



WSNetworkNews

July 15, 2001

Click to jump to news on these WSN priority issues:

- [Arrowhead-Weston Transmission Line](#)
- [DNR Independence](#)
- [Factory Farming](#)
- [Groundwater Protection](#)
- [Mercury Reduction](#)
- [Metallic Mining](#)
- [Public Intervenor Office Restoration](#)
- [Shoreland/Wetland Protection](#)

DNR split and recycling still unresolved in budget talks

According to Caryl Terrell of the Sierra Club, “The Budget Conference Committee is still struggling with two of our issues — recycling and DNR split. (See www.wsn.org for recent alerts if you need background.) I suggest people flood their offices again with short faxes, e-mails, or telephone calls on these two issues. Keep it short: ‘Do not split the DNR. Fully fund recycling.’ The leaders to contact include:

- Scott Jensen, 266-3387, Rep.Jensen@legis.state.wi.us,
- John Gard, 266-2343, Rep.Gard@legis.state.wi.us,
- Steve Foti, 266-2401, Rep.Foti@legis.state.wi.us,
- Mary Panzer, 266-7513, Sen.Panzer@legis.state.wi.us,
- Brian Burke, 266-8535, Sen.Burke@legis.state.wi.us,
- Russ Decker, 266-2502, Sen.Decker@legis.state.wi.us, and
- Chuck Chvala, 266-9170, Sen.Chvala@legis.state.wi.us.

SOURCE: WSN and Caryl Terrell

Arrowhead-Weston Transmission Line

WPS wants out of ATC ownership

Wisconsin Public Radio reported Friday that Wisconsin Public Service Corp. (WPS) is seeking to

sell its interest in the American Transmission Company (ATC). Selling its interests would leave ATC and Minnesota Power (MP) as the only two entities involved in the construction of the proposed Arrowhead-Weston line. The report quoted an MP spokesperson as saying their company does not plan on backing out of the deal.

SOURCE: WPR

Assembly condemnation bill introduced

Assembly bill AB-455 has been introduced by Rep. Jerry Petrowski. The bill would eliminate the condemnation authority of non-governmental entities. The bill has been referred to the Urban and Local Affairs Committee.

DNR Independence

Forestry split proposed by budget conferees

The state budget conference committee is considering a “DNR split light” proposal forwarded by committee Republicans to split off *just* the forestry portion of the DNR into a separate, cabinet-level agency. Groups opposing the earlier, more comprehensive DNR split proposal should also be wary of this as an unnecessary action that could lead down the slippery slope to further moves against fully integrated environmental and conservation management.

(See the contact information for the budget conference committee members on page 1 to voice your opposition to this proposal. -Ed.)

Factory Farming

Support sought for agricultural conservation legislation

Lawmakers in Washington have responded to the united call from farmers and conservationists to improve and expand conservation measures in next the Farm Bill. Now they need your help to build support within Congress for these expanded programs!

On June 28, Congressman Ron Kind (D-3rd/WI) is introduced the Working Lands Stewardship Act of 2001. This legislation re-authorizes virtually all of the existing agriculture conservation programs and provides significant funding increases, and also introduces new programs. Representative Kind’s new bill complements the Conservation Security Act, which establishes a new type of incentives program primarily addressing cropping and management practices on working lands. We believe that both Harkin’s CSA and Kind’s renewal and expansion of existing programs are vital, necessary conservation bills for rural America.

Please call the Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121) and ask your Representative to support Rep. Kind's Working Lands Stewardship Act of 2001!

SOURCE: <http://www.familyfarmer.org/alerts/supportkind.html>.

Wisconsin group attending Kentucky CAFO conference Sept. 7

Is anyone interested in going to KY for a CAFO meeting with Sierra Club activists, Wendell Berry, and others? I will be getting more information on this conference, so just let me know if you want further information.

On Sept. 7 and 8 in Louisville, KY, the Cumberland Chapter of the Sierra Club with support from Kentuckians for the Commonwealth will present a Conference on Sustainable Animal Agriculture and the Problems of CAFOs. The conference will begin with dinner and a speaker and musical entertainment on Friday evening and re-convene on Saturday until about 4:00.

Although details and speakers are still being lined up, Wendell Berry, Donald Stull, Rick Dove, and others are already committed to speak. I need to hear from those interested as soon as possible so I know how many rooms to hold at the Galt House Hotel in downtown Louisville. You will be hearing more about this conference soon, but get it on your calendar now.

SOURCE: Caryl Terrell, Sierra Club, cterrell@execpc.com.

Pig CAFOs continue to rise

Large CAFO-type operations account for 73 percent of the country's pig crop last year, according to an article in the June 21 Agri-View. In 1994, such operations accounted for 27 percent of the nation's pig crop. And the number of pig farms with fewer than 5,000 head declined from 217,000 in 1994 to fewer than 84,000 in 2000.

SOURCE: WDNR "Basin Briefs," 6-27-01.

'Treat CAFO waste like human waste' says researcher

Manure from CAFOs should be given the same thorough treatment human wastes, according to David Tilman, an ecologist at the University of Minnesota and lead author of a study that appeared in the April 13 edition of Science. According to Earthwatch Radio's report on the study, most industrial farms are not required by law to treat their animal waste. Tilman said most CAFOs wouldn't be able to afford to do so. But "The reality is the waste products of livestock need the same kind of thorough treatment that human waste need. And the treatment of the wastes of humans is a major cost for municipalities, and, frankly, it should be a major cost for these animal factories."

SOURCE: WDNR "Basin Briefs," 6-27-01.

Brown County communities seeking to limit CAFO farm size

From the July 8 Green Bay *Press-Gazette*: two southern Brown County communities (Morrison and Glenmore) are considering changes to local ordinances that could limit the size of farm operations. The Morrison Town Board recently received a 316-signature petition asking for a limit on the number of animals allowed at CAFOs and a commitment to preserving environmental and land values. Agriculture officials are urging cautions, saying it is important to keep Wisconsin's dairying industry competitive with other states. More at http://www.greenbaypressgazette.com/news/archive/local_675918.shtml.

SOURCE: WDNR "Basin Briefs," 7-1-01.

Bankruptcy delays CAFO until town adopts rules

From the July 8 *La Crosse Tribune*: The Village of Mount Sterling in Crawford County was "saved" from the negative impacts of a CAFO as a result of the farming operation going bankrupt. In the mid-1990s, a small dairy farm on the edge of the village got a new owner who wanted to expand to 700 head of dairy cows. The new owner "had no plan for the manure. It was all running down the hill," according to Del Schreck, former president of the 200-resident village. At the time, Crawford County had no animal livestock ordinance, and the village had no zoning ordinance. When the new owner went bankrupt, the farm reverted to the original owner. Eventually, a local ordinance restricting the number of cows on the farm went into effect, and confinement bars are now being rented as storage space. More at <http://www.lacrossetribune.com/rednews/2001/07/08/build/news/3dairy3.php>.

SOURCE: WDNR "Basin Briefs," 7-1-01.

Groundwater Protection

Water privatization tops list of most "unreported" stories of 2000

The privatization of water tops the list of "Most Censored Stories of 2000" at the site <http://projectcensored.org/c2001stories/1.html>.

SOURCE: Alice McCombs, P O Box 573, Shawano, WI 54166 (715) 524-5998, www.earthwins.com.

CCN members report on Vancouver water conference

Hiroshi and I have just returned from an exhausting but invigorating trip to Vancouver, British Columbia, where we attended "Water for People and Nature," the 1st International Forum on Conservation and Human Rights. Attended by over 800 people from around the world, it was sponsored by the Council of Canadians, an activist group that is highly aware of plans of various

transnational corporations, and even home governments, that will have far-reaching effects on YOUR water, and the water of your fellow humans, and the world's ecosystems. The vast majority of people have little knowledge or concern for what businesses do, but in the case of water, all of us must get informed, and get informed quickly.

There are two major threats that involve the world's water:

#1 — The “commodification” of water. The official designation of water as a “commodity” means that businesses can buy up water and take it out of the ecosystem to which it belongs, and once this process begins, the local people CANNOT stop it, even if there is a serious drought. The water will fall under international trade agreements of the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the export of water cannot be stopped, even if the source is harming the area, its people, its crops, or the natural environment — because that would be violating the rights of the corporation to do business! This doesn't sound right — and it isn't — but efforts are underway NOW to place water in this category of “commodity,” a “product” that can be bought and sold. Do not underestimate the ability of huge transnational corporations to develop the technical means to take huge amounts of water and ship it halfway around the world. There are many locations in the world right now that are seriously short of water, and some of them have the means to pay very large prices for it. If you have doubts about this, check www.waterbank.com on the web.

#2 — The “privatization” of water and water services (delivery). Privatizing water means giving control of it to private corporations. These schemes, wherever they are implemented, mean that citizens are not in control of their water. The government of Bolivia about 2 years ago contracted with a private corporation to provide water services. The native peoples were deprived of water, but the private corporation and the government ignored their pleas. People of all ages came down from the mountains to march. When this went unheeded by the government, violence ensued for many days. Rocks were thrown, barricades were built, fires were set in the streets; armed police in combat gear fired at the rock-throwing protesters from behind body shields. Many were injured, and a 17-year-old boy was killed. (At the conference we saw a film of this — it was ugly.) All over water! Finally the government broke the contract with the corporation, Bechtel of San Francisco.

We became aware of this threat in the last few months because it is linked to our struggle with Perrier. We had been amazed at the lack of our Wisconsin government to protect the water as a “public trust.” This conference showed us that Perrier is not the only corporation that is interested in water and is involved in collusion with authorities to establish new sources. There are breathtaking schemes afoot to remove mega-amounts of water from water-rich areas of the world, and ship it — for profit — to areas that are able to pay the highest price for it. The water-needy who are poor? Tough. That's business.

At the conference we met loads of wonderful people who are concerned about their fellow man and the obligation we all have to protect the right of ALL to clean, fresh water — without having to pay a large price to a private corporation. We support the water rights of humans and all of nature.

We have copies of a paper entitled “Blue Gold” which explains the situation very well. We met and heard the ideas of its author, Maude Barlow, and many other people who are concerned over water and the effects of controlling it — for profit. We hope that you will be interested in getting a copy from us. As caring human beings we cannot close our eyes to the inevitable effects of privatization of water and the commodification of water on the world market, especially under the growing threat of global warming. We like to think that we are the most intelligent of all species. Will we be able to foresee these effects, and will we care enough to plan for ALL species, including the “least” of our own?

SOURCE: Arlene and Hiroshi Kanno, Town of Newport, Columbia County.

Army to sample private wells near Badger for explosives contamination

Citizens for Safe Water Around Badger (CSWAB) has learned that the Army will identify and sample wells that may be impacted by groundwater from the Deterrent Burning Grounds (DBG), an area located inside the far northeast corner of Badger Army Ammunition Plant in the Township of Merrimac.

The decision relates to data collected in March 2001 east of the DBG. Monitoring wells along the fence detected concentrations of the explosive dinitrotoluene (DNT) in the 3-6 micrograms per liter (ug/l) range. These levels far exceed the Public Health Groundwater Quality Standard of 0.05 ug/l. In humans, inhalation and dermal exposures to DNT effect the heart, circulatory, and central nervous systems; it is classified by the EPA as a probable human carcinogen.

SOURCE: Laura Olah, Executive Director Citizens for Safe Water Around Badger, E12629 Weigand’s Bay, South Merrimac, WI 53561 (608) 643-3124, fax (608) 643-0005, olah@speagle.com.

Mercury Reduction

Metallic Mining

Says Schultz misses point of cyanide bill

In responding to Senator Dale Schultz’s recent criticism of the cyanide bill: “Sen. Schultz misses the point. The proposed project expects to use anywhere from 5-18 tons of cyanide a month at the sight. That cyanide is not going to arrive at the sight by some phantom ‘Mother Ship,’ it will be transported over our roads, rails, and bridges. We do not want that volume of one of the most toxic

chemicals known to man to be an invitation to disaster before it even arrives at the sight!”

SOURCE: Bonnie E. Mayer, bmayer@execpc.com.

Likes mining web site

The latest posting from Drillbits and Tailings give one of the best corporate/mining websites I've seen yet. Check it out at <http://www.business-humanrights.org/Mining.htm>.

SOURCE: Tom Wilson, Resenergy@mwt.net.

Public Intervenor Office Restoration

Shoreland/Wetland Protection

DU, others writing Kohl to support wetland conservation measures

I have been working with Lon Knoedler of Ducks Unlimited-Wisconsin to develop a hasty sign-on letter to be sent to Senator Herb Kohl regarding support of the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP). Even though Senator Kohl has been very supportive of this popular program, his staff has indicated that it would be helpful to have strong constituent support sent to him as he discusses final agricultural allocations in the coming days.

The DU Washington office sent the draft letter to Lon, and he and I have made a few modifications based on more recent information. If your organization is able to sign on, please [contact] me [to see the letter].

SOURCE: Charlie Luthin, Wisconsin Wetlands Association, 222 S. Hamilton, Suite #1, Madison, WI 53703 (608) 250-9971.

George introduces Great Lakes drilling bill

Senator Gary George has introduced SB-214 which prohibits construction of pipelines and drilling in the Great Lakes and adjacent waters to explore for oil or gas. The bill has been referred to the Senate Environmental Resources Committee.

Franklin commission considering shoreline setbacks

The City of Franklin Environmental Commission has been appointed to invite experts or persons with knowledge on water issues to speak, educate, make recommendations, or give testimony at an upcoming hearing on a sound setback figure August 16 at the Franklin City Hall. Our present 30 ft. setback is from a building edge which allows soil disturbance/grading within the 30 ft. As you know, soil disturbance allowed within the setback leaves little to no undisturbed vegetative buffer to filter runoff.

It is imperative we have support for an increased setback. Franklin is the land of wetlands quickly being developed. Developers have expressed opposition to an increased setback to protect our waters. Please attend in support of the Environmental Commission's recommendation to enforce a minimum 75 ft. setback to protect our waters.

SOURCE: Kristen Wilhelm, dwilhelm@execpc.com.

U.S. faulted on wetlands inventory and assessment

The Associated Press reported on June 27 that the government fails to enforce laws requiring developers who fill in wetlands to restore old ones or create new ones in return. A National Academy of Sciences report found that no federal agencies are accurately tracking the nation's marshes, swamps, and bogs to see if the losses to development each year are adequately compensated.

Because of that, a panel of academic and government experts found, there is no way to assess whether the nation's goal of "no net loss" of wetlands — in terms of both acreage and functions — is being met.

Voters place high priority on environmental protection

American voters place a high priority on environmental protections, despite concerns about energy and the economy according to a poll conducted by Greenberg Quinlan Research and The Tarrance Group. (*Contact the WSN at wsn@chorus.net to receive a copy of the report.*)

SOURCE: Joy Strawser, joystrawser@hotmail.com.

Group seeks volunteers for stream habitat project

The Upper Sugar River Watershed Association is looking for volunteers with woodworking experience to build structures for a habitat enhancement project on the West Branch Sugar River. If you have a strong arm and want to help the environment, contact Marcia Hartwig at (608) 224-3746 or e-mail hartwig@co.dane.wi.us for more information.

SOURCE: diana@wisconsinrivers.org.

Hartland may alter park mowing to help shoreland restoration

Hartland may quit mowing parts of their parks and other village-owned lands to restore natural shoreland along the Bark River. As part of the Shoreland Restoration Program, they are planning to plant ferns, grasses, sedges, shrubs and wildflowers in a 90-foot section of the east river bank across from a municipal parking lot on North Avenue. Currently the village mows right up to the waterline, as do most homeowners. “However, the clean-cut look of a regularly mowed lawn is not the best way to preserve and protect shorelands and the bodies of water they define,” according to Ruth Johnson, a DNR basin planner for the Rock River basin.

SOURCE: WDNR “Basin Briefs,” 6-27-01.

EPA releases report on the Clean Water State Revolving Fund

The EPA has released an update on the progress of the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF), the low-interest rate loan program available under the Clean Water Act. The CWSRF has provided over \$30 billion to improve water quality since its inception in 1987. While the traditional emphasis of CWSRF loans has been on municipal wastewater treatment systems, the report notes that states are increasingly using the CWSRF to finance programs for watershed protection projects, including

- land purchase,
- wetlands enhancement, and
- reducing polluted runoff.

Also, nearly half the states use CWSRF funds to leverage additional financial support, allowing states to award an average of about \$3.2 billion annually over the last five years. The report, *Financing America’s Clean Water Since 1987: A Report of Progress and Innovation* (EPA-832-R-00-011), can be viewed at www.epa.gov/owm/pdfs/progress.pdf.

SOURCE: WDNR “Basin Briefs,” 6-27-01.

Sheboygan considering runoff tax

The City of Sheboygan is considering imposing a special tax to deal with ongoing stormwater runoff problems, according to a June 19 *Sheboygan Press* article. **The fee would average \$10 a month for residential customers.** “I think the public has been threatened with enough flooding that they’re willing to support this (fee increase),” according to Council President James Graf. “I think it’s important we fund stormwater; it’s a very high priority.”

SOURCE: WDNR “Basin Briefs,” 6-27-01.

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.