



WSNetwork News

June 15, 2003

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

Click on these WSN priority issue section links or scan the Acrobat bookmarks on the left:

- [Arrowhead-Weston Transmission Line](#)
- [DNR Independence and PIO Restoration](#)
- [Fair Motorboat Gas Revenue Allocation](#) *NEW*
- [Farm Manure Management & Polluted Runoff Enforcement](#) *NEW*
- [Forest Fragmentation](#)
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- [Metallic Mining](#)
- [Shoreland Zoning & Water Protection](#) *NEW*

BUDGET WOES:
Read what people are saying about what the Joint Finance Committee has done to natural resources program spending in their budget bill.

Arrowhead-Weston Transmission Line

PSC awards money to groups to use in case against A-W line

The Public Service Commission has given \$175,280 to three organizations for them to use in presenting their side in the Arrowhead-Weston transmission line. Groups receiving "intervenor" money include:

- \$23,530 to Clean Wisconsin,
- \$75,750 to Citizens Utility Board, and
- \$76,000 to Save Our Unique Lands.

Mark Williamson, vice president of the American Transmission Co., was quoted in the *Wausau Daily Herald* as saying, "If they can build a good case, then we can have an honest debate that makes sense. I'd rather have an educated debate than an emotional one."

SOURCE *Wausau Daily Herald*.

BACKGROUND: THE A-W LINE TIMELINE

November 1999: Wisconsin Public Service Corporation and Minnesota Power filed a joint application to build the Arrowhead-Weston power line.

October 2000: The commission issued a final draft that addressed the environmental impact of the power line.

December 2000: Two weeks of public hearings were held, followed by six weeks of technical hearings.

October 2001: PSC approves the power line.

Fall 2002: American Transmission Co. filed a revised cost estimate and asked to amend the legal order.

December 2002: PSC reopens the case.

April 2003: The PSC established specific issues that need to be discussed.

June 2003: The commission awarded \$175,280 in intervenor compensation to three groups who oppose the power line.

SOURCE: Public Service Commission

Links provide follow-up to Namekagon paddle event

If you can figure out a way to pass these two links around please do so, so that people who did get to go on the NRG can experience some of the joy of it. Here's Minnesotans for an Energy Efficient Economy (ME3's) "Just Energy's photo coverage of it at <http://www.justenergy.org/images/0502nelson/> and there is a writeup that also is linked to an MP3 sound file of Gaylord's talk against the Duluth route at <http://www.fightingbob.com/article.cfm?articleID=52>.

SOURCE: Sandy Lyon, water@spacestar.net.

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Newman leaves PSC to join ATC's PR team

Annemarie Newman, a 10-year veteran of the Wisconsin Public Service Commission, is joining American Transmission Company as a Public Relations Specialist. A graduate of the University of Wisconsin, Newman joined the Public Service Commission in 1993. Most recently she served as the Commission's Public Information Officer, dealing with media inquiries to the Commissioners and PSC staff and representing the regulatory agency at public meetings. Newman previously worked as a Consumer Specialist and a Program and Planning Analyst for the Commission. In her new position at ATC, Newman will be responsible for public relations in Dane County as well as southern Wisconsin, primarily regarding electric transmission projects serving the area. She'll work out of ATC's Fen Oak office in Madison.

SOURCE: *Business Wire*, June 11, 2003.

DNR Independence and PIO Restoration

Fair Motorboat Gas Revenue Allocation

Farm Manure Management & Polluted Runoff Enforcement

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Forest Fragmentation

Comments sought for Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest Plan

If you recreate in northern Wisconsin or concern yourself with protecting the diversity of wildlife, you should take the opportunity to comment on the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest Plan Revision and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). This opportunity only presents itself

once every 15 years. The U.S. Forest Service has established July 11 as the deadline for receiving comments, so draft your letter or e-mail today to give your opinions. If you live in northern Wisconsin, you can attend one of two public meetings:

June 24	Nicolet Area Technical College County Highway G Rhineland, WI.	2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
June 25	Park Falls Public Library 121 N. 4th Avenue Park Falls, WI.	2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

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If you plan on sending your comments, please send them U.S. Forest Service at the following address: Chequamegon-Nicolet Forest Plan Revision DEIS, P.O. Box 221090, Salt Lake City, UT 84122-1090, by fax to: 801-517-1014, or by e-mail to: chequamegonnicolet@fs.fed.us. If you need more information to draft your comments consider the following sources for guidance:

U.S. FOREST SERVICE

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/cnnf/>

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/cnnf/natres/plan/newsltr/april2003newsletter.pdf>

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

<http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/NaturalResources.html>

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

<http://www.eccola.org/>

<http://www.forestadvocate.org/>

<http://www.nacredata.com/heartwood/Guide.pdf>

<http://www.northwoodswild.org/home.shtml>

<http://www.sierraclub.org/logging/>

<http://www.sierraclub.org/logging/books.asp>

<http://wisconsin.sierraclub.org/>

<http://superiorwilderness.org/>

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Groups appeal timber sale in Chequamegon Nicolet forest

Habitat Education Center (HEC) and the John Muir Chapter of the Sierra Club have announced they are appealing the Northwest Howell timber sale in the Chequamegon Nicolet National Forest (CNNF). The administrative appeal has been filed at the US Forest Service with the help of Senior Attorney Paul Gaynor of the Environmental Law and Policy Center. The Forest Service is almost done with the Chequamegon Nicolet's New Forest Plan planning process to replace an almost 20-year-old forest management plan. This new plan will give the Forest Service a new "Desired

Future Condition,” a new road map for where the public wants the Chequamegon Nicolet National Forest to go.

“Why step on the accelerator with these timber sales when we’re so close to a New Forest Plan and knowing where we really want to go,” said Ricardo Jomarron, president of Habitat Education Center.

SOURCE: Ricardo Jomarron, Habitat Education Center, (608) 294-5930.

Northern Highlands forest plan comment deadline June 16

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The extended deadline for sending comments to the DNR regarding the Northern Highland American Legion State Forest is on Monday, June 16. At the behest of ECCOLA, the DNR extended its comment period another month to the 16th. If you have not yet done so, go to ECCOLA’s website at www.eccola.org and click on the forestry tab for information on writing your own comments. There you will see a link to ECCOLA’s NHAL comments.

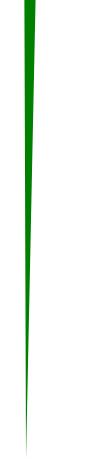
Send the comments to:

Dennis Leith, NHAL State Forest Superintendent
NHAL Headquarters
8770 Hwy J
Woodruff, WI 54568

POINTS TO STRESS IN NHAL FOREST PLAN COMMENTS

- 1) The amount of land dedicated to restoring white and red pine is way too low (16% of the forest) and outside the range of natural variation for the types of soils found on the NHAL. In contrast, the artificially high aspen domination on the landscape which is perpetuated with clearcuts (33% of the forest) needs to be significantly lowered.
- 2) The proposed Bittersweet Lakes non-motorized area should be expanded to include the Dry Lakes area and the Scaffold, Hurrah, Benedict lakes complex. This addition would double the size of the area and provide an area that is more likely to provide remote, quiet recreation opportunities.
- 3) Say no to ATVs on the NHAL. There are hundreds of miles of ATV trails on surrounding County Forest Lands to suit the needs of the 5% of the state’s residents who ride them. There needs to be at least on place in northern Wisconsin where the majority of the people who don’t ride the machines can go to get away from them. There are many other sound reasons in our comments.
- 4) The DNR just needs to say no the Boulder Junction’s silly idea of building a golf course on state property. Again there are many good reasons against the golf course in our comments.
- 5) The DNR should follow ECCOLA’s recommendations with regard to creating State Natural Areas on the NHAL landbase. The comments give management recommendations for 65 important sites on the NHAL that represent the least disturbed habitats left on the forest. For about 16 of these, ECCOLA has recommended the state’s highest protection which is designation as a state natural area. For about five of these sites which are existing Natural Areas, ECCOLA recommends that they should be expanded. These recommendations also coincide with the DNR’s very own Biotic inventory report suggestions.
- 6) The DNR needs to do a much better job of protecting lakes in the plan. There is an unacceptably drastic decline in the acreage of wild and wilderness lakes. Again go to the comments to find an array of detailed comments about the lakes.

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Lautenschlager asks for delay of WE Energies consent decree

Attorney General Peg Lautenschlager on June 12 asked the federal government to delay seeking court approval of its proposed settlement in the Wisconsin Electric Power Company (We Energies) case until the public is provided more information about the deal.

On May 15, 2003, the United States Department of Justice and the United States Environmental Protection Agency issued notice that they had reached what they referred to as a “\$600 million Clean Air Act settlement” with the utility company for its alleged violation of air pollution regulations in Wisconsin over the last 20 years. As required by law, the federal government indicated that it would accept public comments for 30 days on whether or not it should ask the court to approve the proposed settlement. The case is presently pending before Judge Charles N. Clevert in the federal court for the Eastern District of Wisconsin.

In her comments to the federal government, Lautenschlager asked for more information about the nature of the alleged violations. She says the fundamental problem with the proposed settlement is that the EPA has never provided any details on that subject.

“Without knowing the precise nature of the violations,” Lautenschlager wrote, “the State of Wisconsin is unable to determine whether the remedies called for in the consent decree are commensurate with the alleged unlawful conduct, or whether additional enforcement action by the State is warranted.”

SOURCE: Atty. General’s office, (608) 266-1220.

Massachusetts going for 90 percent mercury reduction

The Environment News Service on May 28 reports that the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is poised to issue stricter regulations regarding mercury emissions from four power plants in the state. How strict those regulations are depends on whether the DEP heeds the counsel of a report recently released by a coalition of environmental organizations that advocates the attainability of a 90 percent reduction in airborne mercury effluence. The report

MERCURY CONCERNS IN A.G.

LAUTENSCHLAGER’S LETTER TO THE EPA

Mercury pollution is mentioned in the Lautenschlager letter as follows:

“Left unanswered due to this dearth of information are a number of other important questions, one of which is the actual economic value of the proposed settlement. EPA and WE Energies have emphasized in their descriptions of the proposed consent decree that it is a “\$600 million agreement,” or a “\$600 million Clean Air Act settlement.” Substantial components of the agreement, however, appear to pertain to remedial measures WE Energies previously committed to perform. For example, the TOXECON mercury control project slated for WE Energies’ Presque Isle, Michigan facility was something the company in fact began planning last summer and for which the company received a \$25 million Department of Energy grant four months before the proposed settlement was even announced. Was the company given an offset against otherwise appropriate penalties for this project?

“If so, why and how much was the offset? On the subject of mercury emissions control, why does the proposed consent decree — the terms of which run for more than a decade into the future — not contemplate applying the TOXECON technology to WE Energies’ Wisconsin facilities — which are larger and located in much more populous areas — if this project proves successful?”

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coincides with the release of a similar study by the National Wildlife Federation, which found that mercury levels in the rainfall of 12 eastern states exceed federal health standards for people and wildlife. Mercury pollution — 85 percent of which is created by coal fired power plants — is rising in rank among the environmental hazards that threaten the East. “We estimate that 118,000 women of childbearing age in Massachusetts are exposed annually to mercury levels that could harm their unborn children,” said Eric Palola, director of the National Wildlife Federation’s north-east regional office. Mercury is toxic when ingested or touched. After being released into the atmosphere, it returns to the earth in the form of precipitation, at which point it is broken down into methyl-mercury by bacteria and bio-magnified as it moves up the food chain. Eventually, it can end up in human water and food sources, contaminating fish, for example, or water supplies like Boston’s Quabbin Reservoir. For more information about how your state can reduce mercury poisoning visit http://www.serconline.org/mercury/pkg_frameset.html.

SOURCE: SERC *Wildlines Report*, June 3, 2003, wildlines@serconline.org.

CUB withdraws support for WE Energies’ coal plant expansion

The Citizens’ Utility Board (CUB) withdrew its support May 27 for We Energies’ proposal to build 1,800 megawatts of coal-fired power generation in Southeastern Wisconsin. CUB, the state’s largest utility consumer group, said WE’s proposal costs too much and that alternatives to coal are far less expensive.

CUB Executive Director Steve Hiniker said the utility’s plans to build coal fired power plants is simply too expensive. According to the Public Service Commission’s Draft Environmental Impact Statement on the Oak Creek plan, natural gas fired power is much cheaper. CUB also pointed out that ratepayers are the target of a WE Energies’ plan to pass on the costs of a \$600 million settlement with the Environmental Protection Agency for Clean Air Act violations. “It is unconscionable that We Energies would expect its ratepayers to foot the bill — to the tune of \$600 million — for its own past coal pollution problems,” Hiniker said.

SOURCE: CUB (608) 251-3322, www.wiscub.org, staff@wiscub.org.

Maine Governor signs mercury reduction bill

Maine Governor John Baldacci has signed three bills to protect public health and the environment from mercury and lead pollution. The three bills signed by the Governor include: LD 697, an Act to Require the Installation of Dental Amalgam Separator Systems in Dental Offices, that will remove 98% of the mercury in wastewater discharges that results from dental work on mercury fillings; LD 743, an Act to Develop a Plan for Cathode Ray Tube (CRTs) Disposal, that bans the disposal of CRTs from computer monitors and televisions in landfills and incinerators by January 1, 2006, and that requires a plan by January 30, 2004, to collect and recycle CRTs; and LD 1159, an Act to Reduce Mercury Use in Measuring Devices and Switches, that bans the sale of many mercury-containing products, such as mercury fever thermometers and residential mercury thermostats, by July 1, 2006, and requires a plan to improve collection and recycling of old mercury thermostats. Maine is one of the first four states in the country to require dentists to install separa-

tors to reduce mercury discharges into the sewer systems that empty into rivers and bays. The disposal of CRTs, which each contain four to eight pounds of lead, poses environmental health hazards. “Reducing mercury and lead in the environment will help prevent learning disabilities in our children,” said Sandra Cort, immediate past president of the Learning Disabilities Association of Maine. For more information on how your state can reduce mercury poisoning visit http://www.serconline.org/mercury/pkg_frameset.html.

SOURCE: SERC *Wildlines Report*, June 3, 2003, wildlines@serconline.org.

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Metallic Mining

Potawatomi: pause in Crandon mine process ‘ill-timed, ill-advised’

The new owner of the proposed Crandon mine has quickly discovered what opponents have known for many years. It is a project with immense financial and environmental risks — risks that are not worth any perceived benefits. It is time for a permanent end to the project.

The new owner has asked the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to put an indefinite hold on the processing of the mining permit application. The new owner also informed the agencies that, if the hold is approved, it intends to “Not respond to any outstanding requests for information or con-

DOCUMENT: LETTER SENT BY NWRC ASKING FOR A STAY IN THEIR CRANDON MINE APPLICATION

The following is the text of the letter sent by Northern Wisconsin Resource Group asking for a stay in their Crandon Mine application:

May 29, 2003

Melissa DeVetter
Crandon Project Manager
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
101 South Webster St.
Box 7921 Madison, WI 53707

Robert Whiting U.S. Army Corps of Engineers St. Paul District
190 5th St. E.
St. Paul, MN 55101

Re: Crandon Mine Project — Hold on Further Action

Dear Ms. DeVetter and Mr. Whiting:

On April 10, 2003, Northern Wisconsin Resource Group LLC (“NWRG”) purchased Nicolet Minerals Company from BHP-Billiton. As you know, the previous owners of the Crandon Mine Project have spent over a decade working with regulators and interested parties in preparing the necessary application and analyses for approval of the project. As the new owner we are reviewing those materials to assess how they fit with NWRG’s long range plans, goals and vision for the project.

With this recent change in ownership and management, it seems an appropriate time for a pause in the process. This will allow NWRG to complete its internal review of the project and consult with other parties, as appropriate. These efforts should provide an economy of resources in the future approval process for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the applicant. With this background, NWRG requests that the WDNR and USACE:

1. Stay further processing of all pending applications and approvals for the Crandon Mine Project.
2. Delay further work on the draft environmental impact statements until NWRG completes its internal review of the project.
3. Direct all employees, vendors and consultants under WDNR and USACE control to stay all work on the Crandon Mine Project.

During this stay period, NWRG will:

1. Continue monitoring regional groundwater levels, wetland levels, and lake levels to aid in the State and Federal environmental impact process and to establish baseline data.
 2. Agree to toll any statutory or regulatory deadlines by which the WDNR and USACE are required to act on permit applications or requests for approval. This tolling shall end upon the applicant requesting that the WDNR and USACE reinstate the application/approval process.
 3. Not withdraw the permit applications or requests for approval that were previously filed for the project.
- In this regard, NWRG is not seeking to cease approval of the proposed mining project - just place that approval process on hold.
4. Hold the tailings testing program in a stable environment by flooding the cells with deionized water and sealing the cell ports to eliminate tailings exposure to the atmosphere.
 5. Not respond to any outstanding requests for information or concerns raised on the application (eg. the mining moratorium and paste backfill submittals). The applicant will file responses, as appropriate, after the stay.

We look forward to working with the WDNR and USACE in the future. In the interim, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Gordon R. Connor

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cerns raised on the application (e.g. the mining moratorium and paste backfill submittals).”

The applicant’s request that it be granted authority to stop and start both the Army Corps and DNR’s review processes is ill-timed, ill-advised and unfair to everyone involved. Both the DNR and the Army Corps have consultants, staff members and managers who are in the middle of their reviews. The Potawatomi and other interested parties have also hired consultants who are engaged in the review process. This work cannot be stopped and started like a machine. Permit review instead requires the application of technical expertise to data (much of which is time sensitive), the exercise of professional judgment, and communication with the applicant and interested parties. Such processes cannot simply be suspended until further notice....

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SOURCE: Attorney Jeff Crawford, The Forest County Potawatomi Community, PO Box 46 Crandon, WI 54520

Sierra Club: regulators should refuse pause in permitting work ec01 rninghe time5toapcontroo

The Sierra Club believes that State and Federal regulators should reject Northern Wisconsin Resource Group’s (NWRG) outrageous request to “pause” the proposed Crandon mine permitting activities while the mining company performs an internal review of the project. The Sierra Club strongly urges State and federal regulators and decision-makers to reject this unprecedented request and permanently halt processing of the current incomplete mine application.

“State and federal regulators have no obligation to bend over backward to accommodate this company’s incomplete and failed mining application, and should reject this request,” said David Blouin. “The evidence is clear that this ‘request’ is the desperate act of a company that does not have the resources or the expertise to operate a mine. Regulators should reject this request — especially from an applicant which refuses to give regulators information required of permit applications,” said Blouin. “Now is the time to end this controversy and permanently protect the natural and cultural resources of the Wolf River headwaters area.”

SOURCE: David Blouin, Sierra Club, Burroak15@aol.com.

Cyanide in mining has left history of damage

The reckless use of cyanide by the mining industry has resulted in billions of gallons of cyanide being spilled into the environment since 1970. In the 1980s this misuse resulted in wildlife deaths, extensive water pollution, and ultimately some mines being classified as Superfund sites. The misuse of cyanide does not only result in environmental problems, but also lingering economic problems including forcing taxpayers to fund reclamation projects because mining companies declared bankruptcy. Private pr

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Shoreland Zoning & Water Protection

Canadian water bottler looking open plant in Adams, WI

A June 7 story by Melissa Lake in the Wisconsin Rapids *Daily Tribune* reports that the city of Adams is in discussions with a Canadian company to bottle and export the city's water. According to the story, "Another company is looking at putting a water-bottling plant in Adams, but this time several other businesses, including a retirement community, are part of the package. Steven Shah, president and chief executive officer of Emerald Canada Ltd., said Friday that he's considering relocating his five-division company from Toronto to Adams. The first phase of the project would be construction of a water bottling plant, producing up to 50,000-60,000 million bottles of water per day, and a pharmaceutical packaging plant. Only a sales office will remain in Canada, once all phases of the project are complete. The plants would employ 25 to 40 people the first year, Shah said."

View the complete story at <http://www.wisinfo.com/dailytribune/wrdtlocal/279339148000792.shtml>.

SOURCE: Wisconsin Rapids *Daily Tribune*, (715) 422-6750 or melissa.lake@cwnews.net.

Northwest Lakes leadership conference June 27

Join the Wisconsin Association of Lakes and Wisconsin's northwestern lakes and rivers associations for this day-long conference. Attend sessions to learn more about:

- Aquatic invasive species,
- NR 115 re-write update,
- Limnology 101,
- Public Trust Doctrine and Enforcing it in Court,
- Sensitive Area Surveys, and
- State Legislative Update Panel

Catch up with regional lakes and rivers association members, DNR staff, UW Extension staff, legislators and other partners, AND, be sure to stop by the River Alliance of Wisconsin booth, to say hello and catch up with us. Registration deadline is June 14. For registration forms or more information, visit:

<http://207.21.241.161/education2/NW%20Lakes%20Conference.htm>.

SOURCE: River Alliance of WI *C.A.N.O.E.*, June 5, 2003.

Coon Creek watershed project 70th anniversary celebration June 26

The Wisconsin Watershed Coalition and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service cordially invite you to commemorate the 70th Anniversary of the historic Coon Creek Watershed

demonstration project in Coon Valley, Wisconsin. In conjunction with this event we will showcase the efforts underway in Wisconsin to rehabilitate small watershed dams and restore the flood protection that these dams provide.

The event is Thursday June 26, at Veterans Park Shelter Village of Coon Valley, Vernon County. Registration and coffee at 9:30 a.m., with a program of national, state and local speakers beginning at 10:00. RSVP by June 18.

SOURCE: Grace LaBlanc, (608) 276-8732 x225 or grace.lablanc@wi.usda.gov.

WAL seeks executive director

The Wisconsin Association of Lakes, Inc. (WAL) is seeking a proven leader to serve as its executive director. WAL is a statewide organization, headquartered in Madison, WI, that represents over 330 individual lake associations and lake protection districts, plus hundreds of “Friends of Wisconsin Lakes.” The ideal candidate will bring enthusiasm and extensive experience in the management of a nonprofit organization, as well as in the development of policy issues and in fund raising. This is a great opportunity to lead one of the most respected and effective environmental groups in Wisconsin.

Applicants will have strong organizational, fundraising, communications, advocacy, and education skills. A strong commitment to water stewardship and WAL’s mission statement is essential. The individual will have at least five years experience in a significant leadership position in a conservation, environmental, or other nonprofit organization, and a bachelor’s degree and demonstrated success in the aforementioned areas. For more information and a full job description, visit www.wisconsinlakes.org.

Please submit your resume and compensation requirements by Monday, June 23, to the address below. No calls, please.

SOURCE: WAL Executive Director Search Committee, 9215 Wilson Blvd. Wauwatosa, WI 53226 (414) 278-3640, waled@wisconsinlakes.org,

Purple loosestrife survey underway

We invite local groups to enlist in the purple loosestrife and Phragmites (in coastal counties only) surveys and to sponsor their own local training sessions for their members and communities. We are making this very easy for local groups by providing, free of charge, a scripted slide show or a scripted PowerPoint presentation, new identification materials for both purple loosestrife and Phragmites, and maps and data sheets. Please contact me if you need any further information from me. Thank you all for your assistance.

SOURCE: Derek Strohl, Wisconsin Wetlands Association, 222 S. Hamilton St., Ste. 1, Madison, WI 53703 (608) 250-9971 derek@wiscwetlands.

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Aquatic plant removal may require DNR permit

With lengthening daylight triggering the rapid growth of plants and algae in Wisconsin lakes and allowing them to “catch up” after a cool spring, state environmental officials remind waterfront property owners, lake associations, and other groups that a permit may be necessary to control excessive aquatic plants and algae along shorelines. Many control activities require a permit issued by the Department of Natural Resources in order to protect the diverse and stable communities of native plants that provide fish habitat, produce oxygen, stabilize shorelines, and prevent invasive aquatic plants from getting established. For property owners and groups seeking information about aquatic plant controls on a local lake, contact your local DNR service center and ask for the regional aquatic plant management coordinator.

SOURCE: Frank Koshere, WDNR, (715) 392-0807 or Jeff Bode (608) 266-0502.

Nevada attempts to privatize water

Another attempt to privatize water supplies in this country is moving through the Nevada legislature. SB487, introduced in March 2003, has rapidly passed through the Senate and through the Assembly’s committee on Government Affairs. The bill seeks to allow counties with a population under 400,000 to enter into contract with a private corporation or other entity that will pay for the acquisition, development and distribution of the county’s water resources. Therefore the public water resources of all counties except Clark County, home to the ever growing Las Vegas metropolitan area, could be privatized for a profit. The individuals deciding this are the elected board commissioners of the county. The bill does not contain any stipulations for any public meetings that would detail the facts of the sale. The sponsors of the bill contend it is necessary to allow counties to do this in order to provide for their economic, health, safety, and general welfare. One agreement between Lincoln County and Vilder Water Company already exists. Assemblywoman Sheila Leslie said she opposes the bill because it, “would allow agreements like one already made between Lincoln County and Vidler Water Co. to split profits from water sales to the fast-growing Las Vegas area.” SB487 would also go against the state’s 150 year old laws guaranteeing that water is a public resource not a private one. This bill clearly has been designed to acquire profits for a few individuals and to support the wasteful habits of corporate lobbyists while pitting less populated counties against one metropolitan area. Water is a precious public resource and should not be sold to the highest bidder.

SOURCE: SERC *Wildlines Report*, June 3, 2003, wildlines@serconline.org.

Rahall introduces fed bill to fight invasive species

Invasive species are a huge and growing problem, causing billions of dollars a year in damage to crops, lost value of grazing lands, harm to forests, and degradation of aquatic and terrestrial habitats. A new bill introduced in the House of Representatives by Nick Rahall (D-WV), the Species Protection and Conservation of the Environment Act, would provide additional tools in the arsenal to fight invasive species. The bill provides grants for states to assess and prioritize their inva-

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sive species problems, grants for landowners and federal and state managers to eradicate invasives, and rapid response capabilities to allow land managers to respond to emergency situations. Please contact your Representative via the Capitol switchboard 202-224-3121 and ask him or her to co- sponsor HR 2310, the SPACE Act.

SOURCE: Defenders of Wildlife *Rural UPDates!*, June 11, 2003, Scotty Johnson, sjohnson@defenders.org.

NRDC publishes report on U.S. drinking water quality

The NRDC and a number of drinking water groups across the country released *What's on Tap: Grading Drinking Water in U.S. Cities*. It focuses primarily on drinking water quality and right-to-know reports, but we prepared a fact sheet and question and answer on the link between the Clean Water rollbacks and drinking water quality as well. See the attached links and chart. Please use this as an opportunity to contact your local press to make the link between source water protection and having a strong Clean Water Act that covers headwaters, seasonal waters, and freshwater wetlands that replenish and cleanse drinking water supplies. More on the report at <http://www.nrdc.org/media/pressReleases/030611a.asp> and <http://www.nrdc.org/water/drinking/qtap.asp#cwa>.

SOURCE: Nancy Stoner, Clean Water Project, NRDC, (202) 289-2394 cleanwaternt@igc.org.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Web conference reviews election activities for nonprofits

On Wednesday, June 25, from 1:00-2:30 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time the Alliance for Justice, in collaboration with the Ms. Foundation for Women, presents a free web conference for nonprofit advocates who want to learn the rules for effective advocacy during the coming election year. The 2004 elections offer an exciting opportunity to share your organization's message with voters and candidates. Get-out-the-vote activities, voter guides, candidate debates, and more... There are many ways you can mobilize public support for your issues and encourage the general public to participate in the election process. Learn how your 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(4) organization can seize this opportunity while complying with the federal tax and election laws. Don't miss this timely, web-based workshop from nationally recognized experts on the law governing nonprofit advocacy.

Registrants will receive instructions on how to access the online workshop presentation via your web browser. Please feel free to pass this invitation on to other organizations. Please RSVP with your name, organization, address and e-mail to Kendra-Sue Derby at ksderby@afj.org by Wednesday, June 18.

SOURCE: Alliance for Justice.

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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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Sporting, conservation community reacts to JFC's WDNR budget cuts

Leaders of sporting, conservation, and environmental groups are urging legislators to change the State Budget proposed by the Joint Finance Committee (JFC). The JFC Budget would reduce DNR funding by more than \$33.2 million from general purpose (sales and income tax) and other sources and cut an estimated 244 positions.

“How can Senator Welch say that a further cut in the fish and wildlife funding is good for the sportsman? This Joint Finance version of the budget is disastrous for sportsmen in that it cuts into habitat development. The JFC lower fee levels caused by cuts in habitat funding are not acceptable to the sports community. TU advocates the Governor’s version of the budget.”

—Jeff Smith, Trout Unlimited

“Hiding behind the façade of helping Wisconsin conservationists, members of Joint Finance Committee have instead cast a vote that guts the spirit of Wisconsin’s constitutionally guaranteed right to hunt, fish and trap. JFC members are swimming against the river of public support for the increased hunting and fishing permit fees that help improve wildlife habitat and support the fisheries and wildlife experts that protect our fish and game.”

—Diana Toledo, Acting Executive Director, River Alliance of Wisconsin

At a time when public support for natural resources management and outdoor recreation is at an all-time high, with surveys showing that Wisconsin citizens place its value at over 9 on a scale of 1 to 10, the legislature should take a lesson and support these programs to a like degree.

—Madison Audubon

Outdoor groups and sportsmen statewide are requesting a reinstatement of the fee increase on hunting and fishing licenses in

the state budget. In the budget prepared by Governor Doyle fishing licenses were increased \$6, from \$14 to \$20, and deer hunting licenses from \$20 to \$32. The plan would have provided the Department of Natural Resources with an extra \$17 million to help offset the cuts made to the Department’s budget. The Joint Finance Committee’s (JFC) version of the budget reduced the increase to just \$3 for fishing and eliminated the increase altogether for hunting, causing an overall decrease of \$10 million to the DNR from the Governor’s budget. Ironically, what the members the JFC are touting as a “win for sportsmen” is seen as a real loss by sportsmen.

—WI League of Conservation Voters

“When the Joint Finance Committee bragged that they had done something great for sportsmen in the state budget, I guess that I expected to see that they had done something great for sportsmen in the state budget. Instead they pretty much guaranteed that the DNR won’t have the funds it needs to manage and protect our fish and wildlife resources.”

—George Meyer, Executive Director, WI Wildlife Federation

“I would gladly pay what is basically the equivalent of a happy meal and a shake if that means the fish managers can continue to do their job and protect the quality of our lakes and streams.”

—Jon Christiansen, Chair, Wisconsin State Council of Trout Unlimited