



WSNetworkNews

June 1, 2001

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Last call for northern Wisconsin GreenChat — The WSN's regional hub in Tomahawk, WI, is holding a "GreenChat" boat cruise June 8 in conjunction with the League of Conservation Voters Education Fund. The cruise will bring sporting, conservation, and environmental leaders from northern Wisconsin groups together with representatives of local print and electronic media to discuss how to better get the word out about your group's activities. Contact Hub coordinator Jim Wise of Environmentally Concerned Citizens of Lakeland Area (ECCOLA) for more details at (715) 453-3676, or ecowise@newnorth.net.

Arrowhead-Weston Transmission Line

SOUL holding Madison legislative listening session June 7

On June 7th you have the opportunity to take part in a legislative listening session and appear outside of the Public Service Commission (PSC) for a victory rally. Busses will leave from Krug Tours, Medford, 6 a.m. and Stage Stop, Mosinee, 7:10 a.m. In order to reserve your seat, call Georgia Shupe at (715) 748-2068. Cost is \$20.00. If you are driving, meet at the State Capitol at 10:00 a.m., Room 225 NW. We rally at the PSC at 1:00 p.m.

Please call and write your legislators and ask them to attend the listening session! Call Governor McCallum and request his presence. Do this even if you are unable to attend. They will listen for you. This may be our last time to speak out. Make it count. We are counting on you!

SOURCE: Linda Celor, SOUL, cen20773@centuryinter.net

Joint Finance provision lets utilities form subsidiaries to build power plants

The Legislature's Joint Finance Committee approved a state budget provision that lets public utilities form subsidiaries to build new electric generating plants. The provision is said not to apply to electric transmission lines, nor is it expected to speed up the approval of new transmission lines such as the Arrowhead-Weston line proposed for northwest Wisconsin.

Doyle won't challenge law authorizing power line company

Wisconsin Attorney General James Doyle will not challenge the constitutionality of a state law authorizing the creation by a group of energy companies of a subsidiary company to own the proposed Arrowhead-Weston transmission line.

"Wisconsin courts have repeatedly recognized that the Legislature may confer corporate powers and privileges on a single entity where the entity is charged with a public and statewide purpose," said Doyle. "The provision of adequate and reliable transmission of power has been held by our courts to be a public and statewide concern."

Project supporters say the proposed 345-kilovolt, 250-mile-long line between Hermantown and the Wausau, WI, area is needed to increase the reliability of the region's transmission system. Opponents worry about the line's possible impact on the environment, their health and property values. A PSC decision on whether to authorize the line could be made by late summer. The PSC would decide which of several alternate routes the line could follow.

SOURCE: Duluth News-Tribune.

Renewable energy fair June 22-24 in Amherst

Every summer about 12,000 visitors trek to central Wisconsin to participate in what has become the largest renewable energy gathering in the United States. This year's Renewable Energy and Sustainable Living Fair will be held June 22-24 at the Portage County Fairgrounds in Amherst.

The Energy Fair is organized by the Midwest Renewable Energy Association (MREA), a non profit grassroots organization dedicated to promoting renewable energy and energy efficiency through education and demonstration.

SOURCE: Tehri Parker, MREA, 7558 Deer Road, Custer, WI 54423, 715-592-6595, or visit our web site at www.the-mrea.org, tehri@the-mrea.org.

DNR Independence

CORRECTION: 93% oppose DNR split at hearings, not 70%

In the last issue of *WSNetworkNews*, we incorrectly reported that “a list of people registering or speaking for or against the DNR split hearing at last week’s hearings shows that nearly 70% opposed the split.” That was incorrect. As you math majors well know, when just 8 of 123 people testify in favor of the split, that means fully *93% are against* the move.

(As a side note, the WSN recently conducted an update of its mailing list. Because that mailing coincided with news of the proposed DNR split, we carved out a place on our response card for people to express their opinions. Result: 95% of those returning cards also marked their opposition to splitting the DNR. -Ed.)

Legislators sign on to split DNR bill

The following legislators have signed on as sponsors of a bill to split the WDNR:

ASSEMBLY:	Friske	SENATE:
Gard	Suder	Welch
Montgomery	Musser	Zien
Johnsrud	Sykora	Darling
Huebsch	Pettis	

SOURCE: State of Wisconsin

Conservation Congress county resolutions favor DNR independence

Unlike in past years, the printed Conservation Congress ballot this year did not include a question about returning DNR secretary selection to the Natural Resources Board. However, resolutions to that effect were introduced on a county-by-county basis. Those results have now been tallied, with the following results:

Two-part resolutions asking to restore both the Public Intervenor Office and NR Board appointment of the DNR secretary:

- Introduced in 29 Counties.
- Vote total 1,818 in favor, 83 opposed.
- County-by-county votes: Barron 31-0, Bayfield 39-0, Buffalo 3-4, Burnett 31-0, Calumet 75-0, Chippewa 84-1, Crawford 18-0, Dodge 63-1, Door #A 37-1 - #B 27-4, Dunn 69-0, Florence 19-0, Grant #A 46-0 - #B 2-32, Jackson 30-2, La Crosse 77-0, Langlade 55-1, Monroe 43-3, Outagamie 112-0, Pierce 40-0, Portage 207-2, Racine 79-7, Richland 38-7, Rock 69-2, Sauk

70-1, Trempealeau 38-0, Vernon 27-0, Vilas #A 39-1 - #B 32-3, Waushara 42-0, Winnebago 176-6, Wood #A 69-1 - #B 31-4.

One-part resolutions asking to restore NR Board appointment of the DNR secretary:

- Introduced in 3 counties.
- Vote total 438 in favor, 72 opposed.
- County-by-county votes: Dane 300-68, Eau Claire 63-0, Jefferson 75-4.

SOURCE: State of Wisconsin

Sierra Club testifies in favor of changes to Natural Resources Board

Caryl Terrell of the Sierra Club testified before the Senate Environmental Resources Committee May 17 that “the current [Natural Resources] Board needs a shake up... There are no members with demonstrated expertise or working knowledge of the intimate linkage of environmental pollution, particularly related to air emissions, toxics, and groundwater contamination with human health.”

Terrell’s testimony also objected to the re-appointment of Howard Poulson to the NRB, saying “Mr. Poulson has consistently raised issues of concern mainly to the Farm Bureau, but not necessarily to farmers in general. And too often Mr. Poulson has then voted to reflect only the position of the Farm Bureau, of which he is President, and not reflecting the interests of the broader farming, conservation, and environmental community.”

As part of her testimony, Terrell offered a “Suggested Selection Criteria for DNR Board Members.” (Contact the WSN at wsn@chorus.net for a copy.)

SOURCE: Sierra Club

Factory Farming

Family Farm Protection Act funding gets tie vote in Joint Finance

It was pins and needles time for the Wisconsin Citizen Action (WCA) Family Farm Stewardship Campaign (FFSC) members as Senator Brian Burke, the state legislature’s Joint Finance Chair, offered an amendment to the Governor’s proposed state budget that would have provided \$2.6 million for programs that aid family farmers in improving profitability and protecting the environment. Unfortunately, all eight Republicans voted in unison to prevent passage of the amendment through the Joint Finance Committee. The measure is likely to be reintroduced when the State Senate takes up the budget bill later this summer.

The Family Farm Protection Act budget amendment, developed by the FFSC and introduced by Senator Burke, included funding to establish:

- a “Buy Wisconsin” market development program,
- a cost-share program for transition to more profitable managed intensive grazing and organic systems of production, and
- a low-interest revolving loan program for farmers who are implementing new farm enterprises or developing new businesses that add value and build markets.

It would also have established a new position at the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection that would work to gather and analyze information on unfair pricing and contracting practices that large agri-businesses are using to drive smaller farms out of business.

SOURCE: Sam Gieryn, WI Citizen Action Family Farm Stewardship Campaign Coordinator, (608) 256-1250 ext. 13, sgieryn@wi-citizenaction.org, 1202 Williamson Street, Suite B, Madison, WI 53703

EPA’s proposed feedlot management plan faces House, expert scrutiny

House lawmakers last week ventured into the controversial subject of regulating non-point source water pollution originating from animal feedlots. Testimony during a hearing on the subject in the House Transportation and Infrastructure’s Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee was heavy with criticism over a proposed Environmental Protection Agency rule that would limit water pollution at tens of thousands of concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) across the country.

Rep. John Duncan (R-Tenn.), the panel’s chairman, said his chief concern was that the EPA rule could be both financially and bureaucratically burdensome enough to “put another nail in the coffin” for the small and medium sized farm operations, that along with the large farms, would be required to enter into a newly structured National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permitting process.

Under the proposed rule, which is open for public comment through July 30, the definition of a CAFO is expanded to include not only where animals are kept, but also where manure is applied by the permit holder. EPA has outlined two approaches to change the number of animals used in defining CAFOs: a “2-Tiered Option” that reduces the number of allowed animal units to 500 and under that number can be designated a CAFO on a case by case basis; and a “3-Tiered Option” that is similar to the process in place, but would shift the burden to require an operator of between 300-1,000 animal units to be considered a CAFO unless they can meet five mandated criteria.

EPA is under a consent decree, which stems from settled lawsuits with the Natural Resources Defense Council, to issue final regulations for both effluent limitations guidelines and CAFO permitting requirements. EPA must issue the former by Dec. 15, 2002, while the latter has no deadline.

Rep. Gene Taylor (D-Miss.), questioned the panel of farmers and state environmental agency leaders over the proposed rule's ability to limit pollution that ultimately crosses state borders. Taylor emphasized how Mississippi ends up seeing some two thirds of the nation's water pass through his home state. But both Craig Hill, an Iowa pork producer, and Marty Smith, a Florida cattle rancher, responded that it is already against their states' law to discharge water from their farms.

There is no need for new EPA rules in light of existing state laws and state programs, opponents to the proposal argue. And Russell Harding, director of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, a state that has pursued a non-regulatory approach to the issue, said the EPA proposal "values process over performance." He added that the rule has "seriously underestimated" the number of CAFOs that would be required to get an NPDES permits by more than 50 percent. Subsequently, he said the rule would require a state like his to double the number of individual permits issued for all non-point sources.

"If states are forced to permit animal feeding operations, the resulting shift of resources from other higher priority areas could create an actual degradation in overall water quality," he said. "We will, in effect, be taking cops off of the beat and putting them behind desks."

Since 1996, 12 states have established new environmental regulations to address animal feeding operations. And at least one of those states, Maryland, is in support of the proposed EPA rule.

Jane Nishida, secretary of the Maryland Department of Environmental Quality, was among the minority of gathered witnesses who backed the rule. Agriculture accounts for 36 percent of the nitrogen entering the Chesapeake Bay, she said, which is more than point sources such as municipally owned wastewater treatment plants as well as from urban lands, forests, fields and other open spaces.

"A national approach to the regulation of CAFOs is essential to ensure consistency among the states," she said. "Without a national approach, we could create a situation where large animal operations may move from state to state to find those with the least degree of state regulatory protection. It is in just such situations, where national water quality goals are threatened, that EPA should set a standard for the nation."

SOURCE: Nanney.Roger@epamail.epa.gov

EPA has help for those wanting to comment on CAFO proposal

EPA has created a "Commenter's Guide" for their proposed changes to regulations for Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations. They have asked that we distribute it to interest groups in our state (these documents have also been sent to the Watershed Advisory Committee and the Outreach Advisory Committee).

EPA developed this document in response to concerns they heard during their outreach activities about the size and complexity of the proposal. It is not totally comprehensive and does not replace

the proposed rule, but they believe it will relieve some of the frustration people are having with the proposal and help folks wade through the key issues.

(Readers may contact the WSN at wsn@chorus.net for a copy in .pdf format.)

SOURCE: Kristi Minahan, WDNR Runoff Management Section, Bureau of Watershed Management (608) 266-7055

WDNR considering two WPDES permits in Wisconsin

The DNR is considering two requests for WPDES permits from Schneider Farms Inc. of Hilbert (which hopes to operate a dairy replacement animal raising facility housing 2,225 animals or 1,900 animal units) and B&D Dairy in Marinette County (which hopes to expand its operation to 2,200 animals), according to a May 14 item on the *Wisconsin Ag Connection* news service.

SOURCE: WDNR "Basin Briefs," 5-23-01

South Carolina continues CAFO moratorium

South Carolina will continue its moratorium on large lot farm operations until August 9, according to a May 11 story in *The State* [from South Carolina]. The 90-day moratorium will be used to analyze how the large farming businesses operate and whether new technologies can adequately address the environmental issues associated with such operations.

SOURCE: WDNR "Basin Brief," 5-23-01

Groundwater Protection

High-capacity well provision clears Joint Finance committee

The Joint Finance Committee approved a budget item May 16 that will make water bottlers like Perrier conduct full environmental impact studies before being issued permits for high-capacity wells. The measure passed 14-2 and now moves on to a budget conference committee. For more information, see <http://www.jsonline.com/WI/051601/wi--perrier-budget05160119955.asp>.

CCN holding benefit concert in Baraboo July 28

Concerned Citizens of Newport will have a benefit concert on July 28th in Baraboo, WI, at the beautiful Ringling Theatre on the Square. Our headliner is the Sundowners, a nationally known barbershop quartet. We are fortunate to have them. It helps to have one of our members related to the lead singer.

The proceeds from the concert will go toward our legal expenses and for our educational outreach program to protect spring water, groundwater, and wetlands. Group and commercial sponsorships are available.

SOURCE: Hiroshi Kanno, (608) 253-7266, hirok8@aol.com

WOW rummage sale July 21

A fund raiser rummage sale will be held from 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Saturday, July 21, in the parking lot of The Cove, located on Highway 23, Briggsville. The event is being sponsored by the Waterkeepers of Wisconsin. Proceeds from the fund raiser will aid in the protection of Wisconsin spring water and wetlands.

For additional information, call Dave Krause at 608-981-2403; Joan Byers at 608-586-4388; or Margaret Kutzke at 608-742-1075.

SOURCE: WOW

Grist magazine prints Perrier story

If you are looking for a nice summary story on Perrier's history in Wisconsin over the past two years, check out the May 21, 2001, *Grist* magazine story by Erik Ness.

The story is at: <http://www.gristmagazine.com/grist/maindish/ness052101.stm>.

Report says Wisconsin water utilities 'losing' 23 billion gallons/year

More than 23 billion gallons of the water pumped into Wisconsin public water utilities were "lost" in the year 1999, up from the previous year's 22-billion-gallon loss, according to state reports recently made available on the Internet.

On average, any given public water utility in Wisconsin cannot account for 13 to 15 percent of the water pumped from its source, according to the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSCW) report. That percentage is high compared to other states, and casts a new light on recent public discussions on drinking water resources and water system construction costs, according to water experts with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

In Wisconsin, 70 percent of drinking water is from groundwater aquifers, with the remainder coming from a variety of surface water resources such as Lake Michigan or Lake Winnebago.

The full reports can be downloaded from the PSCW web site at <http://www.psc.state.wi.us>.

SOURCE: WDNR

Midwest Groundwater Conference planned for late October

The 46th annual Midwest Groundwater Conference will be held in Madison in late October. The annual conference provides the opportunity for students, faculty, environmental managers and private sector professionals to exchange ideas and present results on various groundwater issues affecting the Midwest. A brochure announcing the conference and the Call for Abstracts is available. Information is also posted on the University of Wisconsin Water Resources Institute Web site at www.wri.wisc.edu.

SOURCE: DNR "Basin Briefs" 5-16-01

Mercury Reduction

Groups says Bush energy plan subsidizes dirty coal

The coal industry has already received more than \$2 billion for supposed "clean coal" technologies that have not achieved breakthrough reductions in smog and soot pollution and have not addressed mercury or global warming pollution at all. Now the Bush Administration wants to hand big coal companies like Southern Co. and Bechtel another \$2 billion over the next ten years for more of the same.

SOURCE: WISPIRG, wispirg@chorus.net.

Metallic Mining

Cyanide bill passed by Senate Environmental Resources Committee

Senate Bill 160 — legislation to ban the use of cyanide in Wisconsin mines — was passed May 31 by the Wisconsin Senate Environmental Resources Committee on a bipartisan 4-to-1 vote. Senators Jim Baumgart (D), Robert Cowles (R), Dave Hanson (D), and Bob Wirch (D) voted to recommend the bill for passage by the full Senate.

SB 160 is the companion to Assembly Bill 95. The bill was a subject of the Senate committee's hearing on May 17. The "Black and Decker" bill had a Committee hearing on May 10. Nicolet Minerals Company flew in people to testify from around the country, claiming that the vat flotation process (to be used during ore processing at Crandon) is safer than the heap leach process. Yet their claims do not address the risks before processing (transportation) and after processing (waste storage and cyanide's "breakdown" into other dangerous compounds).

More than 20 local governments and 12,000 Wisconsin citizens have signed on to effort to ban cyanide in mining. For more information, call the Wisconsin Campaign to Ban Cyanide in Mining toll-free at 800-445-8615 or log on to <http://www.alphacdc.com/treaty/cyanide.html>.

SOURCE: Dave Blouin, 608-233-8455, burroak15@aol.com and Zoltan Grossman, 608-246-2256, mtn@igc.org.

Wolf Watershed group meeting June 16 in Mole Lake

The Wolf Watershed Educational Project will meet on Saturday, June 16, in Mole Lake, from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at the Nii Win House. Off of Hwy. 55, turn on Sand Lake Road, go one block and follow it to the left.

SOURCE: Wolf Watershed Educational Project

Australian protesters oppose Wisconsin mine

Those attending the Australian mining giant Broken Hill Proprietary (BHP) Annual General Meeting in its headquarters city of Melbourne, Australia, May 19 ran a gauntlet of about 2,000 protesters.

Participating were members of the environmental group Friends of the Earth Melbourne, who held signs reading "Stop Billiton's Crandon Mine in Wisconsin, USA," "Protect Indigenous Rights in Wisconsin, USA: Drop the Crandon Mine," and "Billiton's Nicolet/Crandon Project: A Disaster for BHP in USA."

BHP shareholders attended the meeting to consider a pending merger with the London-based South African miner Billiton, which owns the proposed Crandon mine project in Wisconsin. BHP shareholders were expected to approve the merger to create the world's second-largest mining company, which would be called BHP Billiton

SOURCE: Dave Blouin, Mining Impact Coalition, burroak15@aol.com, 608-233-8455

Public Intervenor Office Restoration

Conservation Congress county resolutions favor PIO restoration

Unlike in past years, the printed Conservation Congress ballot this year did not include a question about returning the Office of the Public Intervenor. However, resolutions to that effect were introduced on a county-by-county basis. Those results have now been tallied with the following results:

- Introduced in 11 counties.
- Vote total 824 in favor, 125 opposed.
- County-by-county votes: Brown 123-18, Dane 289-85, Eau Claire 56-2, Jefferson 74-8, Kewaunee 38-0, Langlade 42-1, Lincoln 63-2, Menominee 3-0, Ozaukee 65-9, Sawyer 29-0, Waushara 42-0.

SOURCE: State of Wisconsin

Shoreland/Wetland Protection

Dane County approves stormwater runoff ordinance

After three years of meetings, including 11 public hearings, the Dane County Lakes and Watershed Commission has given its approval to a stormwater runoff ordinance that would require developers building more than 20,000 square feet (a half acre) of impervious surface to obtain a county permit.

According to a May 10 article in the *Wisconsin State Journal* by Lesley Rogers, the proposed ordinance, which requires Dane County Board approval, sets up a sliding scale for permit fees — the more stormwater control is built in to a development, the lower the cost of the permit fee. The fact that the permit fees won't be raising enough revenue to administer the rules is expected to be a point of contention with the county board.

The ordinance would go into effect one year after the county board approves it because local municipalities would need to adopt the plan and learn how to run the permit process. During that year, the county would work with developers to explain the new rules.

SOURCE: DNR *Basin Briefs*, 5-9-01

Wetland Restoration Handbook recognized by WLA

The Wisconsin Distinguished Document Award for 2000 from the Wisconsin Library Association Document Services Round Table is being presented to the Wisconsin Wetland Association's *Wetland Restoration Handbook for Wisconsin Landowners* published last year by the WDNR.

The 124-page restoration handbook, co-authored by Alice Thompson and Charlie Luthin of WWA, was a collaborative effort by many agencies and organizations, including: Wisconsin Coastal Management Program, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Wisconsin Waterfowl Association, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Ducks Unlimited, and Wisconsin Great Lakes Protection Fund.

A revision of the handbook is planned for this year, to be completed in spring 2002. To order the original restoration handbook, send \$5 (to cover shipping costs) with your complete mailing address to Wisconsin Wetlands Association at the address below.

SOURCE: Wisconsin Wetlands Association, 222 S. Hamilton, Suite #1, Madison, WI 53703 (608) 250-9971, fax (608) 256-4562, <http://www.wiscwetlands.org>

Purple loosestrife curriculum being developed

Wisconsin Wetlands Association is one of 20 grant recipients from the Midwest for an EPA environmental education grant for developing a standardized curriculum for the bio-control of purple loosestrife for grades 4-12.

SOURCE: Wisconsin Wetlands Association

Kind introduces runoff bill for Mississippi River

U.S. Rep. Ron Kind, D-Wis., reintroduced legislation in the House of Representatives on May 10 to protect the Mississippi River, according to a May 12 article in the *La Crosse Tribune*. While the legislation does not focus on flood relief specifically, the Upper Mississippi River Basin Conservation Act, a bipartisan bill, would establish a science-based, non-regulatory approach to reducing runoff into the river and its tributaries, according to Kind spokesman Darin Schroeder. According to Kind, "The Mississippi River is a natural treasure, but it is slowly filling with dirt and silt from soil erosion, as well as fertilizer runoff from suburban and rural areas.

SOURCE: WDNR "Basin Briefs," 5-23-01

USDA announces new funds for soil and water conservation

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Wisconsin will soon receive approximately \$200,000 in cost-share funds for a new program called Soil and Water Conservation Assistance (SWCA). Signup is expected to open June 4.

SWCA is a voluntary effort for farmers that provides cost-share and incentive payments to address threats to soil, water, and other natural resources. Eligible practices in Wisconsin are nutrient management, residue management, and prescribed grazing.

In Wisconsin, primarily the upper Mississippi River Basin, which covers the western half of the state, is eligible. For more information, contact the NRCS office at the USDA Service Center in your county.

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

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: Citizens for a Better Environment, 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, Sierra Club — John Muir Chapter, Wisconsin Association of Lakes, Wisconsin B.A.S.S. Federation, Wisconsin

Conservation Congress, Wisconsin Council of Sportfishing Organizations, Wisconsin's Environmental Decade, and Wisconsin Trout Unlimited.

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

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.