



# WSNetwork News

June 1, 2002

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

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## Hands to lines! WSN-WLCV "GreenChat" sets sail June 25 in Milwaukee

Sporting, conservation, and environmental group leaders are invited to a "GreenChat" sponsored by the WSN's Southeastern WI Hub and the WI League of Conservation Voters on June 25. The chat will take place aboard the *WI Lake Schooner*, a recreated 1800s sailing vessel. The chat will feature a discussion between members of the local media on how we can better work together on the issues that concern us.

For more information, contact WSN Hub Coordinator Monique DiGeorgio at Friends of Milwaukee's Rivers at [milwaukeesrivers@yahoo.com](mailto:milwaukeesrivers@yahoo.com) or (414) 476-6042.

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## Arrowhead-Weston Transmission Line

### Marathon second county to ban WPSC from public lands

The *Duluth News Tribune* reported on May 23 that "a second Wisconsin county has denied a request from companies building the Arrowhead-Weston high-voltage power line to work on public property." The Marathon County Board joined Douglas County in voting not to let Wisconsin Public Service perform preliminary survey work on county lands. The vote was 18-12.

The story quoted Save Our Unique Lands (SOUL) member Linda Ceylor as saying, "We're delighted. We feel it's a major setback for WPS and believe it could be the straw that breaks the camel's back."

SOURCE: *Duluth News Tribune* via SOUL.

### WPSC suing landowners over access denials

A good portion of us received our summons today from a nice old guy who indicated that at least we could beat the bastards in court. Good timing because earlier this week we called as many of these folks as we could and invited them to a summons meeting tonight. About 70 people showed up.

Our group decided each person who wants to be defended by SOUL's attorneys must be a member of SOUL and donate \$150 to offset attorney fees, no exceptions. I hate to do that to our diehards but they understand. It appears that our first day in Court will be June 18, sure would be nice to have some extra friendly faces there. I will update you on that as this firms up.

SOURCE: Tom Kreager, SOUL.

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## DNR Independence and PIO Restoration

### Falk would make change for DNR Secretary and PIO

At a recent visit to Green Bay, Democratic gubernatorial candidate Kathleen Falk said she would restore the state's reputation for tough environmental stewardship and said she'd start by resurrecting the public intervenor position she once held. "I would love for that to be the first bill I sign," Falk said. "People in Wisconsin don't want politics getting in the way of natural resource protection."

The paper also quoted David Littig, political science professor at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, who said "Our hunters are environmentalists, and people who fish the lakes and rivers are environmentalists. That's the way Wisconsin people see themselves." Read the complete story at [www.greenbaypressgazette.com/news/archive/local\\_4116543.shtml](http://www.greenbaypressgazette.com/news/archive/local_4116543.shtml).

SOURCE: Green Bay *Press-Gazette*.

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## Factory Farming

### Farm Bill summary on web

A National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) section-by-section summary [of the just-passed federal Farm Bill] is at [www.nacdnet.org/govtaff/FB/FB-SxS.htm](http://www.nacdnet.org/govtaff/FB/FB-SxS.htm) and provides a good (7 page) summary of the conservation components of the Farm Bill. The final version of the 2002 Farm Bill is now available from "Thomas." The sections of the Conservation Title have been copied to the Farm Bill Network site and indexed at [www.fb-net.org/FB/fb-contents.htm](http://www.fb-net.org/FB/fb-contents.htm). The complete bill is available from <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d107:h.r.02646>. Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman remarks on the farm bill are at [www.usda.gov/news/releases/2002/05/0194.htm](http://www.usda.gov/news/releases/2002/05/0194.htm).

SOURCE: WDNR "Basin Briefs," 5-22-02.

## **Kewaunee farm expansion to focus on 20-million gallon pit**

From the May 13 Green Bay *News-Chronicle*: Many of the comments on the proposed expansion permit of the Dairy Dreams operation in Kewaunee County centered on the farm's 20-million-gallon manure pit. Jim Vandenberg of Robert E. Lee & Associates (which helped design the system) said the clay soils in the area were "very good for this type of facility." Town of Lincoln resident Mick Sagrillo said the idea of leakage from a clay-lined manure pit is "a recipe for disaster," and he questioned whether the area's geology and potential for groundwater contamination had been fully examined. Tom Konop, Kewaunee County assistant conservationist, responded that the farm had followed the county's manure storage ordinance for constructing a pit and placed it on the south side of the property where the soil "looked pretty good." John Pagel, a co-owner of Dairy Dreams, said the farm plans a second expansion to 2,600 cows in 3-4 years "if economically viable." More at [www.greenbaynewschron.com/page.html?article=113986](http://www.greenbaynewschron.com/page.html?article=113986).

SOURCE: 5-15-02 WDNR "Basin Briefs."

## **Michigan groups initiate suits to get clean water compliance**

From the May 8 Toledo (OH) *Blade*: Two southeast Michigan dairy farms have repeatedly polluted area waterways, and Michigan officials have done little to stop the problem, according to federal lawsuits filed by the Sierra Club and the National Wildlife Federation. The lawsuits, filed against Mericam Farms in Hillsdale County (with more than 600 cows) and Hartland Farms in Lenawee County (with more than 850 cows), claim the operations have dumped cow manure and other waste into area rivers and streams in violation of the federal Clean Water Act. The two environmental groups are asking a federal judge to require the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality to issue permits for such operations and provide information on how they will handle and dispose of manure in an environmentally safe manner. More at [www.toledoblade.com/apps/pbcs.dll/artikkel?SearchID=73098545506500&Avis=TO&Dato=20020508&Kategori=NEWS19&Lopenr=105080084&Ref=AR](http://www.toledoblade.com/apps/pbcs.dll/artikkel?SearchID=73098545506500&Avis=TO&Dato=20020508&Kategori=NEWS19&Lopenr=105080084&Ref=AR).

SOURCE: 5-15-02 WDNR "Basin Briefs."

## **Idaho adopting "new method" fencing to protect waterways**

From May 10 Idaho *Statesman*: Idaho regulators are directing land and resource managers to apply new methods to reduce water pollution from logging, agriculture, and construction to five creeks in the northern part of the state that have confirmed elevated levels of sediment. The plan relies on voluntary compliance and calls on farmers and ranchers to fence stream sides to keep cattle from eroding banks, as well as replant vegetation to hold soil in place. More at <http://204.228.236.37/Story.asp?ID=9793>.

SOURCE: 5-15-02 WDNR "Basin Briefs."

## **Michigan medical society calls for CAFO moratorium**

The Michigan State Medical Society (MSMS) is calling for a moratorium on all new concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs). The group passed a strongly worded resolution saying: “Animal factories pose very significant public health and environmental risks to communities and the general public. Threats range from hastening the development of antibiotic resistant bacteria to contaminating ground and surface water to releasing ammonia gas. Michigan must impose an immediate moratorium on animal factories until public health and environmental risks are addressed.” Further, the resolution critiqued the State of Michigan for developing a system which fails to contain animal factory pollution including no permit system for discharges in waters, no public input mechanism for the people impacted by animal factory pollution, and no monitoring of adjacent drains, streams or wells. In light of these failings the resolution calls for an immediate moratorium on new CAFOs, a mandatory permit process, mandatory monitoring of adjacent waters and a phase out of open air lagoons.

SOURCE: Jud Lounsbury, [jud@serconline.org](mailto:jud@serconline.org).

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## **Forest Fragmentation**

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## **Groundwater Protection**

## **Illinois spring sold to Nestle**

The Sparkling Spring Mineral Water Co. in Highland Park, IL, has been sold to the world’s largest food conglomerate, Nestle S.A. The price was not disclosed.

SOURCE: Mary J Schmudlach, [theschmuds@juno.com](mailto:theschmuds@juno.com).

## **WA court says multi-developments need groundwater permits**

The Washington state Supreme Court ruled recently that housing developments that would be served by multiple drinking-water wells need a water-right permit before construction begins if the wells together would withdraw more than 5,000 gallons a day. The case began in 1999 when a developer proposed a 20-house subdivision with multiple wells withdrawing less than 5,000 gallons a day in order to avoid seeking a water-right permit. “This decision protects streams and rivers as well as senior water-right holders by preventing large, unregulated groundwater withdrawals, which have been a controversial issue in the Yakima basin and statewide,” said Joe Stohr, who supervises the state’s water-resources program.

SOURCE: Jud Lounsbury, [jud@serconline.org](mailto:jud@serconline.org).

## **New Hampshire issues MTBE well contamination order**

Gov. Jeanne Shaheen last week ordered the Department of Environmental Services to notify abutters, public water suppliers, and community health officers when any well tests positive for MTBE above five parts per billion. She also ordered the agency to issue notice when other contaminants are detected at levels exceeding drinking water standards. The governor said order will keep residents informed of contamination to their drinking water supplies.

SOURCE: Jud Lounsbury, [jud@serconline.org](mailto:jud@serconline.org).

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## **Mercury Reduction**

### **Ashland enacts historic ban on all mercury products**

Ashland has taken the historic move — first local community in the country, I believe — to ban the sale and distribution of all products containing more than 50 milligrams of mercury, with the exception of dental amalgams. With a population of about 8,600, Ashland is located on the shore of Lake Superior in northwest Wisconsin. The ordinance also requires that as part of building demolition, all mercury containing devices must be removed. The penalty is a fine of not less than \$100, plus the cost of prosecution, and the effect date is August 15, 2002. Congratulations to city staff, and to the very progressive City Council and businesses of the City of Ashland. For more information, contact Craig Nordgren, Water/Wastewater Superintendent, City of Ashland, (715) 682-7194, [CNordgre@coawi.org](mailto:CNordgre@coawi.org).

SOURCE: John Reindl, Dane County, WI.

### **NR Board asks for mercury recycling comments**

The Board of Natural Resources has authorized the [WDNR] to hold public hearings for two proposed recycling rules: The Recycling Efficiency Incentive Grants Program and the Pilot Program for an Alternative Method of Compliance. The schedule for the public hearings and links to the rules are available through the website at [www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/aw/wm/recycle/ProposedRecyclingRules.asp](http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/aw/wm/recycle/ProposedRecyclingRules.asp).

The public hearings will take place on June 13 in six locations throughout the state, at noon and again at 6:30 pm. Hearings will be conducted through teleconference. Public comments will be accepted through June 21. Comments must be submitted in writing, and sent to the address listed on the website.

SOURCE: Cynthia Moore, Recycling Teamleader, Bureau of Waste Management, WDNR (608) 267-7550.

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## Metallic Mining

### Indigenous Mining Summit at Mole Lake June 12-15

At the North American Indigenous Mining Summit at Mole Lake (June 12-15), volunteers are needed to help drive shuttle vans to and from airports (Rhineland and Green Bay) to pick up and drop off guests. The need is especially great on Saturday, June 15. Please e-mail [mtn@igc.org](mailto:mtn@igc.org) and [polersdc@newnorth.net](mailto:polersdc@newnorth.net). A complete agenda for the summit can be found at [www.alphacdc.com/treaty/molelake02.html](http://www.alphacdc.com/treaty/molelake02.html).

SOURCE: Zoltan Grossman, [mtn@igc.org](mailto:mtn@igc.org).

### Non-natives invited to Mole Lake Mining Summit

All who wish to protect the water and who would like to enjoy a fine feast of gourmet wild rice are invited to come [to the Indigenous Mining Summit]. These are alcohol and drug free events that feature speeches, acoustic music, plenty of food in a beautiful outdoor setting and Native American drumming and singing. These Community Gatherings are the perfect place for people who care deeply for the earth and support Native American issues, but, who've never actually been at the Native Communities. They are also the perfect setting for old time environmental activists and conservationists who would like to get together with others and enjoy their good company. Not a rally. Not a workshop. Not a conference. And all completely free.

Outdoor camping (at Mole Lake) under the tall pines on beautiful Swamp Creek, just downstream from where the largest toxic waste dump in the history of the state is proposed by Nicolet Mining Company (i.e., the Crandon Mine) at the headwaters of the Wolf River.

SOURCE: Sandy Lyon, [water@spacestar.net](mailto:water@spacestar.net).

### Fed bill would replace 1872 Mining Law

Stronger mining rules written by the Clinton Administration in 2000 would have better protected water resources from the toxics released by the mining industry. However, Interior Secretary Gale Norton rescinded most of the rules in 2001, so mine waste dumping continues essentially unchecked. The statute governing hardrock mining, the General Mining Law of 1872, remains largely unchanged since its passage 130 years ago; and it contains no environmental protection provisions.

Partially in response to Norton's action, last week Representatives Nick Rahall (D-WV), Christopher Shays (R-CT) and Jay Inslee (D-WA) introduced a new environmental mining reform bill, HR4748 the Mineral Exploration and Development Act of 2002. HR4748, which would replace the 1872 Mining Law, would strictly regulate the disposal of toxic mine waste, and require the

mining industry to abide by environmental performance standards that would protect surface and groundwater resources. It would also fund the cleanup of toxic pollution from past mining.

SOURCE: Ami Grace, [cleanwaternt@igc.org](mailto:cleanwaternt@igc.org).

## Mexico cyanide hijacking reminder of risks at Crandon

“The hijacking of ten tons of deadly cyanide en route to a mine and a new accidental spill of 24,000 gallons of cyanide solution at a Nevada mine are grim reminders of the risks of using cyanide in Wisconsin mines,” said Dave Blouin, Sierra Club state mining committee chair. “Cyanide is not being used in northern Wisconsin now; why make it easier for a spill to happen whether accidental or deliberate?”

Conservation groups again called on Gov. Scott McCallum to call a special session to ban the use of cyanide in mining. “BHP Billiton wants to use 200 tons of cyanide a year at its proposed mine near Crandon,” Linda Sturnot, Vice President of the Mining Impact Coalition of WI. “But there are safer chemicals they could use to process the ore.”

SOURCE: Wisconsin Campaign to Ban Cyanide in Mining.

### BACKGROUND: Cyanide use at Crandon

The application for the proposed Crandon mine would allow the owner to use between 14,000 and 36,000 pounds of sodium cyanide per month or between 5 million and 13 million pounds over the life of the mine.

39 Wisconsin counties, cities, and local governments, and 59 Wisconsin Tribes, labor unions, sportfishing, conservation, and environmental organizations have passed resolutions supporting a ban on cyanide in Wisconsin mines. In addition, more than 17,000 Wisconsin residents have signed petitions supporting the ban on cyanide.

## Mine official calls abandoned mines ‘gigantic environment problem’

A recent Reuters story reported that Sir Robert Wilson, chairman of London-based metals giant Rio Tinto Plc, called environmental and social costs of closing and rehabilitating old and abandoned mines around the world are likely in the trillions of dollars, and far beyond the capability of mining companies alone to deal with. Wilson told Reuters at a mining industry conference on sustainable development in Toronto that a recent estimate puts rehabilitation costs just in the United States, where regulation is stricter than in many other countries, at \$35 billion.

SOURCE: Reuters via Ann Finan.

## U.S. backs tribal environmental rights

The Bush administration has asked the Supreme Court to allow a tribe to implement potentially strict water quality standards over the objections of the state of Wisconsin. In a brief filed earlier this month, Solicitor General Ted Olson defends the right of the Sokaogon Band of Ojibwe to exercise authority over the Mole Lake Reservation. Citing a history of related cases, he urges the

nation's highest court to reject the state's "poor" challenge and let a September 2001 appeals court ruling stand.

"[The] suggestion that this decision will inevitably lead to tribal regulation of waterways throughout Wisconsin vastly exaggerates the impact of this case," Olson wrote on May 3. Under the Clean Water Act, the tribe applied for, and received, permission from the Environmental Protection Agency to develop a water quality program. This "treatment as a state," or TAS, designation was based on several factors including the tribe's heavy dependence on Rice Lake, which is used for food, fresh water, medicine and raw materials.

Find related documents at [www.usdoj.gov/osg/briefs/2001/0responses/2001-1247.resp.pdf](http://www.usdoj.gov/osg/briefs/2001/0responses/2001-1247.resp.pdf) and [www.supremecourt.us/docket/01-1247.htm](http://www.supremecourt.us/docket/01-1247.htm). The record of the State of Wisconsin v. EPA, No. 99-2618, from the 7th Circuit Court dated September 21, 2001, is at <http://laws.lp.find-law.com/7th/992618.html>.

SOURCE: Zoltan Grossman, [mtn@igc.org](mailto:mtn@igc.org).

## **Doyle rapped for suit against Mole Lake Chippewa**

Wisconsin Attorney General Jim Doyle is running for governor. With one hand, he recently supported two legislative bills to reform state mining laws. Yet with the other hand, he is suing the Mole Lake Chippewa Tribe for using the federal Clean Water Act to protect its wild rice beds from the proposed Crandon mine. Doyle has it within his power to drop the lawsuit against Mole Lake's "Treatment-As-State" (TAS) status within the EPA, and help the effort to stop the proposed Crandon mine. Yet instead, he has chosen to appeal the case to the U.S. Supreme Court. Even the Bush Administration has now sided with the tribe against Wisconsin's "poor" legal challenge.

Doyle lost a federal appeal of Wisconsin v. EPA last September. In its ruling, the Court stated, "This grant of TAS status alarmed the State of Wisconsin, which saw it as both an affront to the state's sovereignty and, more pragmatically, as an action with the potential to throw a wrench into the state's planned construction of a huge zinc-copper sulfide mine on the Wolf River, upstream from Rice Lake. Concerned about its loss of authority over certain territory within its outer boundaries and worried that the tribal water standards might limit the activities of the mine by prohibiting some or all of the discharge from the mine, Wisconsin filed this action..."

SOURCE: Wolf Watershed Educational Project, [mtn@igc.org](mailto:mtn@igc.org).

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## **Shoreland/Wetlands**

### **Shoreline buffer resolution added to runoff rules**

A coalition of conservation and water protection groups hailed the adoption of a resolution to phase-in vegetative buffers into the state's rules to prevent polluted runoff. In a unanimous vote,

the Natural Resources Board adopted a resolution directing the staff of the DNR to develop a science-based standard to require vegetative buffer strips for agricultural land along high quality and impaired waters throughout the state. The new standard will be developed after scientific research is conducted to determine the most effective buffers for Wisconsin.

The new standard will require buffers on agricultural land along all high quality and impaired waters in Wisconsin when cost share dollars are available. The standard will be based on the results of scientific research to be conducted by the Wisconsin Agricultural Stewardship Initiative with input from the University of Wisconsin College of Agricultural Life Sciences. The report is to be concluded by no later than the end of 2005. If the research is not completed by that time, the new standard will mirror the current buffer guidelines for Wisconsin that have been developed by the Natural Resource Conservation Service.

SOURCE: River Alliance of WI.

### **Calls sought on Ashley budget exemption**

The legislative budget conference committee is still locked in a stalemate on details of a final budget “repair” bill, but we expect some movement soon. Now is the moment to ask the committee — and the Governor — to REMOVE AN INAPPROPRIATE NON-BUDGET, PRIVATE POLICY ISSUE from the budget bill — the exemption from state law for Ashley Furniture Industries in Trempealeau that would allow them to fill an important 14-acre floodplain wetland without a permit from the DNR.

Although a specific bill that would have given Ashley the exemption it desired was vehemently criticized and rejected during a public hearing by the Senate Environment Committee this past winter, back-room politicking revived the Ashley exemption that was inserted into the Senate’s version of the budget repair bill just moments before the bill was passed six weeks ago — with no public comment whatsoever. Now it is up to the Conference Committee and the Governor to reject this special favor for a private entity. But it’s an uphill road — we need many people asking for the removal of this exemption!

PLEASE WRITE, CALL, OR E-MAIL THE GOVERNOR and the eight members of the Budget Conference Committee asking them to remove the “Ashley Exemption” from the Budget Repair Bill.

SOURCE: Charlie Luthin, [charlie@wiscwetlands.org](mailto:charlie@wiscwetlands.org).

### **Former DNR Secretary comments on Ashley and campaign finance**

An op-ed piece by former WDNR Secretary George Meyer has been published in several Wisconsin newspapers criticizing the Ashley Furniture exemption in the state budget. Meyer offers this

budget provision as a prime symptom of why Wisconsin has fallen in recent years from its former status as a clean government state. *(Read the complete piece at the end of this newsletter.)*

SOURCE: WSN.

### **Groups to McCallum: “remain consistent” on wetland protection**

Six state environmental and conservation groups wrote Gov. Scott McCallum Feb. 28 asking that he “remain consistent in your commitment to protect Wisconsin’s wetlands by vetoing the wetlands exemption provision of the Budget Repair Bill when it comes before you.” *(Read the complete letter at the end of this newsletter.)*

SOURCE: WSN.

### **Multiple turkey manure permit hearings held**

The May 7 hearing on Turkey Store’s WPDES application went smoothly, with only two people besides company representatives appearing, according to two articles. The May 12 article in the *Barron News Shield* quotes Barbara Thomas, chair of the Chippewa Valley Sierra Club as recognizing all that The Turkey Store has done to address problems but that she is still concerned about water quality in Lake Tainter (which is on the 303(d) impaired waters list). “I understand that over one-third of the private wells that were tested in the Town of Hay River had excess amounts of nitrogen,” according to Thomas. “Between the algae-ridden lake from the phosphorus and the drinking water with excess nitrogen, we have big problems.” Thomas said she also wanted to know how residents living proximate to Turkey Store operations can get information about the permit and subsequently monitor company activities to meet permit requirements. Jim Olson of Eau Claire, also speaking at the permit hearing, said he was concerned about the ability of company fields to absorb additional nutrients. More at [www.zwire.com/site/news.cfm?newsid=4114661&BRD=1132&PAG=461&dept\\_id=157660&rft=6](http://www.zwire.com/site/news.cfm?newsid=4114661&BRD=1132&PAG=461&dept_id=157660&rft=6).

SOURCE: 5-15-02 WDNR “Basin Briefs.”

### **Nonpoint rules summary available**

[The River Alliances can send those who are interested] updated fact sheets [on the subjects of general buffer benefits, phosphorus reduction, infiltration improvements, and polluted runoff from roads and road-building]. If you have any feedback on content or design, I’d be happy to receive it. I can also provide these in .pdf format.

SOURCE: Steph Adams, [cleanwater@wisconsinrivers.org](mailto:cleanwater@wisconsinrivers.org).

## Plan would let facilities buy discharge ‘credits’ from those in compliance

From the May 16 Janesville *Gazette*: Industrial and municipal facilities in Wisconsin and other states are getting an alternative to reducing discharges or installing new controls; they can buy credits from others whose discharges are below legal limits. According to EPA Chief Christie Whitman, the approach “offers greater flexibility and incentives to states, tribes, and companies to comply with the Clean Water Act.” Whitman added that such trading “provides incentives for voluntary reductions from all sources to improve and maintain the quality of the nation’s waters.” In Wisconsin, the Fox and Wolf river basins are participating in the testing of the new approach. More at [www.gazetteextra.com/waterquality051602.html](http://www.gazetteextra.com/waterquality051602.html).

SOURCE: WDNR “Basin Briefs,” 5-22-02.

### Group wants your ‘trading’ experiences

We are especially interested in your experiences with real, on-the-ground trading programs. In our initial search we found many trading programs across the country exist in name only, and have yet to show results. We need your help in evaluating the local trading programs in your area. Please contact Ami Grace at [cleanwaternt@igc.org](mailto:cleanwaternt@igc.org) if you have information or experience with a trading program in your area. We are especially interested in identifying trading programs that have had real impact, good or bad, on water quality.

SOURCE: Eddie Scher, Clean Water Network, (202) 289-23950 [escher@nrdc.org](mailto:escher@nrdc.org).

## More WI lakes found to contain invasives

Zebra mussels and Eurasian watermilfoil invaded 26 new Wisconsin lakes in 2001, continuing a pattern of dramatic increases that has state officials urging boaters and anglers to take the necessary steps to prevent new infestations. “The rate at which new lakes are becoming infested leads me to believe that recreational boaters and anglers are not getting the message to clean their boats,” says Ron Martin, who coordinates statewide aquatic invasive species efforts for the Department of Natural Resources. “We’re hoping some new ways to get the message out will be more effective. But the bottom line is we all need to be aware of invasive species and take responsibility to prevent them from spreading.”

SOURCE: WDNR.

## Pothole wetland tour June 1

This is a reminder that Rich Beilfuss, ecologist at the International Crane Foundation (ICF) in Baraboo, has scheduled a “pothole wetland” visit and work party for this Saturday, June 1, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at ICF in collaboration with Wisconsin Wetlands Association. This tour/work party is part of WWA’s statewide outreach and summer field trip program. If you are interested in joining the field trip, please contact Rich directly at [rich@savingcranes.org](mailto:rich@savingcranes.org) (608) 356-9462 (X 131).

SOURCE: Wisconsin Wetlands Association, (608) 250-9971.

## **EPA nutrient comments still being taken**

Folks should know that there is still a chance to comment on EPA's nutrient criteria for this region. Comments are particularly necessary at this time since it looks like polluters are trying to hit hard in their efforts to get EPA to promulgate unprotective nutrient criteria. I've attached the Federal Register notice on this proposed criteria-setting action. All relevant documents are available online at [www.epa.gov/waterscience/standards/nutrient.html](http://www.epa.gov/waterscience/standards/nutrient.html).

Please send an original and two copies of written significant scientific information to Robert Cantilli (MC-4304), U.S. EPA, Ariel Rios Building, 1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20460.

SOURCE: David Zaber, [dzaber@chorus.net](mailto:dzaber@chorus.net).

## **Firm wins award for Rock River runoff study**

From the May 8 *Fond du Lac Reporter*: A study examining runoff entering the Rock River has earned an award from the Wisconsin Association of Consulting Engineers. The study was completed by the Rock River Partnership. Working with the consultants Earthtech, nearly \$750,000 was raised through contributions and DNR grants to fund the study. During a 2-year period, 9 study teams collected water samples throughout the Rock River basin (3,750 square miles running from Waupun to Beloit) on a monthly basis and during rain events. Based on that information, a computer model analyzed data, with the model estimating contributions from nonpoint and point sources. According to the project summary, 80-90 percent of sediment delivery, and 60 percent of the phosphorus, originates from farmland and development runoff, with 40 percent of the phosphorus coming from point sources (such as industry and municipalities). Having won a statewide award, the study will now be competing for a national engineering award. More at [www.wisinfo.com/thereporter/news/archive/local\\_3841405.shtml](http://www.wisinfo.com/thereporter/news/archive/local_3841405.shtml).

SOURCE: 5-15-02 WDNR "Basin Briefs."

## **Novel idea in Florida: clean polluted waters**

From the May 15 Tallahassee (FL) *Democrat*: A Florida administrative judge has cleared the way for the state to work with communities to implement a sweeping variety of actions to clean up polluted lakes, streams, and rivers. Under the rule from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the state will identify water bodies that require protection and then set pollution limits. The department will use new voluntary programs and regulations to accomplish its goals. But an environmental activist said she may ask a circuit court judge to halt the rule, saying the rule as written fails to meet federal Clean Water Act requirements and may actually reduce the number of waterways the state would have to clean up. More at [www.tallahassee.com/mld/democrat/news/local/3264421.htm](http://www.tallahassee.com/mld/democrat/news/local/3264421.htm).

SOURCE: 5-15-02 WDNR "Basin Briefs."

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### **River Alliance “Rivers 2002” watershed event Nov. 8-10**

The River Alliance of Wisconsin has announced the date of their “Rivers 2002: A Watershed Event” for Nov. 8-10, 2002, at the Wisconsin Lions Camp in Rosholt just outside Stevens Point. For more information, contact the River Alliance at (608) 257-2424.

### **WED seeking water policy specialist**

Wisconsin’s Environmental Decade Institute, a statewide environmental advocacy organization based in Madison, WI, is seeking a qualified Water Policy Specialist. This is a full time position with benefits. The salary range is between \$30 and \$35K depending on experience. This position will be responsible for designing and implementing water campaigns, creating and managing budgets, grant writing and lobbying. The Water Policy Specialist will work within a team of program specialists, development and communication personnel supervised by the Executive Director.

To apply, send a cover letter and resume by June 3 to Elizabeth Wessel, Executive Director, Wisconsin’s Environmental Decade Institute, 122 State Street, Suite 200, Madison, WI 53703 [lwessel@chorus.net](mailto:lwessel@chorus.net).

### **Funders seek proposals for community organizing**

The National Training and Information Center (NTIC) and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation have teamed up to help local grassroots groups in the Midwest get involved in community organizing. The partners will provide funding and technical assistance to nonprofit groups that are less than five years old, have a budget under \$100,000, have a staff of four or less, are neighborhood- or community-based, and are engaged in community organizing or plan to do so. Groups that seeks social change are welcome to apply, but the funders will not pay for social services. Application deadline is July 31. For more information, contact Joe Mariano at (312) 243-3035.

### **Group searching for sprawl stories**

We’re looking for anecdotes in which poor drinking water/wastewater infrastructure planning induced suburban sprawl. Specifics are helpful. If you have a story, please tell us how much infrastructure was involved and what type or types? How much sprawl and what type or types? For example, a sewer line was built to overcapacity outside of the area planned for the next stage of growth in the relevant land-use plan, spurring a new proposal to use the new capacity by developing the land to the tune of 500 housing units (150 single-family detached, 250 single-family attached).

Also, if more coordinated and/or better state and/or local planning would have prevented the situation, and you can describe why, that would be most helpful. In the example above, clearly the location of the wastewater infrastructure should have “fit” the land-use plan better. This could have been done by establishing a more comprehensive planning process, that includes categories of infrastructure like water/wastewater.

**IMPORTANT:** We need stories by the end of this week, so please send yours in now! Please send all stories to Deron Lovaas, NRDC, at [dlovaas@nrdc.org](mailto:dlovaas@nrdc.org).

## Cities recommit to the Clean Water Act

Sounds good, eh? Help make this a reality by participating in the Clean Water Network’s City Clean Water Proclamation Campaign this summer! Back in January the Network kicked off a campaign to get 100 cities across the country to sign a proclamation praising the Clean Water Act for the progress that we have made, but also highlighting our theme of ‘The Clean Water Act at 30: Time to Keep the Promise.’

Since then many Network members have already worked with their city councils to pass clean water resolutions, including commitments the city will make to meet the goals of the Act. Thanks to Raleigh, NC, for being the first city to sign our proclamation! Network members in NY, NC, TN, and CA have been working on this campaign for months. However, we still have many more cities to get on board. For more information on this campaign, go to [www.cwn.org](http://www.cwn.org) and click on the 30th anniversary logo on the main page.

SOURCE: Ami Grace, Grassroots Director, CWN, [cleanwaternt@igc.org](mailto:cleanwaternt@igc.org).

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

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

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

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

Editorial contributions to this e-newsletter are welcome. Send news of your group’s activities relating to the WSN’s priority issues to State Coordinator Todd Hanson at [wsn@chorus.net](mailto:wsn@chorus.net).

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## An Op-ed on Ashley Furniture and Campaign Finance Reform

By George Meyer

There are many pressing issues that environmental and conservation groups are facing today, chronic wasting disease, non point pollution standards, mercury emission reductions, mercury product legislation, restoration of the Public Intervenor's Office and a DNR Board appointed Secretary, global warming, smart growth and many others. But, except for chronic wasting disease, none is as critical and needing immediate attention as campaign finance reform. The current system of campaign finance is highly corrupted and causes those who contribute heavily to political campaigns to drive the legislative agenda and results. In the process it is the citizens of Wisconsin that lose out big time.

I started working in Wisconsin State government thirty-two years ago. Wisconsin at that time had the finest reputation for clean government as any state in the country. State employees felt proud that they were working in a clean government. We use to joke about the corrupt practices in other states. But no more! Wisconsin now has a highly corrupted campaign finance system. We have legislative leaders in both houses and both parties under criminal investigation. And unfortunately the investigation will only begin to touch the corruption that takes place in our system. Wisconsin has lowered itself to other states with corrupt government systems.

The current poster child for the need to have campaign finance reform in Wisconsin is the current budget proposal to give an exemption to state wetland protection laws for Ashley Furniture. Ashley approached the DNR several years ago seeking to fill in 13 acres of wetlands in Arcadia to construct a warehouse. DNR told Ashley that the proposal, by far the largest private wetland fill ever sought, did not meet the legal standards and that the permit would not be granted. Despite having proximate and reasonable alternative locations to build their warehouse outside of wetlands, Ashley persisted. They were able to get an exemption to state wetland laws included in the 1999-2001 state budget. Due to heroic efforts by conservation organizations such as the Wisconsin Wetland Association, the River Alliance and the Sierra Club, a court challenge was mounted and the Trempealeau County Circuit Court found the wetland exemption to be unconstitutional.

Still not fazed, legislators introduced a separate bill granting a wetland exemption to Ashley. The bill passed the Assembly before it was stalled in the Senate Environmental Committee based on overwhelming citizen opposition. Still not fazed, legislators have included the exemption in the Senate version of the current budget repair bill.

Why does this happen? In the last ten years, Ashley Furniture through its company officials has given \$68,000 to legislative and gubernatorial campaigns. The most blatant was a \$10,000 campaign donation to Governor Scott McCallum a mere week after the first budget exemption was declared unconstitutional in court. A mere coincidence? If you believe that, there is a bridge in Brooklyn still for sale.

Until the whole campaign finance reform system is fundamentally reformed, passage of sound conservation legislation will be a rarity if not an impossibility. The people's voices will not be heard. For this reason, the many citizens that are concerned about conservation and the environment in Wisconsin should make their voices heard and demand that campaign finance reform be the highest priority for the Wisconsin legislature.

May 28, 2002

Governor Scott McCallum  
P.O. Box 7863  
Madison, WI 53703-7863

Dear Governor McCallum:

Just over a year ago you signed Special Session Senate Bill 1, a landmark law that made Wisconsin the first state in the nation to restore the protection of wetlands to the level that existed prior to the U.S. Supreme Court's wetland-threatening "SWANCC" decision. You worked closely with the Department of Natural Resources, environmental groups, and the business community to craft this law, which was passed unanimously by both the Assembly and the Senate. At the time you signed this bill you said,

*"protecting our precious wetlands became a priority from the moment the U.S. Supreme Court ruling came down and I said early on that it would be a priority for my administration."* [Source: Press Release, 5/7/01, Governor's office].

You made wetlands a priority because,

*"Wisconsin's wetlands are vital for flood control and for keeping our lakes and rivers clean, as well as for protecting fish and wildlife."*  
[Source: Press Release, 5/7/01, Governor's office].

More recently, your campaign advertisements have prominently featured wetlands protection as one of your proud accomplishments.

We are writing today to ask that you continue your commitment to protect Wisconsin's wetlands by vetoing a wetlands exemption provision in the Budget Repair Bill that will come before you shortly. This provision will exempt a wetland fill, to be selected by the Governor, from virtually all existing state requirements and restrictions that would normally apply to wetland fill projects. This provision was introduced in the Senate version of the 2001-2003 Budget Repair Bill and is a variation on an exemption included in 1999 Act 9. The 1999 exemption, also known as the "Ashley Furniture wetlands exemption," was declared unconstitutional in August 2001 by the Wisconsin Circuit Court in Buffalo County. Rather than appeal the Court's decision, the defendants in that case lobbied to have yet another, amended wetland exemption inserted into the 2001-2003 budget. Despite the amendments to the provision, the effect of such a law will be the same: it will allow for the *carte blanche* destruction of almost 15 acres of functional wetlands that prevent flooding, protect species habitat, and keep our lakes and rivers clean.

For these reasons we ask that you remain consistent in your commitment to protect Wisconsin's wetlands by vetoing the wetlands exemption provision of the Budget Repair Bill when it comes before you.

Sincerely,

1000 Friends of Wisconsin  
Midwest Environmental Advocates  
River Alliance of Wisconsin

Sierra Club—John Muir Chapter  
Wisconsin Wetlands Association  
WISPIRG-Wisconsin Public Interest Research Group