



WSNetwork News

May 1, 2003

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

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Scanlan, Lloyd, Bonde join WSN Board

Three new individuals have joined the board of directors of the Wisconsin Stewardship Network. Melissa Scanlan and Sarah Lloyd will represent Midwest Environmental Advocates and Concerned Citizens of Newport. Meanwhile, Larry Bonde was elected an at-large board member for his ties to the Conservation Congress and many hunting and fishing organizations. Click [here](#) for more on these dedicated individuals.

Arrowhead-Weston Transmission Line

Gaylord Nelson headlines May 10 Namekagon paddle challenging A-W line's impact on river, lands



Gaylord Nelson — Wisconsin's former Governor, US Senator, and founder of Earth Day — is coming to Springbrook, WI, to the Namekagon River Gathering on May 10. The visit is part of an action by a collective of groups opposed to the crossing of the federally protected river by the 250 mile long, 345,000 volt Arrowhead-Weston transmission line.

Citing the unnecessary line's connection to the massive destruction of Cree lands in the north and local environmental impacts to thousands of property owners in Wisconsin and Minnesota, the groups have organized a group paddle to be followed by a public hearing of the issues for the National Park Service to consider in their Environmental Impact Statement process.

Nelson will have a book signing at the hearing. His newly released book is entitled *Beyond Earth Day*. For details and more information about the event and Nelson, please visit the web site: <http://www.protecttheearth.com/GaylordNelson.html>. The Namekagon River Gathering is sponsored by Save Our Unique Lands (SOUL), The River Alliance of Wisconsin, Clean Wisconsin

(formerly Wisconsin's Environmental Decade), the Wisconsin Stewardship Network, and Anishinaabe Nijji/Protect the Earth.

SOURCE: Claire Schmidt, schmidtc@cleanwisconsin.org.

DNR Independence and PIO Restoration

Editorial says NR Board should appoint DNR secretary

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The Waukesha *Freeman* editorialized on April 24, “We couldn’t agree more with the [NRB appointment power restoration] proposal and its potential impact on the state agency and the resources it oversees and protects. Transferring the power to appoint from the governor to the seven-member board would take the politics out of the DNR decision-making process, which is something that could only benefit those concerned more with the great outdoors than smoke-filled rooms. The DNR board should select and recommend a DNR secretary. The selection would still have to get the nod from the state Senate and the governor. But the process would rightly begin with the board and would not take into account what political stripe someone wears.

“We’re not alone in the wilderness in our stance. Several sportsmen and wildlife groups across Wisconsin have called for the switch, including the Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility group. PEER conducted a survey of state employees and more than half said they believed DNR scientific evaluations were influenced by politics.”

SOURCE: Waukesha *Freeman*.

Fair Motorboat Gas Revenue Allocation

Farm Manure Management & Polluted Runoff Enforcement

Writer appreciates discussion on local oversight of large feedlots

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[Though longer than our usual stories in WSNetwork News, we think it important to include all of this writer’s thoughtful comments on an earlier story about Sen. Dale Schultz’s consideration of a bill to do away with local oversight of large animal feedlots. -Ed.]

I thank Bill Pielsticker for his remarks [in the April 15 *WSNetwork News*]. Even though it’s dismaying for me to see the legislature (especially Republicans, those champions of “local control”) want to pre-empt local control, there has to be a better way to deal with livestock agriculture in this state than either giving them a free ticket to expand, or to fight every last one of them in hundreds of town halls across the state.

There is nothing inherently “environmentally disastrous” about large livestock farms. As those farmers will point out, they are far more regulated/observed/monitored/scrutinized than smaller farms. If you want to avoid a whole lot of scrutiny by state regulators, simply keep your cow numbers under 700. Though I wish it were otherwise — and after spending 10 years advocating to save the family farm — I also think that we will not prevent the loss of small single-family livestock farms in this state. For both economic and social reasons (e.g., an occasional night or weekend off), farm families are expanding as a way to keep going.

We also have to consider, “What’s the alternative if livestock farming goes away?” You can see that future by going to southeastern WI and to western WI, west of the Twin Cities. When cows or hogs go (and with them the small grains and forages fed to livestock), they are replaced by corn ‘n beans — America’s green two-crop desert. There is nothing environmentally benign about cash grain agriculture. In fact, it could be argued that corn/bean farming is worse over the long haul for land and water than livestock. (It is why conservationists are working hard to BRING BACK LIVESTOCK to the Driftless Area, because the corn ‘n beans that have replaced them have been ecologically disastrous.) Then the corn ‘n beans are replaced eventually by everybody’s favorite permanent ground cover — rooftops and asphalt.

I don’t think it’s a stretch to say that from northern Ozaukee County to Green Bay could easily look like the Chicago suburbs in 20 years if livestock farming is not viable or possible in WI. (And for that matter, Stillwater to Eau Claire.) There are many forces making that viability a challenge. It would be a shame that one of those “challenges” is making it politically impossible for dairy farms to expand.

I think local control is a pillar of democratic, participatory government, and we should figure out a way to keep it, but also figure out a way to make livestock expansions less of an ordeal for farmers. I plan to talk to Schultz’s office and Ward’s office, and perhaps the Counties and Towns Associations (whom I presume will oppose the Schultz-Ward bill) about creating state standards for siting livestock expansions (a good idea), but then allowing towns and counties to review and adopt the standards locally. That way, dairy farmers know where they would be welcome, or not welcome, and local citizens can make the case themselves, once and for all, why they want/don’t want dairy farms in their neighborhood.

SOURCE: Denny Caneff, American Farmland Trust, dcaneff@FARMLAND.ORG.

Midwest megafarms making enemies

An April 21 story in the *Chicago Tribune* reported that Midwest megafarms, or concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs), are again threatening the public water supply and receiving thousands of dollars worth of environmental polluter fees. Last month a 50,000 gallon manure spill into Indiana’s Little Sugar Creek killed 5,000 fish and proved the public will no longer tolerate inaction. Indiana officials have moved to shut down the 35,000 hog Pohlmann farm after similar incidents in past years. The most recent spill will cost Klaus Pohlmann \$230,000, even though he contends the facility is state of the art. These actions have prompted officials in other states to look at their regulations that deal with CAFOs. In the past citizens and environmental groups have been able to enact rules blocking CAFOs, only to have state legislatures ignore their concerns. Currently regulations vary state to state, even though the Environmental Protection Agency

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recently handed down new rules on the facilities. However, many critics feel the rules do little to protect water quality and do not protect air quality. For more information on how your state can deal with CAFOs visit <http://www.serconline.org/cafos.html>.

SOURCE: SERC *Wildlines Report* Vol. II, No. 17 April 28, 2003.

North Carolina nixes hog farm growth

The *News Observer* reported on April 16 that the North Carolina Senate is poised to extend a moratorium on the creation of new and the expansion of current hog farms until September 2007. The move comes because research on alternative waste handling technology is behind schedule. The moratorium was set to expire this September and has been in place since August of 1997. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources has levied \$30,000 worth of fines in the last three weeks due to illegal manure spreading and for failure to report full lagoons, both which can release harmful waste into public waters. Environmentalists are urging the legislature to move past the moratorium and permanently ban lagoons and aerial spraying. For more information on how to deal with similar issues in your state visit: <http://www.serconline.org/cafos.html>.

SOURCE: SERC *Wildlines Report* Vol. II, No. 16 April 21, 2003.

Lieberman questions adequacy of EPA's CAFO rule

Senator Joseph Lieberman (D-CT) sent a letter to EPA Administrator Christine Whitman this week, expressing "concerns about the adequacy of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) new rule for regulating wastewater discharges from concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) and its plans for enforcement" and complaining that the final rule "significantly weakened the January 2001 proposal and failed to incorporate provisions important to protecting public health and the environment." The letter also seeks answers to 19 multi-part questions about the standards adopted in the final rule, as well as the enforcement, oversight and effectiveness of the rule. In other CAFO news, the "Washington Post" reports this week that a group of agribusiness interests offered to fund \$11 million in air quality research at CAFOs, in return for exemption from state and federal air quality enforcement for the period of the study. According to the article, "Sources familiar with the industry proposal said it is under serious consideration at the EPA." The full article is available at: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A26778-2003Apr14.html>. For more information, see <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/chronicle/archive/2003/04/15/MN174559.DTL> and <http://www.organicconsumers.org/ge/fish041103.cfm>.

SOURCE: Scotty Johnson, sjohnson@defenders.org.

Minnesota bill would silence large farm opponents via pocketbook

Attempts to silence opposition to factory farming in Minnesota has reached new levels at our state's capitol. Senator Steve Dille of Dassel is attempting to pass legislation that disqualifies peo-

ple who have opposed factory farming from receiving organic funding from the MN Department of Agriculture. In other words — no organic funding if you have tried to stop feedlot expansion, the growing of biotech crops, the application of farming chemicals or ANY industrial agriculture practice in MN during the past three years. This bill is now headed for the Senate floor for a vote and is expected to happen very soon. Below is the wording that has been inserted into SF 990.

For the purposes of expanding, improving, and developing production and marketing of the organic products of Minnesota agriculture, the commissioner may receive funds from state and federal sources and spend them, including through grants or contracts, to assist producers and processors to achieve certification, to conduct education or marketing activities, to enter into research and development partnerships, or to address production or marketing obstacles to the growth and well-being of the industry. The commissioner may not provide a grant to or contract with an individual or organization that in the previous 36 months has taken, or participated financially in, an action to prevent a person from engaging in agricultural activities or expanding an agricultural operation.

SOURCE: Tom Taylor, Midwest and Southeast Field Organizer, Organic Consumers Association, (612) 331-7309, tom@organicconsumers.org.

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Forest Fragmentation

Comments being taken on plan for state's largest forest

The public will have an opportunity to comment on the “preferred alternative” for managing Wisconsin’s largest state forest at an open house on Tuesday, April 29, 2003, at the Community Center in Boulder Junction from 2-8 p.m. People who are unable to attend can submit comments on the proposal in writing by May 16.

State officials are currently revising the master plan the 225,000-acre Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest in parts of Vilas, Oneida, and Iron counties. Master plans guide land management, recreation, wild resources, and boundary expansion on state properties.

During the meeting the public can comment and provide any additional information to DNR staff about natural resource management described in the Preferred Alternative and proposed NHAL boundary expansion. Individuals unable to attend the open house or having questions and comments regarding the meeting, the master plan process and the Preferred Alternative may write or contact Dennis Leith, NHAL Forest Superintendent, 8770 Hwy. J, Woodruff, WI 54568 or dennis.leith@dnr.state.wi.us. The deadline for public comments on the Preferred Alternative is May 16, 2003. The Preferred Alternative is being made available to the public in mid April. People not on the regular master plan mailing list may order a copy of the document by calling (715) 365-8993.

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SOURCE: John Schwarzmann, eccola@newnorth.net.

Highlights and lowlights of ‘Preferred Alternative’ plan for Northern Highland American Legion State Forest plan

The following are a set of highlights and preliminary lowlights compiled by John Schwarzmann of ECCOLA regarding the “preferred alternative” that you can use for your own comments at the open house and via the mail. A more detailed set of comments will be available soon on the ECCOLA website.

Highlights

- 22% of the Northern Highland American Legion State Forest has been designated as “focus” sites. These sites will be managed as old growth or will be natural areas. Unfortunately, the preferred alternative doesn’t define old-growth. 15% of these areas would be upland sites.
- A small non-motorized area of about 2,000 acres is proposed for the Bittersweet Lakes Area. The core of this area is a state natural area with four undeveloped lakes (Bittersweet, Prong, Smith, Oberlin) surrounded on three sides by mature pine and oak stands with hardwood inclusions.
- The Preferred Alternative proposes to enlarge the boundaries of the forest in two locations. The southern boundary would be expanded along the Wisconsin River to include the ecologically vital Menninghof wild rice marsh and the McNaughton wetlands. The northern expansion would include most of the areas between the current northern border of the property and the Michigan State line with the exclusion of some of the more populated areas. These expansions give the DNR the opportunity to purchase lands from willing sellers when the opportunity arises. Otherwise, the DNR can’t purchase lands unless they are located within the project boundary of their properties.

Lowlights

- The preferred alternative does virtually nothing to increase the amount of pine forest in the next 50 years (5% increase). An imperceptible gain of 1% of the forest will be allowed to succeed to pine forest per decade. The DNR even states on page 23 of the Preferred Alternative Summary that, “the NHAL stands out as one of the best places in Wisconsin to restore a large-scale red and white pine forest with a mix of aspen, white birch, red oak and jack pine.” Despite the suitability of the property to grow into a pine forest, little effort is made to encourage pine.
- The forest will continue to favor a highly fragmented crazy quilt of aspen. Aspen will continue to be by far the more common timber type (33% to 28% shift). The Preferred alternative allows an all-terrain vehicle trail in the northwest part of the forest that is near and adjacent to the only wilderness area on the NHAL (Manitowish River Wilderness) for part of the proposed route. The ATV trail would be located in a remote area that is mostly wetland and would be very susceptible to

the type of resource abuse commonly found near ATV trails.

- The DNR proposes to expand campgrounds on nine lakes in the forest (Buffalo, Carrol, Clear, Cunard, East Star, Firefly, Razorback, Upper Gresham, Buffalo Lake Northshore group campground). With undeveloped lakeshore disappearing rapidly on private lands, the DNR should not be disturbing lakeshore habitat with its own plans. If it must expand campgrounds, then they should be put back at least 150 feet from the water’s edge. The DNR should propose a no net loss of undeveloped lakeshore on public lands. Even if campgrounds don’t require buildings, they still impact wildlife habitat by building more roads, clearings, electrical hook-ups and boat landings. If the DNR develops lands, it stands to lose a good deal of moral authority in its attempt to enforce reasonably strict NR 115 lakeshore development regulations. Real estate developers will point to the DNR’s own lakeshore and say that if the state’s interest in lakeshore wildlife and fish habitat doesn’t restrict development, why should they be restricted?
- Many of the largest “wild” lakes under the current version of the Master Plan would no longer be managed as “wild” lakes. The main impact to the lakes is that they would lose their 400 foot-wide no-cut buffer zone along the entire shoreline. Eight would continue to be wilderness lakes, 8 would become wild lakes and 3 would lose their protective buffer and as electric-motor lakes.
- The DNR’s preferred alternative leaves no large lakes in the wild or wilderness category. The largest wild lake would be East Ellerson lake at 136 acres. The largest wilderness lake would be Devine Lake at 95 acres. While a lake must have very limited road access to qualify as a wild lake, the DNR should have proposed some road closures in order to keep some of the biggest current wild lakes in that protective designation.
- The Scientific Lakes area of Escanaba, Palette, Nebish, Lost Canoe, and Spruce receive some protection under the current alternative in that about 1,000 acres of land east of Escanaba Lake and between Escanaba and Lost Canoe would be passively managed. However, the areas south of Escanaba Lake and North of Nebish would be managed timber. Most of the shoreline of Escanaba, and Lost Canoe Lake as well as all of Nebish would no longer have their existing 400 foot-wide no-cut buffer zone.

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Assembly Bill would allow ATV use on all state-owned lands

I received a call last evening from Elward Engel (a retired Land Agent for the DNR) about Assembly Bill 174. This bill has been introduced and would require all state-owned land to be open to use by ATVs. This would include State Parks, Natural Areas, public hunting grounds, everything that the State owns. Elward has done a lot to preserve special places and is concerned about erosion, damage to plants and animals, noise pollution, and he often assured people that their land would be protected as a condition of their selling to the DNR. He feels this is a breaking of that trust. He also reported that there was a significant reduction in problems on state land — litter and parties etc. — when they began to put up gates to prevent vehicle access. He wants to urge you to contact your legislators both assembly and senate, and request them to oppose this bill. Please mention this at your meetings and spread the word.

SOURCE: Jim Hlaban, Fox Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited.

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Mercury Reduction

Healthy fishing tips offered for spring opener

Clean Wisconsin (formerly Wisconsin's Environmental Decade) and the Wisconsin Stewardship Network (WSN) have teamed up to offer helpful information on staying healthy in the new fishing season. Although all lakes and rivers in Wisconsin are under a fish-eating advisory for mercury contamination, there are things anglers can do to protect themselves and their families from mercury poisoning, and still eat their catch. Pregnant or nursing women, women of childbearing age and children under 15 years old are recommended to limit their fish consumption to protect themselves from mercury contamination. Mercury is a neurotoxin; it affects brain function and is especially toxic to growing children.

“Fishing is part of what makes Wisconsin great. I've been fishing in Wisconsin my entire life, and eating what I catch is important to me. Fortunately there are types of fish I can catch and eat that are low in mercury like bluegill, perch, trout, and walleye,” said Claire Schmidt, long-time Wisconsin angler and southern regional coordinator for the WSN.

Coal-burning power plants are by far the largest source of mercury in Wisconsin. Mercury is released from coal when it is burned; this mercury gets into our lakes and rivers through rainfall. Mercury builds up in the bodies of fish and other wildlife, sometimes making them too toxic to eat. In fact, loons, which subsist on fish, are heavily impacted by mercury pollution. In order to clean up Wisconsin's mercury pollution, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is writing rules to limit mercury emissions from coal burning power plants. These rules will cut mercury pollution up to 90%.

[Not included in this story was its “meat” — several “healthy fish” recipes. Bounce the WSN a message and we'll send them to you to try.]

SOURCE: Clean Wisconsin (formerly Wisconsin's Environmental Decade, (608) 251-7020, info@cleanwisconsin.org or www.cleanwisconsin.org.

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Bush “clear skies” proposal that in name only

Attached is a letter for your sign-on that opposes the President’s air pollution proposal (otherwise known as “Clear Skies” in his words). His proposal, which severely guts the Clean Air Act, was introduced into both houses in February. We will send this to all WI members of Congress, and would like as many groups as possible to sign onto the letter. We focused specifically on mercury pollution in this letter. You may have received this letter from WISPIRG’s national lobbying office, but I wanted to personally encourage you to sign on. Please contact me and let me know if your group will endorse. [E-mail WISIRG to get the sample letter referred to in this story. -Ed.]

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

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Metallic Mining

Potawatomi: second “model mine” fails Mining Moratorium test

The pending application for the proposed Crandon mine fails to show an example of a sulfidic mine that has been closed for 10 years without pollution from acid runoff or heavy metals, the Forest County Potawatomi Community said last week. Without such an example, no permit may be granted under Wisconsin’s Mining Moratorium Law.

“The Mining Moratorium Law was passed to protect Wisconsin from being a guinea pig,” said Forest County Potawatomi Community Chairman Gus Frank. “It says no one can get a permit for a mine that might cause sulfuric acid runoff until they show an example of a clean mine. The example submitted to the DNR does not meet that test.”

The DNR staff has already informed the applicant that one example mine is not acceptable under the law’s requirements. In the absence of adequate example mines, the DNR will be prohibited from granting a mining permit.

A Potawatomi letter to the DNR challenges Nicolet Minerals Company’s use of the Cullaton Mine in the Northwest Territories of Canada as an example of a mine that has been closed for 10 years without pollution. The tribe says the Cullaton mine has not been operated or closed for 10 years and that it appears to have caused significant environmental pollution.

SOURCE: Forest County Potawatomi, P.O. Box 46, Crandon, WI 54520.

BACKGROUND: Mining Moratorium Law

The Mining Moratorium Law requires an applicant for a metallic mining permit in sulfide ore to provide the DNR with an example of a mine that has been operated for at least 10 years without polluting groundwater or surface water. It also requires an example of a mine that has been closed for at least 10 years without polluting groundwater or surface water. View the exact text by opening the metallic mining statute at <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/statutes/03Stat0293.pdf> and going to 293.50.

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Rep. McCormick introduces mining legislation to protect groundwater

In an effort to keep Wisconsin's ground waters safe, Representative Terri McCormick (R-Grand Chute) is reintroducing legislation today that would update Wisconsin's groundwater regulations for mining while protecting other job growth industries. The legislation would require mines to follow the same groundwater rules as other businesses.

"This bill is about equal treatment," McCormick said. "I want to make sure that mines are meeting fair and reasonable environmental standards. These are standards that other industries must already meet on waste disposal and other issues."

McCormick introduced the same legislation last session, but AB 547 failed to pass the Legislature.

SOURCE: Rep. Terri McCormick, (608) 266-7500.

Rep. Black asks DNR to halt mine review process

Representative Spencer Black has asked the DNR to immediately suspend processing the application for a mining permit for the proposed Crandon mine until questions about the mine's new ownership and its mining plans are answered.

"The sale of the Crandon mine raises basic questions about who owns the mine, how they are planning to operate it, and whether they have the resources to implement their plans," Black wrote in a letter to DNR Secretary Scott Hassett. "The DNR should halt consideration of the Crandon permit until the new owners provide full and complete information to the state."

"If the DNR continues to spend staff time processing the application without full disclosure by the reported new owner, then valuable state employee time will be wasted and the public will be shortchanged," Black wrote Hassett.

SOURCE: Rep. Black's office.

Doyle calls for cyanide ban in mining at Earth Day celebration

An April 22 Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel story report, "Gov. Jim Doyle used a news conference on the future of Wisconsin's water resources Tuesday to push the Legislature for a ban on the use of cyanide in mining and a law regulating high-capacity wells. Those regulations are needed now 'to protect our precious water resources' while leaders work on long-term policies to maintain the state's groundwater supply and the viability of rivers and lakes, he said.

"In addition to the cyanide legislation, Doyle called for a law to hold mining waste landfills to the same environmental standards as municipal landfills. During his campaign, the governor supported a ban on cyanide in mining, but the issue has taken on renewed significance with the latest proposal to develop the Crandon Mine, near the headwaters of the Wolf River in Forest County.

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Northern Wisconsin Resource Group announced this month that it had purchased the Crandon Mine and plans to seek a partner to obtain the necessary permits to begin extracting the ore.”

SOURCE: Milwaukee *Journal-Sentinel*.

Citizens call upon Governor to reopen mine purchase discussions

Representatives from local government, environmental groups, and tribes are calling upon the Governor to reopen talks to discuss the public purchase of the proposed Crandon mine site.

“We are calling upon Governor Doyle to reopen talks on the public purchase of the land near the headwaters of the Wolf River. By protecting this nationally recognized river we open the door to sustainable development in the Northwoods. We want use, not abuse, for this special area. A mine is clearly not a logical option. Numerous mining companies have already tried and failed to mine this site,” said Claire Schmidt, mining campaign director for Clean Wisconsin.

SOURCE: Clean Wisconsin (formerly Wisconsin’s Environmental Decade), (608) 251-7020, info@cleanwisconsin.org or www.cleanwisconsin.org.

Doyle disbands mining advisory council

The Green Bay *Press-Gazette* reported on April 21, “Gov. Jim Doyle has decided to discontinue a scientific panel of university professors named years ago to review how a proposed underground zinc and copper mine in northern Wisconsin would affect the environment. The five-member panel spent nearly four years reviewing Nicolet Mineral Co.’s project near Crandon, at a cost of at least \$200,000 and perhaps without proper state authorization.” View the complete story at http://www.greenbaypressgazette.com/news/archive/local_9886938.shtml.

SOURCE: Green Bay *Press-Gazette*.

Shoreland Zoning & Water Protection

River-Lake grant programs rumored up for Jt. Finance axe

As many of you know, members of the Joint Finance Committee (JFC) of the legislature are currently developing their own version of the state budget, and they are looking for programs to cut to address our \$3.2 billion deficit. Unfortunately, we have learned that they will very likely be looking to nix the River and Lakes Protection Grant Programs. Many of you have received, worked on, or otherwise benefited from projects that have been funded by these grant programs. The three-year old River Protection Grant Program amounts to only \$300,000/year, but has helped numerous river and watershed groups form, incorporate, receive training, plan their activities, monitor their waters, build their membership, and educate their communities about the benefits of clean and healthy rivers.

Once we see the final draft of the budget and know by exactly how much they propose to cut the program (we hear it might be zeroed out, but won't know until the draft is out), we will be looking to all of you to voice your support for this program before the JFC and before your own legislators. We need all of us who benefit from the grants to speak up on their behalf if we are going to stand a chance. Because we don't expect that JFC will take their budget to public hearings around the state, we will need you to send or fax letters, make phone calls, and send e-mails instead.

SOURCE: Diana Toledo, River Alliance of Wisconsin.

New CREP sign-up announced

In an Earth Day speech to farmers in Maryland this week, USDA secretary Ann Veneman announced that there will be a general sign-up for the Conservation Reserve Program (CREP) from May 5 to May 30, 2003. The 2002 Farm Bill authorizes the CRP to enroll up to 39.3 million acres in 10-15 year contracts to remove environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production. This will be the only general sign-up period for CRP until 2007.

Participants with contracts expiring this year are invited to re-apply. CRP's continuous sign-up program is also accepting applications on an ongoing basis, and the USDA announced that it will set aside 500,000 acres for bottomland hardwood tree planting. More information and sign-up instructions are available at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/pas/publications/facts/html/crp26sign03.htm>.

SOURCE: Scotty Johnson, sjohnson@defenders.org.

River Alliance, TU release dam removal book

A book entitled *Restoring the Flow: Improving Selective Small Dam Removal Understanding and Practice in the Great Lakes States* has been released by The River Alliance of Wisconsin and Trout Unlimited. The book summarizes dam removal policy and management recommendations from more than 40 river restoration experts from around the Great Lakes. It is the product of a unique gathering of resource professionals, conservationists, and academics with over 100 years of combined dam removal experience and involvement with more than 100 dam removals across the Great Lakes region. These experts convened in 2001 for a Small Dam Removal Workshop and Working Meeting in Kohler, WI, to share regional information, showcase several demonstration projects, and develop the recommendations detailed in this report.

Download the complete report at <http://www.wisconsinrivers.org/SmallDams/restoring.pdf> or find it on the WSN's 2004 annual conference CD.

SOURCE: River Alliance of WI, Goodman@wisconsinrivers.org.

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National river clean-up week May 10-17

Groups or organizations interested in picking up trash from along Wisconsin waterways or already planning such an event for National Rivers Cleanup Week, May 10-17, can receive free materials from the state and register their event to let people know about it. Free garbage bags and informational materials on how to plan and carry out a river cleanup are available from the Water Action Volunteers, WAV, a cooperative program between DNR and the University of Wisconsin-Cooperative Extension. People can find the materials on the WAV Web site at <http://clean-water.uwex.edu/wav/river/plan.htm>, and register their event online or by calling Kris Stepenuck, WAV coordinator, at (608) 264-8948.

SOURCE: Kris Stepenuck, (608) 264-8948.

MMSD buys flood easements

The Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD) has purchased three conservation easements from the City of Oak Creek to help reduce the risk of future flooding. Combined, the properties total about 28 acres. Oak Creek will own the land under the agreement. However, the easements, purchased through MMSD's Conservation Plan, will ensure that the land remains open space and is not developed.

SOURCE: Bill Graffin, Public Information Manager, (414) 225-2077.

WI water law conference May 28

A Wisconsin Water Law and Policy Conference will be held Wednesday, May 28, at the UW Law School Madison, WI.

“Water use policy and regulation has become a major public agenda item. Wisely regulating water use and water quality is a challenge facing Wisconsin as demands by conflicting recreational, residential, commercial, agricultural, and industrial interests are debated. Listed speakers include Tom Bauman, Jill Jonas, and Dave Siebert of DNR. Topics will include: Issues in Groundwater Management, Shoreland Management, Reconfigured Water Quality Regulations, Tribal Authority, Revisions to Stormwater Mgt. Rules, Recent Water Law Cases & Legislation, Dockominiums & Public Trust Doctrine, Redesigned Rural NPS Program, and Wetlands Compensatory Mitigation. For more information, call (800) 355-5572 or (608) 262-3834.

SOURCE: WDNR “Basin Briefs,” April 4, 2003.

UW-Oshkosh to study Lake Michigan water quality

According to the April 22 Green Bay Press-Gazette, “Water quality at 62 state beaches, including several in Door County, will be under heightened scrutiny under water-testing research grants won by the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh. The university is closing in on securing more than

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\$100,000 in local, state and federal funds that will pay for mobile testing labs that will be set up in Door, Vilas and Bayfield counties.”

SOURCE: Green Bay *Press-Gazette*.

Georgia senate kills bill allowing sale of water rights

The Atlanta *Journal-Constitution* on April 18 reported the Georgia Senate rejected a bill Thursday that allows for the sale of water rights. The bill would allow for factories or farmers to sell water withdrawal permits in scarce regions or to one another. Opponents to the bill say that the sale of water rights would lead to overuse of rivers and underground aquifers. However, bill proponents argue that permit trading is an effective tool for redistributing water in times of increased scarcity.

SOURCE: SERC *Wildlines Report* Vol. II, No. 16 April 21, 2003.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

2003 Renewable Energy Fair June 20 in Custer

The world’s largest renewable energy event, the Renewable Energy and Sustainable Living Fair (a.k.a. Energy Fair) is returning to Custer, WI, near Stevens Point on June 20. This event attracts over 15,000 environmentally conscientious people each year from 36 countries and 49 states. The Fair, hosted by Custer’s own Midwest Renewable Energy Association (MREA), provides fairgoers with entertainment, speakers, workshops, exhibitors, and like-minded people all interested in preserving the earth and our standard of living through renewable energy. For more information about the 2003 Renewable Energy and Sustainable Living Fair, contact the MREA at (715) 592-6595, or visit their website at: www.the-mrea.org.

SOURCE: Katy Matthai, Associate Dir., katy@the-mrea.org.

Gaylord Nelson joins WLCV board

The Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters announced on April 22 that Gaylord Nelson has accepted the position of Honorary Chair on the Board of Trustees for the organization. As the Honorary Chair, Nelson offers his support of the mission and goals of this nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to electing conservation leaders to the state legislature and encouraging lawmakers to champion conservation policies.

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Groups float idea of shared space for Milwaukee enviro organizations

Here's an idea whose time has come. The idea of shared office space for some of Milwaukee's environmental organizations keeps surfacing, but we're ready to start getting real. This morning four of us (representing River Revitalization Foundation, Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin, The Park People, and Friends of Milwaukee's Rivers) gathered to brainstorm our needs and wants, and then toured a few possible downtown office locations.

The purpose of this email is to get the word out to as many of the area's environmental non-profits as possible to make sure that everyone who is interested in joining this bandwagon will be included in the discussions. So, if you know someone associated with an organization that just may be interested in being part of the "Environmental Incubator" (Susan's term brilliant!), please have them contact me or Susan Slocum ASAP.

For those organizations who may not be able to justify a full office downtown, we are also considering the concept of including more transitory types of arrangements if possible, maybe some organizations would like to have access to the office facilities, conference room, and occasional use of a cubicle. Possibly even some Madison-based organizations would like to have a place to call home while working in Milwaukee. If there is enough interest, we could probably work that into the arrangement.

But we need to know soon if you are even remotely interested. Please help get the word out. Susan or I would love to hear your thoughts, questions, and suggestions. Also, if you know of any other successful version of this idea, please let us know.

SOURCE: Lynn Broaddus, Friends of Milwaukee's Rivers, (414) 771-8368, Lebroaddus@aol.com.

IRS stops recent practice of auditing nonprofits that lobby

The following joint statement was released by the Alliance for Justice, Charity Lobbying in the Public Interest, the Council on Foundations, Independent Sector, the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, the National Council of Nonprofit Associations, and OMB Watch:

"At a meeting on April 24 with representatives of seven organizations from across the nonprofit sector, Internal Revenue Service (IRS) officials stated that they were halting an IRS program in which a sample of charities was audited because they reported lobbying activities. The IRS, however, indicated that it was not examining organizations simply because they had made a 501(h) lobbying election, contrary to concerns raised by some of these organizations as recently reported in the press. We, the nonprofit groups that attended that meeting, applaud the move by the IRS, but we urge the IRS to take strong, affirmative steps to remind the nonprofit sector that lobbying by charities is legitimate.

These previous communications are available on the Alliance for Justice website for the Non-profit Advocacy Project at www.allianceforjustice.org/nonprofit. Click on "News and Press" for the press release or click on "Public Policy" and then "Alerts" for the alert.

SOURCE: John Pomeranz, pomeranz@afj.org.

Three new members join WSN board of directors

Elected to the WSN board of directors at the WSN's April 19 meeting were three individuals with a wealth of experience and passion for Wisconsin's natural resources:

Melissa Scanlan is the founder and Executive Director of Midwest Environmental Advocates (MEA) in Madison, Wisconsin's first and only environmental law center. MEA represents groups that are working for environmental justice. Author of a law review article on Wisconsin's public trust doctrine and lawyer for the Concerned Citizens of Newport in their fight against the proposed Perrier project, Scanlan holds law and Master of Science degrees from the University of California, Berkeley.

Larry Bonde is the Manitowoc County chair for the Wisconsin Conservation Congress. He has served as District 8 Councilor for the congress for the last two years. While on the congress over the past 10+ years, he has served on the Environmental Practices Committee, Big Game Committee, and has been the chair of the Outdoor Heritage Committee. He was appointed to the Future of Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Oversight Team that was formed by DNR Secretary Bazzell. He is now a liaison to the Future of Hunting Fishing, and Trapping Implementation Team which will enact the work plan that was developed by the Oversight

Team and recently adopted by the Natural Resources Board. Locally he is a member of the Manitowoc County Fish and Game Protective Association and the Viking Bow and Gun Club. He is also a member of the Wisconsin Bow Hunters Association, Wisconsin Deer Hunters Association, North American Hunting Club, and the National Rifle Association. Larry has a wife Jean and three teenage children, Phillip, Miranda, and Candace, who all enjoy the outdoors in one way or another.

Sarah Lloyd is a member of the Cambrians For Thoughtful Development, a citizens group working to keep an ethanol plant from being built in the village of Cambria next to the school. Sarah has been active in forming Wisconsin Initiative for Sustainable Local Environments (WISLE), a newly launched statewide effort to unite grassroots citizen groups committed to the protection of citizen's rights and interests in the face of ethanol plants. Sarah is the Membership and Grants Coordinator for the Aldo Leopold Foundation in Baraboo. She also grows organic vegetables for the local market on the ancestral Lloyd farm outside of Cambria. She moved to Cambria two years ago after living for several years in Sweden and Finland working with environmental organizations in the Nordic Countries and Russia on boreal forest protection and sustainable use as well as community development in forest-based communities.

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

The WSN's Board of Directors consists of representatives from the following organizations: Brown County Conservation Alliance, Concerned Citizens of Newport, ECCOLA, Izaak Walton League of America, Madison Audubon Society, Midwest Environmental Advocates, Inc., 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's Environmental Decade, and Wisconsin Trout Unlimited, plus individuals who serve as at-large members.

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 WSN Exec. Director Todd Hanson at wsn@chorus.net.

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