat.

"It was very clear to me from our discussion," Meyer recalled, "that unless I guaranteed him that the Crandon project wouldn't be permitted, I wouldn't be confirmed. He said, 'I want you to stop the mine.'" Meyer said he told Chvala that he was bound by law to evaluate the permit application for the proposed mine.

"It's something I never could have delivered on legally," Meyer said of Chvala's request. "I told him my staff was going to do its job." Meyer said Chvala's action was inappropriate. "It was wrong," he insisted.

Jonathon Becker, a lawyer with the state Ethics Board, said Wednesday that Chvala's threat to hold up Meyer's confirmation doesn't appear to violate any laws.

"From a statutory standpoint," Becker said, "I'm not aware of any statute that would be violated." But Meyer said the incident worried him because it demonstrated how politicians are increasingly trying to influence the environmental agency's regulatory decisions. Such attempts at influence, he said, can come from either party. He said he is particularly concerned about former Gov. Tommy Thompson's decision to make the position a Cabinet post, subject to appointment by the governor instead of the Natural Resources Board.

There are ways, Meyer said, that a secretary could easily carry out the agenda of a politician who exerts undue influence. He said that if he had been so inclined, he could have found subtle ways to undermine the permit process - influencing the tone of the agency's testimony at hearings, for example, he said.

"Those ultimately are calls the secretary makes," Meyer said.

Meyer said he told Paul Heinen, the DNR's legislative liaison, about the incident. Heinen said Wednesday he remembers the conversation with Meyer.

"He told me about it," Heinen said. "He told me that he wasn't going to get confirmed unless he stopped the Crandon mine." Meyer never was confirmed by the entire Senate. Ironically, he said Wednesday, at the time of the Chvala lunch his re-confirmation to retain the secretary's job had already been recommended by the Senate's Environmental Resources Committee in a unanimous vote.

"It was a love fest," Meyer said of the committee hearing on his confirmation.

In 1999, the proposed mine near Crandon — being pursued then by Rio Algom — was in the news because of a controversial mining moratorium bill that was eventually passed by the Legislature. The bill required the state to deny mining permits to a company unless the company could cite similar mines that had not damaged the environment.

The Natural Resources Board was under fire during the winter of 1999 for not writing rules to implement the new law.

The agency is still evaluating the permit application — now being sought by Nicolet Minerals Co., a subsidiary of mining giant BHP Billiton, which purchased the project from Rio Algom. The DNR may release a draft environmental impact statement on the project in the next few months.

"This is just another example," Heck said, "of the quid-pro-quo politics that seems to have overtaken Wisconsin. But this is Wisconsin and this is not how we're supposed to conduct the people's business."

SOURCE: *Wisconsin State Journal*, printed with permission.

Factory Farming

WDNR considers having EPA take over animal waste permitting

From a March 28 posting at the Channel 3000 (WISC-TV/Madison) web site: The State Natural Resources Board has indicated its opposition to having the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency take over animal waste regulation in Wisconsin. NRB Board Member Stephen Willett said the danger of giving the EPA regulatory authority is that the agency will either refuse to issue permits, which would halt farm expansions, or that it will be too strict in its farm regulation. More at <http://www.channel3000.com/news/1334089/detail.html>.

SOURCE: WDNR "Basin Briefs," 4-03-02

Action taken on manure spill into Big Eau Pleine River

The Wisconsin River Country Group of the Sierra Club in Marathon County, Wisconsin, today announced its intention to clean up Wisconsin's waters by ensuring that the Maple Ridge Dairy, a mega-livestock factory, stops dumping cow manure into Wisconsin's rivers and stream. Midwest Environmental Advocates, Inc., an environmental law center, is representing the Sierra Club.

"I fish in the Big Eau Pleine River and intend to take every step necessary to protect it from livestock factories that damage and pollute our shared clean water resources," stated Richard Wentzel, a resident of Marathon County. Wentzel is chair of the Wisconsin River Country Group of the Sierra Club and is a named party in the lawsuit.

The Sierra Club sent their notice of intent to file a lawsuit in response to a major manure spill that occurred on February 27, 2002, during land spreading of manure by Maple Ridge Dairy. According to the Sierra Club's letter, the Clean Water Act violations by Maple Ridge include:

- Dumping manure on a field not authorized by the DNR for manure disposal,
- Dumping manure on frozen and snow covered ground within 200 feet of a stream,
- Dumping manure on steep slopes, and
- Failure to report its annual manure disposal and other information.

More at www.thewheelerreport.com/releases/Apr02/0412sierrariver.PDF.

SOURCE: Sierra Club.

Farm Bill conferees reviewing conservation program terms

House and Senate lawmakers are continuing to meet to hash out differences between the two versions of the Farm Bill. Rumor on the Hill has it that they have agreed to a 7-year bill. This time frame could be very bad for several of the conservation programs, because it means stretching the

money provided in the Senate bill over a longer period of time. Conferees need to hear that conservation programs are important to rural America! Harkin seems to be championing more conservation money, but Senators Daschle, Leahy, and Conrad need support championing the conservation message loud and clear.

SOURCE: Scotty Johnson, defenders.returns@reply.net.

***Modern Meat* airs April 18 on PBS**

A one-hour Frontline documentary *Modern Meat* reveals how today's high-tech meat industry has fundamentally changed the composition of the typical American burger, causing some to fear the spread of serious — and even deadly — bacteria. The program also explores the powerful U.S. meat industry's attempts to resist government regulations aimed at preventing contaminated meat from ending up in supermarkets and fast food chains across America. More at www.pbs.org/frontline.

Antibiotic use rising in aquaculture

The aquaculture industry in the U.S. uses between 204,000 and 433,000 pounds of antibiotics annually to treat diseases, control parasites, and promote growth in the nation's farmed fish. Since there is no central authority for monitoring and reporting antibiotic use in aquaculture, Dr. Charles Benbrook and the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy have compiled the evidence from several different agencies for a new report. About half of these antibiotics are used in catfish production, but nonetheless, catfish farmers suffer up to 60% losses from enteric septicemia. The amount of antibiotic usage in fish farms is small compared to factory beef, poultry and pork production. However, it represents a significant concern because aquaculture facilities offer great opportunity for these drugs to move into the wider environment where they could catalyze the development of resistant bacteria. Since the drugs used in aquaculture are potent ones that are also used to treat human diseases, this antibiotic usage could pose a threat to public health. To read the full report, please visit <http://www.iatp.org>.

SOURCE: Scotty Johnson, defenders.returns@reply.net

Pennsylvania towns say no to industrial agriculture

Ten townships in Pennsylvania have adopted ordinances that ban agribusiness corporations from owning farmland or operating within their boundaries. The ordinances are part of an attempt by residents in north-central and south-central Pennsylvania to stem a tide of new and proposed agribusiness operations in those regions. This emerging trend, also seen in Missouri and Iowa, reveals that local communities are fed up with state governments that have failed to protect workers, public health and the environment from the negative effects of industrial agriculture and livestock. The default of the state-level government is particularly obvious in Pennsylvania, where a State Senator has sponsored a bill to overturn the local ordinances and force communities to accept fac-

tory farms. The bill was supported by the State Farm Bureau but has stalled in committee due to an outcry of opposition from Pennsylvanians.

Scotty Johnson, defenders.returns@reply.net.

Forest Fragmentation

Groundwater Protection

Perrier exec: “WI rules worked against us”

An April 15 story by Peter Rebhahn in the Green Bay *Press-Gazette* quotes Perrier’s chief executive as favoring “more regulation” of Wisconsin’s groundwater. Kim Jeffery, president of North American operations for the Perrier Group of America, was quoted as saying Wisconsin was “by far the worst situation we’ve ever encountered. Nobody is recording withdrawals, nobody knew how many high-capacity wells there were in the state, nobody knows the condition of groundwater in Wisconsin, nobody knows what the recharge rate is versus what’s being withdrawn. And these are things that we typically do in the course of running our business every single day.” Complete story at <http://www.thewheelerreport.com/papers/0415gazettewater.htm>.

Bush altering Clean Water Act rules on burying wastes

The Bush administration is about to change Clean Water Act rules to allow wastes — especially mountaintop removal coal mining waste, but also hardrock mining waste, construction and demolition debris, and other industrial wastes — to bury streams, wetlands, lakes, rivers, ponds and other water bodies around the country. This new rule change would overturn a 25-year old regulation that forbids the use of wastes to fill and bury waters. The Bush administration is saying they will make this change in clean water regulations in April to allow wastes to bury waters. For more information visit <http://www.cwn.org/docs/whatnew/whatnew.htm>.

SOURCE: WISPIRG, wispirg@mail.chorus.net.

ALEC’s TMDL bill makes drought situation worse

As America is in the midst of the most severe drought in recent memory, the corporation-controlled American Legislative Exchange Council is pushing the TMDL Implementation Act in state legislatures throughout the country. The TMDL Implementation Act makes a bad drought situation even worse. This legislation clings to phrases like “resource constraints” and “sound scientific data” to treat water use “in the most cost-effective” fashion possible. The ALEC TMDL Act focuses on business costs — not costs to our health — and waits for water to be contaminated

before we clean it up. By requiring overly-demanding scientific proof of poisoning, the bill does little to protect our drinking water until after the problem has already occurred. ALEC sets up several hurdles to using science in a precautionary way, making it difficult to pro-actively take steps to address water problems before they occur. By requiring such a high burden of scientific proof, ALEC encourages states to avoid regulatory compliance or enforcement until it's too late. When dealing with our drinking water during a drought, it is better to be safe than sorry. For more information about this and other harmful legislation please visit our watch dog page at <http://www.serconline.org/watchdogpage>.

SOURCE: Jud Lounsbury, jud@serconline.org.

Mercury Reduction

Senate bill includes mercury reduction item

The [State] Senate is working on their version of the Budget Repair Bill which includes several solid waste measures, including restored funding for the UW-Extension Solid & Hazardous Waste Education Center and the UW-Systems Solid Waste Research and Experiment program. It also includes a ban on the sale of most mercury thermometers.

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

Maine votes to eliminate mercury from retired vehicles

Last week the Maine Senate sided with environmentalists in voting for a LD 1921, a bill creating a system to collect mercury switches from cars when they are junked. Such a program, which removes the toxic chemical from retiring vehicles to prevent environmental contamination, would be funded by auto manufacturers.

SOURCE: Jud Lounsbury, jud@serconline.org.

Metallic Mining

Doyle asks for special mining bill session

Jim Doyle on April 8 called on Governor McCallum and the Legislature to take swift bi-partisan action to protect Wisconsin's natural resources in relation to metallic mineral mining in the state. "I urge that a special session of the Legislature be called concurrent with the work on the budget to pass these two important bills," Doyle said. "Just like the action that was taken to protect Wisconsin's wetlands, the Governor and the Legislature need to pass these two proposals to ban the

use of cyanide in mining and to eliminate the exemption for mining waste from the state's hazardous waste laws."

SOURCE: James Doyle.

Wolf Watershed Ed. Project holds meeting

I made a presentation at the [March 30] monthly meeting of the Wolf Watershed Educational Project which is a project initiated by the Midwest Treaty Network. The goal of the project is to educate local communities on metallic sulfide mining (particularly Rio Algom's proposed Crandon Zinc-copper mine and recently purchased by Billiton, a London-based South African firm) build local community organizing skills, establish links between community non-Indian skills, and establish links between Indian and non-Indian communities on environmental protection. The Project now includes focus on the Wisconsin River.

Approximately 30 people were in attendance, including students from UW-Madison and Stevens Point, representing a variety of groups. There were several reports of interest to WSN members. The status of the mining bills and the pulling motion in the Assembly which failed were discussed. The bills are seen by the group as educational efforts and will be reintroduced in the next session of the legislature. Other reports were given by Chuck Sleeter, Town Chair Town of Nashville. He reported that their appeal on the legality of a prior Towns Board action failed, but that they are considering appealing to the State Supreme Court. Kenneth Fish from Menominee Treaty Rights & Mining Impacts Office reported that the Menominee Tribe will be meeting with the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers on April 23, 2002, to discuss technical and water modeling issues on mining impact on the Wolf River. This is also the time when they introduce sturgeons in the River. They anticipate a great deal of publicity.

There was also some discussion of the Indigenous Mining Summit which will be held this year in Mole Lake from June 12-15. They anticipate 1000 people attending this Summit meeting. Protect the Lake Conference will be held a week later at Mole Lake and they anticipate a large gathering. I reported on the WSN video Wisconsin's Blue Gold. I inquired about having a booth and equipment at the two conferences above. I also updated the group on the Perrier issue and answered many of their questions. Finally I described our Fighting Bob Fest which is to be held August 23-25. Although we will have several nationally prominent speakers, there will also be a time and place to discuss issues of concern to environmentalists including mining issue, groundwater issues, transmission lines, etc. They seemed receptive to participating either as individuals or as a group.

SOURCE: Hiroshi Kanno.

North American Indigenous Mining Summit June 12-15 at Mole Lake

The public is invited to participate in the North American Indigenous Mining Summit at the Mole Lake Indian Reservation near Crandon. The North American Indigenous Mining Summit is co-

sponsored by The Sokaogon Chippewa Community, The Indigenous Mining Campaign Project, which is a partnership between The Indigenous Environmental Network and Project Underground.

SOURCE: Coleen Poler, (715) 478-5033, fax (715) 478-5034, polersdc@newnorth.net.

Anti-mine supervisor elected to Forest County Board

Great News! Shirley Mills won! We now have a staunch anti-mine representative on the Forest County Board of Supervisors.

SOURCE: Jan Olson.

Shoreland/Wetlands

Buffers continue to be nonpoint rules sticking point

In case you were wondering what happened to the nonpoint rules since the Legislature sent them back to the NRB and buffer discussions were held with the Farm Bureau...nothing has happened. The nonpoint rules are still in limbo.

As you may remember, the Senate Environmental Resources committee requested several technical changes and action on “the buffer issue” and the questionable wetlands language. The Natural Resources Board has the option to do nothing, something, or possibly even make major revisions. At this point, we do not know what course of action will be taken or when. Stay tuned for more information. Your help may be needed again very soon.

Last week, the Legislature held a joint informational hearing on ATCP 50. The committee chairs were undecided as to whether or not they would hold public hearings. Again, if a hearing is scheduled, I will let you know. Meanwhile, we are using this time to start thinking about our role in implementing the rules. This isn't over until the nonpoint rules are fully implemented and we have clean water! So, PLEASE SAVE THIS DATE: WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24 AT 3:30. All Clean Water Coalition members and friends are invited to a nonpoint campaign reflection and implementation planning kick-off meeting/party. I'm still looking for a good location that can handle a meeting and transition into a party. Let me know if you have any ideas.

SOURCE: Steph Adams, Clean Water Coalition Coordinator, River Alliance of Wisconsin.

Senate passes Ashley exemption bill

As we had anticipated, the Ashley Furniture “wetland fill exemption” simply won't die. Although key individuals within the Senate were successful at stopping the exemption from being passed as

a separate bill in the Senate, the Senate version of the budget repair bill contains the exemption. Last Friday March 5th, the Senate voted on an amendment introduced by Sen. Rod Moen to the budget repair bill that included language that is the exemption for Ashley Furniture. Initially, the exemption amendment was defeated 18-15, and we felt momentary relief and jubilation. However, on a re-vote within an hour, seven senators “crossed over,” resulting in a final vote of 22-11 for adopting the amendment. All but one Republican (Sen. Cowles) voted to support the amendment, and seven Democrats voted to “help out” Rod Moen (who is up for re-election this fall). How each senator voted is indicated below.

Senate Votes FOR “Ashley exemption”	Senate Votes AGAINST Ashley Exemption
Sen. Roger Breske (D)	Sen. Jim Baumgart (D)
Sen. Alberta Darling (R)	Sen. Brian Burke (D)
Sen. Russell Decker (D)	Sen. Chuck Chvala (D)
Sen. Michael Ellis (R)	Sen. Rob Cowles (R)
Sen. Scott Fitzgerald (R)	Sen. Jon Erpenbach (D)
Sen. Richard Grobschmidt (D)	Sen. Gary George (D)
Sen. Sheila Harsdorf (R)	Sen. Dave Hansen (D)
Sen. Joanne Huelsman (R)	Sen. Gwendolynne Moore (D)
Sen. Robert Jauch (D)	Sen. Kimberly Plache (D)
Sen. Theodore Kanavas (R)	Sen. Fred Risser (D)
Sen. Alan Lasee (R)	Sen. Judy Robson (D)
Sen. Mary Lazich (R)	
Sen. Mark Meyer (D)	
Sen. Rod Moen (D)	
Sen. Mary Panzer (R)	
Sen. Carol Roessler (R)	
Sen. Peggy Rosenzweig (R)	
Sen. Dale Schultz (R)	
Sen. Kevin Shibilski (D)	
Sen. Robert Welch (R)	
Sen. Robert Wirch (D)	
Sen. David Zien (R)	

We encourage you to contact your senator to applaud him or her if he/she voted AGAINST the Ashley exemption, and share your disappointment with those who supported ADOPTION of the amendment. Citizens should take prompt action in an attempt to halt passage of the amendment. Since the budget conference committee will likely NOT address the amendment (it will undoubtedly be accepted by the Assembly conferees), communication should be directed at Governor Scott McCallum who should be encouraged to “line item” veto the amendment. Remind the Governor that he vowed to protect our state’s wetlands in 2001; how can he now turn tables and allow a large floodplain wetland to be filled? Remind him that we are spending millions of dollars in Wisconsin to remove residential and commercial structures from floodplains; further development in a floodplain should be discouraged, not condoned! Governor Scott McCallum, PO Box 7863, Madison WI 53707, wisgov@gov.state.wi.us, (608) 266-1212

SOURCE: Wisconsin Wetlands Association, <http://www.wiscwetlands.org>.

Senate budget bill better for water programs

The Budget Repair bill looks pretty good for water programs so far. The Senate began with the Joint Finance budget bill, not the Assembly budget repair bill. They did not make the additional cuts in DNR water programs or the Stewardship fund, nor did they kill the water attorney or prohibit DNR from enforcing inappropriate shoreland variances. They established an invasive species program and provided funding for two new positions. However, those positions are to come out of segregated (i.e. motorboat gas tax) funds rather than GPR, which could affect the positions available for the lakes, rivers, and wetlands programs. In short, Bill thought we were in as good a position as could be expected going in to the conference committee.

SOURCE: Donna Sefton, Executive Director Wisconsin Association of Lakes One Point Place, Suite 101 Madison, WI 53719 (608) 662-0923.

Common Cause hints at Ashley campaign influence

A press release by Common Cause of Wisconsin suggests that campaign contributions may have influenced the Senate vote on Ashley Furniture. See <http://www.wispolitics.com/freeser/pr/pr0204/apr11/pr02041105.html>.

Editorial: budget no place for Ashley exception

The *Wisconsin State Journal* editorialized on April 12 that the state budget is “no place for [the] Ashley exception This provision should not be a part of the budget bill. As much as the jobs are needed, it would be better if Ashley found an uplands site or persuaded the DNR that a 2-for-1 wetlands swap is a good deal.” Complete editorial at <http://www.thewheelerreport.com/papers/0412journalashley.htm>.

WLCV: Ashley provision brings Senate rating down

The State Senate budget bill was headed for high marks on natural resource protection matters until a potentially expansive wetlands destruction amendment got included at the last minute, according to the Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters. “A little midnight dumping occurred in the Senate,” said Barry Ashenfelter, executive director of WLCV. “They were on their way to a good grade and then the bottom fell out.” The “bottom,” according to Ashenfelter, was a late change made on the Senate floor (for the benefit of Ashley Furniture Co.) that gives the governor authority to fill specific wetlands.

SOURCE: Barry Ashenfelter, WLCV, (920) 206-6257.

Rush River hit with another big fish kill

From the April 9 Eau Claire *Leader-Telegram*: About 100 dead fish, including 53 trout ranging in size from 4 to 20 inches, were collected from the Rush River north of Highway 29 in Pierce

County last week. DNR Fish Manager Marty Engel is quoted in the story as saying about three miles of river starting near its headwaters in southern St. Croix County suffered a partial fish kill sometime in mid- to late March. More at <http://www.leadertelegram.com/story.asp?id=6688>.

SOURCE: WDNR "Basin Briefs," 4-10-02.

IWL progressing on fish kill inventory

Hello, fellow conservationists. Just wanted to update you on our work with the DNR and our progress to this point [on getting the WDNR to collect and disseminate data on fish kills, manure spills, and pollution discharge investigations.] The formal letter of request was sent the Secy. Bazzell last week with the sign-on groups I had heard back from at that point. I felt that time was somewhat of the essence if we are going to get these meetings scheduled soon. I have not yet heard back from the Secy., but I will follow up with him towards the end of this week. I have enclosed a copy of the letter I sent with the signatory groups. If your group is not included, I apologize as I may not have heard back in time. Of course, everyone's continued participation is welcomed and encouraged. Thanks for your time, and keep in touch!

SOURCE: Michael S. Hand, Izaak Walton League, Midwest Office, (651) 649-1446, mhand@iwla.org.

Brown County could lose some CREP dollars due to local fee

Brown County may be in danger of losing \$2.5 million in federal dollars for its buffer program because the county charges participating farmers an administrative fee, according to an April 10 article in the *Green Bay Press-Gazette*. The funds are distributed through the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program. But because of the state budget deficit, funds to administer the Brown County buffer strip program were not available, and the federal dollars cannot be used for administrative costs. Brown County addressed the budget squeeze by charging farmers who participate in CREP an administrative fee of \$56 per acre. But the U.S. Department of Agriculture has indicated counties charging such a fee would be ineligible for CREP dollars. State officials have asked U.S. lawmakers to allow the administrative charge to continue a program that has been successful in Brown County and that has the support of a large number of the county's farmers. The 2.5 million in funds currently earmarked for Brown County would be used to establish an additional 400 miles of buffers. More at http://www.greenbaypressgazette.com/news/archive/local_3261148.shtml.

SOURCE: WDNR "Basin Briefs," 4-10-02.

U.S. House passes Upper Mississippi sediment/runoff bill

The U.S. House has authorized \$6.8 million to study the flow of sediment and nutrient runoff into the Upper Mississippi River. The House unanimously passed the Upper Mississippi River Basin Protection Act of 2001, written by U.S. Rep. Ron Kind of La Crosse. It now goes on to the Senate.

“If you talk to the experts in the river system both in the north and the southern part, the one thing that has really been lacking or missing is a comprehensive scientific program... in order to understand more of the effects of the sediment and nutrient flows going into this valuable ecosystem,” Kind told the House Tuesday before the vote.

NRCS holding April 17 session on ‘third party’ tech assistance

USDA is asking farmers to comment on a new “Third Party Vendor” option for conservation technical assistance. Pat Leavenworth, State Conservationist for the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, welcomes comments from farmers and anyone participating in USDA farm programs, either in writing or at a public meeting on April 17 in Madison.

SOURCE: NRCS.

Minnesota law encourages citizen water quality monitoring

SF 2932, a bill introduced by MN Senator Jane Krentz, has been enacted into law. The legislation requires the state’s Pollution Control Agency to encourage citizen water quality monitoring by providing technical assistance, integrating the citizens monitoring data into water quality assessments and agency programs, and by seeking funds to promote citizen monitoring.

New York lead sinker ban bill close to passage

The *New York Times* reported last week that after over 10 years of haggling, the legislature is on the brink of passing A 8683, a bill that would ban the sale of lead sinkers. Lead sinkers are a problem because loons, great blue herons, mergansers, trumpet swans, mallards and other birds go after fish bait and swallow it — literally — hook, line and sinker. The split-shot sinkers they ingest — balls usually less than a quarter-inch in diameter — are then ground up in the birds’ gullets and cause lead poisoning, accounting for about 20 percent of loon deaths each year. Rep. Englebright first introduced the bill a decade ago, but it was not until this year that the New York State Conservation Council, which represents hunters and anglers, agreed to support the bill.

SOURCE: Jud Lounsbury, jud@serconline.org.

Municipal sludge use questioned

From the March 30 *La Crosse Tribune*: La Crosse and its suburbs produce the equivalent of 14,000 tons of dried sewage sludge a year, enough to cover 187 football fields with sludge a foot deep. This practice, followed in Wisconsin and across the U.S., gives cities and sanitary districts a relatively inexpensive way to dispose of sludge while farmers get a free source of fertilizer. But scientists, environmentalists, and regulators are becoming concerned about the practice and are raising questions about the long-term environmental and health effects of sludge spreading. “The agency can neither investigate nor keep track of all of the complaints of adverse health effects that

are reported,” according to an internal memo leaked to the Associated Press. “There are indications that more research is needed on risks to human health from pathogens in sludge.” More at <http://www.lacrossetribune.com/rednews/2002/03/31/build/news/2sludge2.php>.

SOURCE: WDNR “Basin Briefs,” 4-03-02.

EPA: 34 percent of coastal water cannot support aquatic life

From the April 2 Detroit (MI) *Free Press*: A study released April 1 by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency indicates that 56 percent of U.S. coastal waters are in good condition to support plant and animal life and human uses, but 34 percent are too poor to support aquatic life, and 33 percent are unacceptable for human use. The study found water clarity in the Great Lakes to be good but that the lakes are losing their ability to support zoo plankton and other low forms of life. The Great Lakes area has also lost 51 percent of coastal wetlands to development and found that the ecological condition of the Great Lakes borders is “poor.” More at http://www.freep.com/news/nw/lakes2_20020402.htm.

SOURCE: WDNR “Basin Briefs,” 4-03-02

WI Coastal Management Grants awarded

Gov. Scott McCallum announced April 12 that Ashland and Bayfield counties will benefit from grants totaling \$804,422 for coastal projects along Lake Superior. The grants are part of \$6,585,153 awarded through the Wisconsin Coastal Management Program (WCMP) for activities in the coastal areas of Lake Michigan and Lake Superior. More at <http://www.thewheelerreport.com/releases/Apr02/0412govcoastalfund.pdf>.

SOURCE: State of WI.

Law review article looks at Clean Water Act and fisheries

Andrew Hanson, Attorney with Midwest Environmental Advocates, Inc., has recently published a law review article on water quality standards under the Clean Water Act and how they can protect threatened and endangered fishes under the Endangered Species Act. Specifically, Hanson criticizes the EPA’s oversight of state water quality standards programs for its failure to disapprove water quality criteria that do not reflect the water quality needs of threatened and endangered species. Hanson instead argues that EPA should require states to set water quality criteria at levels protective enough to help threatened and endangered fishes recover to healthy, sustainable populations.

SOURCE: Midwest Environmental Advocates, 22 E. Mifflin St. Suite 301 Madison, WI, www.midwest-e-advocates.org.

Web site helps with 'low-impact' development

A "Low Impact Development" web site has been developed through a Cooperative Assistance Agreement under the US EPA Office of Water 104B(3) Program in order to provide guidance to local governments, planners, and engineers for developing, administering, and incorporating Low Impact Development (LID) into their aquatic resource protection programs.

LID technology is an alternative comprehensive approach to stormwater management. It can be used to address a wide range of Wet Weather Flow (WWF) issues, including Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs), National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Stormwater Phase II permits, Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) permits, Nonpoint Source Program goals, and other Water Quality Standards. See <http://www.lid-stormwater.net/>.

SOURCE: WDNR "Basin Briefs," 4-03-02.

New WI fish consumption advisory available

An updated 2002 fish consumption advisory is now available in print and online to help people continue to enjoy fish meals but limit their exposure to environmental contaminants in fish they catch in Wisconsin waters and in commercial fish popularly sold in restaurants and stores. The advisory, *Choose Wisely: A health guide for eating fish in Wisconsin*, can be found on the DNR web site at www.dnr.state.wi.us. Use the drop-down topic menu and click on "fish consumption advisory." Printed copies are available at DNR service centers and regional offices.

SOURCE: WDNR.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Gaylord Nelson at April 18 Madison Earth Day event

You are invited to a free public panel discussion with Gaylord Nelson, founder of Earth Day, entitled *Environment, Population, Sustainable Development: Where Do We Go From Here?* In addition to Nelson, the program will feature:

- Stephen Born, Professor, Urban and Regional Planning/Environmental Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison. Chairman, Natural Resource Board, Trout Unlimited
- Michael Dombeck, UW System Fellow of Global Conservation. Professor of Global Environmental Management, UW-Stevens Point. Chief, U.S. Forest Service, 1997-2001.
- Curt Meine, Director of Conservation Programs, Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters. Coordinator, IUCN Action Plan for Cranes, International Crane Foundation.

The event will be Thursday, April 18, at 7:30 p.m. in the Pyle Center, 702 Langdon St., University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Bush administration set to axe environmental education efforts

The Bush administration has callously proposed to eliminate the Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Environmental Education. As part of his budget proposal, President Bush has adopted the recommendations of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to transfer \$9 million dollars in funding from the EPA Office of Environmental Education to the National Science Foundation (NSF).

So, as leaders yourselves, seize this moment to protect the educational opportunities of America's children. We must act soon to convince Congress and President Bush not to make this costly mistake. Please [contact me to find out how you can] consider taking one or more actions to restore the EPA Office of Environmental Education.

SOURCE: Chris Nehrbass, Sierra Club, Christopher.J.Nehrbass@uwsp.edu.

Watershed-sensitive development workshop April 17-18

Just wanted to remind you that the Planning for Watershed Sensitive Development conference will be taking place on April 17 & 18. The cost for all day Wednesday, April 17 is \$60.00. The cost for half day in Racine and afternoon field trip to Prairie Crossing is \$40.00. If you would like to attend please call Shawna at (262) 632-6440 so that she can fax a registration.

WI Democracy Campaign to meet May 1

The Wisconsin Democracy Campaign annual meeting will be held on May 2 from 3-5:30 p.m. at the Inn on the Park in Madison. A short business meeting and election of board members will follow from 5:30-6:00. Traditionally, WDC has used the occasion of our annual meeting to host an interesting and stimulating issue-oriented program for our members and public. I believe the Voters First Coalition members and other groups following the reform issue will find the 2002 annual meeting interesting and informative.

This year's agenda will include:

- Senator Mike Ellis, the legislature's leading campaign finance reform advocate.
- *Wisconsin State Journal* reporters Dee Hall and Phil Brinkman, who led the newspapers award-winning investigation into apparent illegal campaign activity in the State Capitol.

Earth Day is April 22 — events on-line

For Earth Day 2002, millions of people will join in a call to Protect Our Home, the Earth. In the U.S, our on-line calendar lists over 800 Earth Day events and is growing daily! Find out what's happening in your neck of the woods, and around the world, at:

<http://www.earthday.net/dir/event.asp>.

- Paul Taylor, a former *Washington Post* reporter who, along with legendary CBS anchorman Walter Cronkite, co-founded the national Alliance for Better Campaigns. Paul Taylor now leads the Free Air Time Coalition, a new nationwide grassroots campaign to build support for proposals requiring broadcasters to provide candidates free air time before all elections.

SOURCE: Wisconsin Democracy Campaign, (608) 255-4260, uebelher@wisdc.org.

WSNetworkNews is published twice monthly by the Wisconsin Stewardship Network, a network of Wisconsin hunting, fishing, conservation, and environmental groups.

The WSN's Steering Committee 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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