



WSNetwork News

November 1, 2001

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

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](#)

Think the WSN should take on a new "priority issue" in 2002? **Propose it** before the deadline on Dec. 1.

Arrowhead-Weston Transmission Line

Wausau-to-Duluth power line route details finalized

The Public Service Commission of WI (PSCW) has written the finalized order that outlines the details and route specifics of the 220-mile electric transmission line from Wausau to Duluth. The PSCW approved the line on August 17.

The finalized route begins at the Weston Power Plant Substation just south of Wausau. It runs west to the Owen-Withee area (near State Hwy. 29) and then heads northwest (near State Highway 53) to the Arrowhead substation near Duluth.

With the PSCW's written final order, the utilities will proceed with the project and begin the engineering and geographical surveys that need to be completed before 2002 when construction is expected to begin.

SOURCE: WPS.

WSN issue chairs call for project ideas from Wisconsin groups

For each of the WSN's eight statewide priority issues tracked in this newsletter, the WSN has an issue chairperson. These chairs keep in touch with groups and individuals concerned with their issue. Chairs also develop flexible plans for distributing the WSN's limited resources around the state so we make progress on these issues.

At this time, our issue chairs are developing their plans for 2002. They are also looking for ideas for short-term projects that can still be accomplished in 2001.

If you have some ideas and would like to participate in one or more of these plans, contact State Coordinator Todd Hanson at (608) 268-1218 or wsn@chorus.net.

Duluth OKs power line special use permit

The Duluth City Council on October 9 passed a special use permit that will help the Arrowhead Weston power line. The permit gives Minnesota Power (MP) authority to upgrade its 115 kilovolt line to a 345/115 kilovolt double circuit line through a portion of the city. It also allows MP to relocate a stretch of the line away from homes in Gary-New Duluth to a railroad corridor.

SOURCE: Logan Edinger, Save Our Unique Lands, Edinger@centurytel.net.

DNR Independence

Factory Farming

Organic farmers consider suit against Monsanto for ‘trespass’

Folks in North Dakota, much like rural residents all over America, have an independent streak longer than the tail of Halley’s comet. Now, one organic farmer in North Dakota is letting his independence shine bright as he begins organizing farmers to join him in civil case against the Monsanto corporation.

According to *CropChoice* (Oct. 9), North Dakota organic wheat farmer Terry Kemmet has banded together with other family farmers and they are considering launching “a co-plaintiff action suit against Monsanto for, among other things, trespass with its genetic engineering technology and harm to export markets.” In a guest opinion letter to *CropChoice*, Kemmet said, “Monsanto and other companies seem to be polluting organic and commercial crops across the fence... Our basic constitutional right to property is soon to be lost. Our right to grow the type of plants that we want to grow and market is being overshadowed by the rights of a patent. Soon we won’t even be able to save our own seed.” To learn more about this issue, call or e-mail Terry Kemmet at (701) 327-8285 or tkembek@bektel.com.

SOURCE: Scotty Johnson, National Rural Community Outreach Campaign, sjohnson@defenders.org, Defenders of Wildlife, (520) 623-9653.

Iowa governor denies state has ‘factory hog lots’

From the October 24 *Des Moines Register*: Former Iowa Governor Terry Branstad said he does not believe Iowa has “factory hog lots” but acknowledged that states cannot roll back changes that have transformed the livestock industry in recent years. “You’re talking about large commercial operations owned by individuals,” Branstad said. “They are not factories. But the truth of the mat-

ter is that the livestock-raising business has changed dramatically.” Branstad said the best way to stop water pollution caused by large livestock operations is to go after violators of environmental laws. More at www.dmregister.com/news/stories/c4789004/16273002.html.

SOURCE: WDNR “Basin Briefs,” 10-24-01.

Wisconsin dairy herd count continues downward

If current trends continue, October could be the last month that Wisconsin counts more than 18,000 dairy herds, reports *Wisconsin Ag Connection*. According to Wisconsin’s agriculture department, the current herd-count stands at 18,009. This is about 44 less than a month ago and 428 less than in July. An average of about 4 herds/ day are taken out of production in the state. Since January 1995, the total number of dairy herds in the state has declined each month, noted *Wisconsin Ag Connection*. However, dairy farms that are still operating in Wisconsin are producing more milk than ever. State agricultural officials say Wisconsin farmers produced 23.3 billion pounds of milk last year, an all time record for the state.

SOURCE: WDNR “Basin Briefs,” 10-24-01.

Manure permit case worrying farm groups

From the October 18 *Agri-View*: A federal judge’s September 20 ruling in a North Carolina case has farm groups concerned that large farm operations may be “threatened.” U.S. District Court Judge Malcolm Howard rejected a motion by Smithfield Food Inc. to dismiss a lawsuit filed by the environmental group Waterkeeper Alliance. The environmental group alleges Smithfield failed to obtain a manure management permit required to operate its CAFO and has accused the giant pork producer of polluting streams. Environmental groups believe the North Carolina ruling may apply to similar cases in other states and encourage environmental groups and CAFO neighbors to file lawsuits.

SOURCE: WDNR “Basin Briefs,” 10-24-01.

Medical journal opposes antibiotics in animal feed

The prominent medical journal *The New England Journal of Medicine* this week stakes out a position opposing the use of antibiotics in animal feed. The October 18 issue of the *Journal* contains three studies documenting the presence of antibiotic resistant bacteria in supermarket meats and human intestinal tracts.

The first study found that 20 percent of ground meats (chicken, turkey, beef, and pork) from supermarkets contained Salmonella bacteria, and that over half of the strains detected were resistant to three or more antibiotics.

The second study found antibiotic resistant strains of the bacteria *Enterococcus faecium* in 17 percent of chickens purchased at supermarkets in four states. The bacteria were resistant to an antibi-

otic at the time approved for livestock but not humans, indicating that the resistance probably came from feedlot antibiotic use.

In the third study, healthy participants ingested samples of meat-derived antibiotic-resistant bacteria, and found (by testing stool samples) that the bacteria survived in the intestinal tract of each person. (No word on how 18 healthy people were convinced to ingest resistant bacteria).

As the widespread use of antibiotics as a livestock “growth-promoter” is cited as a chief cause of increased resistance, these three articles were accompanied by an editorial calling for a halt to the use of antibiotics in animal feed. For more information, see <http://www.nejm.org>.

SOURCE: Scotty Johnson, defenders.returns@reply.net.

Groundwater Protection

Black seeks approval of high-cap well study vetoed by Governor

Assembly Democratic Leader Spencer Black is proposing a nonpartisan study of Wisconsin’s lack of legal authority over high-capacity wells like the one that water bottler Perrier has proposed in Adams County.

“The proposed Perrier well exposed how weak our laws are when it comes to protecting the groundwater supply. While we have tough anti-pollution laws to protect groundwater quality, groundwater quantity is now threatened by high capacity wells pumping hundreds of millions of gallons of groundwater a day,” Black said.

In an Oct. 22 letter co-signed by 20 legislative colleagues, Black asked Legislative Council Co-chairs Sen. Fred Risser and Rep. Kitty Rhoades to approve the study, which the Legislature added to the 2001-03 budget but was vetoed by Governor McCallum.

SOURCE: Rep. Spencer Black.

Farm Progress Days water sampling reveals high nitrate levels

Twenty-two percent of the 100 well water samples tested by the University of Wisconsin-Extension specialists at 2001 Farm Progress Days indicated unsafe levels of nitrate. “Nitrate-nitrogen greater than 10 milligrams per liter (mg/L) of water is considered unsafe,” explained Chris Mechenich, University of Wisconsin-Extension groundwater educator. Samples were brought in from 20 Wisconsin counties as well as counties in Iowa and Illinois

People without infants in their homes should also be concerned about elevated nitrate levels. Recent studies in Nebraska and Iowa have suggested links between high nitrate drinking water and cancer. High nitrate levels do not occur naturally in Wisconsin groundwater, so they indicate

that some human activity is contaminating the water, Mechenich said. “In Wisconsin, about 70,000-80,000 private wells may contain unsafe levels of nitrate,” Mechenich adds. Complete story at www1.uwex.edu/news/print.cfm?release_id_pk=418&style=print_story.

SOURCE: UW-Extension.

Water chemist, fisher appalled by Perrier-leaning groundwater presentation

Last night [Oct. 30] I listened to the worst example of red herrings, poor science, and association propaganda that I have ever heard in my life. OK, maybe I don't get out much or spend a lot of time in the political trenches, but it was hard to keep my supper down. The talk was part of a UW series of lectures on Groundwater Management in Wisconsin. The series has been terrific and the previous presentations have been highly informative and scientifically excellent.

The title of last night's was basically the same as advertised: “Filling in the Blank Pages in Wisconsin Groundwater Policy: Perrier's Model for Environmental Investigation and Regulation,” but the talk should have been titled “How to Look like the Good Guys Because You Do More than the Law Requires Which is NOTHING Even Though What You Do is Poorly Done.”

The talk was a two-part tag team effort by Robert Nauta and Peter Peshek. It was the first time that I had ever seen Peter Peshek, and I had to check my calendar just to make certain that Darth Vader was not dressed up for Halloween as a lawyer in a dark suit. If Peshek had taken out a laser pointer, I would have run for the exit.

The talk began with a “scientific” presentation by Robert Nauta, URS Corporation. Robert is employed by Perrier Bottling Company to model the effects of high-capacity wells in Adams County. He began the discussion by pitching the idea that bottled water provided an excellent backup to the nation's water supply during times of crisis such as hurricanes in Florida or the tragedy in New York City. I equated the increase in sales to the same form of hysteria that causes bread to disappear from grocery store shelves after the weather service forecasts a blizzard in Wisconsin. He pitched the idea that EPA was the villain in Florida for hindering the construction of a housing development because the drinking water supply was deemed to be inadequate. Robert mentioned, however, that the developers eventually won out. I guess he thought the audience would be impressed, and perhaps he underestimated the wave of “big business” support in Madison.

Once Robert moved past winning the hearts of the audience, he got into his strong area--science. Unfortunately he did a miserable job of convincing me that he knew anything about surface water hydrology or meaningful trout stream restoration. He did state that he was a groundwater guy, so I suppose that it is OK to present garbage as long as it is not your area of expertise. I thought that he was supposed to link the pumping to the science of improving the habitat. I commented that my confidence in their expertise was shaken by his presentation concerning the variability of diurnal water temperature. It was obvious to me that the surface water was a low-flow, shallow, dark-bottom ditch, but Robert seemed to think the diurnal fluctuation was a poorly understood scientific phenomena. Perhaps he knew the answer but was just trying to fool the audience into thinking

Perrier would repair the nasty condition. Presenting trivial data containing peaks that go up and down might win an argument in the bar in an economically depressed area but not in the cradle of limnology. I'll bet A. E. Birge might come out of the grave tonight just to get his hands on Robert.

I finished Robert off by commenting that I failed to see how removing groundwater would restore the quality of the habitat when restoring high base flows is essential to improving habitat. Peter, however, came to his side and said that my "final word" was a cheap shot. In general, I felt that the surrounding watershed use and adjoining drain tiles and channelization make any restoration effort simply a red herring to help build the plant.

Peter Peshek was a whole lot more slippery to grab and I was still worried about a laser sword. Every lawyer joke I ever heard kept flashing into my mind. I think he spent most of the time associating himself with Steve Born, UW Urban Planner and Trout Unlimited national director, and Tom Dawson, former Public Intervenor in WI. Peter slid so smoothly between the righteous efforts of smart growth and sound groundwater management and Perrier that I "almost" was ready to buy the used car he was selling. But the fence wasn't high enough to hide behind, and eventually I got the message that Perrier could have just come into Adams County, drilled a hole, and set up shop because the law was on their side. Instead the "Perrier Model" was a holistic partnership of the community, land stewardship, and good old American capitalism.

I don't know how I could stop from wanting to be part of this futuristic, sustainable, model enterprise, but at that point I had to tend to my supper problems. My question was "If Perrier has such a good plan, why did Perrier leave the Mekan River area?" Peter's answer was something like Perrier didn't research the area properly and there were state land issues. What a crock of crap! The real issue was that trout fishers around the state treasure the Mekan like the Michigan anglers treasure the Au Sable. Both rivers have habitat and water quality that sustains good populations of the mayfly, *Hexagenia limbata*. The hex hatch is the most treasured food/fish interaction in the Midwest and rivals the salmon fly and large drake hatches in the West. Hex streams are the Mecca, Vatican, and Tibbet of fly fishing, and fly fishing has a lot of high income participants and influential folks. The little stream in Adams County does not have a Hex hatch.

The key to the Perrier Model is simply 1) it is hard to drill anywhere in Wisconsin without finding water, 2) find an area where the surface water is so bad that anything you do is likely to be an improvement, 3) pick an area where people need a buck, and 4) model your public relations campaign like uncle Lou's Used Car advertisements.

SOURCE: Phil Emmling, Federation of Fly Fishers, Emmling@engr.wisc.edu.

New Internet site to help public identify residual groundwater contamination

Wisconsin realtors, developers, well drillers, and other interested parties will find it easier to learn about the existence of sites where residual groundwater contamination exceeds state standards through a new Internet-based registry system being implemented under changes to state rules. The rule changes become effective on Nov. 1, 2001. The changes will apply to sites with groundwater

contamination that remain above state standards at the time a party requests that the state DNR close out the site.

The GIS registry is on the DNR Remediation and Redevelopment (RR) web site at www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/aw/rr. On the RR main web page, click on the “GIS” button located under the “Find Sites” button in the upper left part of the page. More information about the rule is at the “Regulations” page on the RR web site at www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/aw/rr/wi_regs.

SOURCE: WDNR.

Public’s ‘River IQ’ low

National Geographic Society commissioned a national poll for *Geography Action! Rivers 2001* which is a nationwide public involvement program of river protection and water conservation. The survey showed respondents’ lack of awareness that we are all part of a larger system, interconnected to rivers through watersheds, and our individual and collective actions profoundly affect river health. Questions asked included: Did you know that land use and urban sprawl are the most serious threats to watersheds in the US? Or that nonpoint source pollution is the largest source of water quality problems for rivers? That runoff from farms causes more river pollution than industry? Other findings:

- 63% wrongly believed that water is a renewable resource.
- 59% did not know that farm runoff causes more river pollution than industrial sources.
- 42% incorrectly thought water that goes down storm drains is treated at water treatment plants.

Conversely, the good news is:

- 98% said conserving and protecting rivers is an important environmental priority.
- 65% were interested in becoming more personally involved in river protection.

SOURCE: WDNR “Basin Briefs,” 10-17-01.

Canada may classify road salt ‘toxic substance’

From the October 18 *Ottawa Globe and Mail*: The salt industry in Canada is trying to overturn a scientific recommendation from Environment Canada that road salt, which pollutes groundwater, kills trees, and rusts cars, should be classified as a toxic substance. If the recommendation is adopted by the national government, new regulations to control salt’s usage would place the chemical in the same category as dioxins and PCBs and would result in changes in the way Canadian municipalities store and use road salt. The Salt Institute of Canada, an industry lobbying group, also fears such rules would have a negative impact on the salt mining industry. An estimated 80 percent of the salt from Canada is spread on North American highways for de-icing.

SOURCE: WDNR “Basin Briefs,” 10-24-01.

Mercury Reduction

Douglas County bans mercury thermometers

Finally after a monthly discussion since March on boards of health, recycling solid waste committee, and the legislative and judicial committee, the mercury fever thermometer ban ordinance passed the Douglas County Board on Thursday, October 18. The ordinance will take effect on the date the ordinance is published. The City of Superior has already passed that ban. What remains is for the villages in Douglas County to adopt the ban as well.

MERCURY AND FISH ADVISORIES: Did you know that just one gram of mercury — the amount found in most thermometers — is enough to put a fish consumption advisory on a 20-acre lake?

SOURCE: Kay McKenzie, Kamick1@excite.com.

(Congratulations to Kay on all her hard work on this issue. Kay is not only the WSN's Northwest Hub coordinator, but a Douglas County supervisor. —Ed.)

Metallic Mining

Senate committee recommends passage of mining 'equal treatment' bill

The Senate Committee on Environmental Resources voted 4-1 to recommend Senate Bill 271 for passage. The bipartisan bill is authored by Sen. David Hansen (D-Green Bay), Rep. Terri McCormick (R-Appleton) and Rep. Judy Krawczyk (R-Green Bay). SB 271 says if a general environmental standard is more stringent than a standard for mining, the general standard will apply. It specifically repeals the current exemption for mining waste from hazardous waste regulations. It also reduces the area around a mine that could be polluted to be the same as that allowed for other solid waste facilities.

Potawatomi Tribal Chairman Harold "Gus" Frank praised today's bipartisan committee vote to eliminate loopholes in environmental laws for mining. "Ninety percent of the people in Wisconsin we polled last summer agreed that mines should meet the same groundwater and hazardous waste standards as other industries," Chairman Frank said. "We're happy to see that legislators agreed it's time to close the loopholes for mining."

SOURCE: Bill McClenahan, bill@martinschreiber.com.

Kreibich surprised no safeguards in place on hazmat transport

Rep. Rob Kreibich (R-Eau Claire) said he was surprised to learn that no safeguards exist to prevent terrorists or criminals from hauling potentially deadly substances. The FBI discovered that several men fraudulently obtained hazardous materials permits in Pennsylvania shortly after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. "I don't want to alarm people, but we have 24,000 people in this state who are authorized to drive hazardous chemicals, and we don't know the background of any of them," Kreibich said. See full story at www.pioneerplanet.com/news/wis_docs/160689.htm.

SOURCE: WSN correspondent.

Group says WDNR misleading on need for cyanide in mining

Mines are successfully using alternatives to cyanide in the same ore processing system as proposed for the Crandon mine, according to mining industry information on Canadian mines. "The use of cyanide is not only unsafe, it is unnecessary," said Dave Blouin, Sierra Club spokesperson. "Mines with essentially the same flotation process as proposed at Crandon are using alternatives to cyanide that are less toxic and cheaper."

At least three mines in Canada are processing or have processed copper/zinc/lead/pyrite ores, as the proposed Crandon mine plans to, without using cyanide, according to Canadian Milling Practice. Two of the mines, which are owned by Noranda, currently use sulfur dioxide and starch for the same purpose as Crandon mine owner proposes to use cyanide. Sulfur dioxide and starch are less toxic and cost less than cyanide.

"The fact that two of the mines not using cyanide are operated by Noranda is significant," said Blouin. "Noranda has a reputation for being a cost-conscious operator."

SOURCE: Dave Blouin, Mining Committee Chair, Sierra Club, (608) 233-8455.

Mining lobbying in state reported on the rise again

An October 25, 2001, story in the Merrill *Foto News* quotes northern Wisconsin environmentalists as noticing in lobbying by Nicolet Minerals Co. "There is a history of foreign mining companies spending large amounts of money in Madison to buy influence in the legislative process," said Jim Wise of Environmentally Concerned Citizens of Lakeland Area (ECCOLA). "Millions have been spent on lobbying over the years, and it is no surprise that Nicolet Minerals Company just hired one of the nation's leading mine lobbyists from Nevada." The complete story is at www.thewheelerreport.com/papers/1026fotonicolet.htm.

Legislators sent letter disputing level of industrial cyanide use

A northern Wisconsin environmental group is alerting legislators to possibly misleading statements made in a recent mining company communication about the amount of cyanide currently

being used annually by Wisconsin manufacturers. "Senate Bill 160 and Assembly Bill 95 will be debated soon, and we want you to have accurate information for your decision," wrote Jim Wise of Environmentally Concerned Citizens of Lakeland Area (ECCOLA).

Wise said a list distributed by Nicolet Minerals Company (NMC) was taken from Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act (EPCRA) records used by emergency response teams. Wise pointed out that because that list shows all locations with cyanide on their premises no matter what its intended use, it falsely gives the impression that cyanide use in manufacturing is more widespread than it is. Instead, Wise noted that many of those locations are the multiple warehouses of chemical distributors who carry large inventories to sell across the US. Wise said a more accurate figure might be 27,000 pounds of sodium cyanide being used annually in Wisconsin, whereas the Crandon Mine proposes to use 420,000 pounds annually.

SOURCE: ECCOLA.

Public Intervenor Office Restoration

Shoreland/Wetlands

Ashley Furniture "Wetland Fill" bill on fast track in Assembly

An Assembly Environment Committee hearing was held October 30 to discuss a special bill (AB 580) that would give the Ashley Furniture Company in Arcadia an exemption from state law to fill a 15-acre wetland adjacent to the Trempealeau River in order to expand its furniture manufacturing facility. This bill has widespread support in the Assembly, and there is a good chance that it will pass. It will likely go to the full Assembly within a week after the hearing. We need immediate citizen action to kill this bad bill!

As most of you know, WWA and four other environmental organizations filed a lawsuit two years ago to stop this same wetland fill exemption from going through the state budget. We won the lawsuit in August, but now Ashley has been able to convince their local legislators, Rep. Barb Gronemus (D) and Sen. Rod Moen (D), to take their wetland exemption to the Legislature. Thank you for your prompt response. Your comments are very urgently needed. See www.wiswetlands.org for further information on how you can help.

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

Wetland mitigation delayed for more legislative review

Landowners may have to wait until 2002 for the start of a new program that could in some cases allow them to fill in low-quality wetlands if their proposal to develop their land includes restoring other wetlands. The proposed wetland compensatory mitigation rule, NR 350, is undergoing a second round of legislative review, which may delay its start through the end of the year at least, and possibly longer, depending on the legislative process, state wetland officials say.

“Due to the additional legislative process that is now required, the mitigation rules will likely not be in effect this year,” says Dave Siebert, the Department of Natural Resources wetland ecologist who led development of the rules. “People will not be able to propose wetland mitigation as part of their state application package until the rules are finalized and published.”

SOURCE: WDNR.

Merrimac board urges Corps to do better groundwater testing

On October 2, the Town of Merrimac board unanimously passed a resolution urging the U.S. Army to provide better testing of groundwater and drinking water resources in the township. In recent months, unsafe levels of groundwater contamination have been detected at the boundary of Badger Army Ammunition Plant within the Township of Merrimac. The contamination represents a potential threat to nearby residents that rely on groundwater for their drinking water.

All agencies involved, including the U.S. Army, the WDNR, and the USEPA, agree that significant study is needed before the groundwater problems in and around the northeast corner of Bad-

WETLAND MITIGATION BACKGROUND —

Lawmakers in mid-2000 passed legislation creating the program and DNR wetland staff in 2000 developed proposed rules to implement it. The program was to be one component of the agency's newly developed strategy for how the state would work with private landowners, who control 75 percent of Wisconsin's remaining wetlands, to protect and restore these critical features.

DNR held public hearings on the proposed rules in late 2000, and the Natural Resources Board (NRB) adopted the final rules June 27, 2001. Legislators requested changes to those final rules, DNR staff revised them to reflect those requests and submitted them to the NRB for approval. Late last month, board members approved all but one of the requested changes.

The Senate Committee on Environmental Resources then objected to the NRB not making the requested change. The Assembly Committee on Environment also objected to a different provision of the rule relating to the sequence that permit applicants would have to follow in the wetland mitigation process relating to the purchase of credits from a mitigation bank. Though the Assembly committee objected only to special provisions that addressed the treatment of two banks that were established before these rules were developed, the legislative process required them to object to the entire section where these provisions were found.

As a result of the committees' objections, the rules have been sent to the Joint Committee for Review of Administrative Rules for resolution. If that committee affirms the objections, both committees will need to pass legislation before the bill or bills go to the full houses for a vote. If the bill or bills do not pass or are not voted on by the end of the session, DNR can promulgate the rules as approved by NRB at the end of the 2001-2003 Legislative Session. If the Joint Committee does not affirm the objections, then the department is free to promulgate the final rule.

ger are completely understood. The WDNR has recommended that the groundwater inside Badger be regularly monitored for VOCs, SVOCs, explosives, sulfate, and possibly manganese and boron.

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

Last dam removed from Baraboo

The Linen Mill Dam, the last of four dams that once spanned the Baraboo River in Sauk County, was removed this month, restoring the 120-mile river to its free-flowing, pre-settlement condition. Baraboo's Waterworks Dam was removed in 1997, its Oak Street Dam in 2000, and the LaValle Dam in February 2001.

SOURCE: WDNR "Basin Briefs," 10-17-01.

Navigable waters Legislative Council to meet Nov. 13

The Special Committee on Navigable Waters Recodification will meet at 10:00 a.m. Tuesday, Nov. 13, at the State Capitol in Room 328-NW.

Mequon votes against stormwater utility ordinance

The Mequon Common Council unanimously defeated a proposed stormwater utility ordinance, according to the October 15 Ozaukee-Washington Daily News Graphic/Times Press. Several council members expressed reservation about a new utility — what they said was the utility's disproportionate impact user fees on westside land owners and farmers, the plans inclusion of non-profit entities (schools, churches, synagogues), the loss of a deduction on federal tax returns, and a reduction in fees for properties that drain into nearby bodies of water. While the ordinance was dead, Mequon Mayor Christine Nurenberg reminded council members that clean water maintenance standards mandated by the state and federal governments will not go away. More at www.dailynewsol.com/topnews09.htm.

SOURCE: WDNR "Basin Briefs," 10-17-01.

Shawano to classify waterbodies by development sensitivity

All waterbodies in Shawano County will be classified on the basis of their sensitivity to development, as part of the county's Surface Water Classification Project, according to an October 22 Shawano Leader article. The larger lakes in the county have already been categorized as most sensitive, moderately sensitive, and least sensitive to development. Those three categories are broken down even further — as undeveloped, moderately developed, and highly developed. Officials involved in the project have said that water quality in small isolated lakes is more sensitive to the

effects of runoff pollution than larger drainage lakes, and the classification system will help public officials make decisions to protect lakes, streams and other bodies of water from effects of development and housing projects.

SOURCE: WDNR "Basin Briefs," 10-24-01.

River Alliance asking people to write in support of nonpoint rules

The River Alliance of Wisconsin is encouraging people to celebrate the 29th anniversary of the Clean Water Act by writing a letter on behalf of Wisconsin's waters. According to a River Alliance alert, "October 18th marked the 29th anniversary of the Clean Water Act. Unfortunately, we are still waiting for the promise of clean water to be kept; Wisconsin has 552 water bodies that are not safe for fishing or swimming." To see how you can help, [review the alert](#) from the River Alliance alert at the end of this newsletter.

SOURCE: River Alliance of Wisconsin.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dombeck speaking on conservation challenges

I just received notice that Mike Dombeck from UW-SP, Professor, Global Environmental Management, will speak at the UW-Madison on November 8 at 4 p.m. at Union South. The title of his talk will be "The Ten Big Conservation Challenges: Where Do We Go From Here?" Mike is the UW System Fellow of Global Conservation and served as Chief of the U.S. Forest Service from 1997-April, 2001.

Union South is located at 227 North Randall Avenue and that is just north of the entrance to the old fort, Camp Randall and east of the football stadium. Parking will be difficult so I would allow time to cruise the area for parking.

SOURCE: Phil Emmling University of Wisconsin-Madison Water Chemistry Program.

WSN annual "priority issue" selection process underway

It is "priority issue" selection and reevaluation time at the WSN. If you think the network should pick up a new issue — or drop one of our existing eight issues — now is the time to make your thoughts known. Send your ideas to State Coordinator Todd Hanson at wsn@chorus.net, or call (608) 268-1218. The procedure for issue selection is to make a presentation at the WSN's fall Steering Committee meeting, either in person or via one of the WSN's Steering Committee members. The issue will then be researched by the Steering Committee and voted on at the January 27,

2002, annual meeting. Issues are adopted on the basis of one vote per Steering Committee member with a super majority needed to pass.

Planning meeting Nov. 14 for Rock County Outdoors Network

A planning meeting has been set for Nov. 14 for people interested in forming a Rock County Outdoors Network. The network would be a vehicle for Rock County sporting, conservation, and environmental groups to communicate more closely on issues of common interest. A planning meeting for the network is being held Nov. 14 at 7 p.m. at the DNR headquarters in Janesville. Contact Dean Paynter at (608) 756-1832 for more information.

SOURCE: Bill Hallstrom, Green Rock Audubon Society.

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 State 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.

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.

Subscriptions to *WSNetworkNews* are available free. To opt in or out of this distribution list, either visit our web site at www.wsn.org or e-mail us at wsn@chorus.net.

Action Alert!

Celebrate the 29th Anniversary of the Clean Water Act by writing a letter on behalf of Wisconsin's Waters

October 18th marked the 29th anniversary of the Clean Water Act. Unfortunately, we are still waiting for the promise of clean water to be kept; Wisconsin has 552 water bodies that are not safe for fishing or swimming. The number one cause of polluted waters in the state is polluted runoff — the soil particles, pesticides, nutrients, pet wastes, oil, and other toxic pollutants that wash into the streams and lakes whenever rain falls or snow melts.

In the coming weeks, new state rules to prevent polluted runoff will be presented to the board of the Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection and the Natural Resources Board. The boards will review the latest changes to the rules that have come about as a result of the public hearings, and then will either send the rules on to the legislature or suggest further revisions. The stamp of approval from these boards sends a message to the legislature that “this is the best set of rules our department has to offer.”

We need to let the board members know, through a clear and statewide public message, that the rules — as written — are not the best we can offer to protect Wisconsin's waters. Please send a letter to the editor of your local paper with the message that *these rules offer great potential for improving our water quality if some key changes are made.*

Our goal is to have strong rules to control polluted runoff in place before the Clean Water Act's 30th anniversary!

The following points outline why the rules are important and suggest a few important changes that need to be made to improve the rules. This outline is intended to make it easy to write a letter, but **please write the letter in your own words** and sign the letter on behalf of your own organization or yourself. **Accepted letters are usually 200 words or fewer.**

Writing a letter to the editor in three steps:

1. **Tell the paper why you care about this issue.** You can use facts or just describe the sediment or algae polluted water body nearest you.

Here are a few facts:

- Polluted runoff is the number one threat to water quality in the state of Wisconsin. Polluted runoff comes from a variety of places, including lawns, construction sites, parking lots, barnyards and agricultural fields. This pollution affects:
 - 40% of our streams;
 - 90% of our inland lakes;
 - many coastal waters; and
 - much of our groundwater.

- Wisconsin has 552 impaired waters where water bodies do not meet the standards for their intended uses. Polluted runoff is a principle cause of degradation for 47 percent of these impaired waters.
- The costs of polluted runoff in terms of tourism, water treatment costs, and the degradation of our fisheries have reached billions of dollars, not to mention the costs that future generations will bear.

2. Choose a few talking points that you feel strongly about.

- These rules have been in the making for four years. We are on the verge of an incredible step toward preventing polluted runoff in this state. Let's not waste this opportunity.
- We are presented with a unique opportunity for the state of Wisconsin to set a precedent in water resource and land management. The rules regarding polluted runoff will be a huge step in ensuring the health of our state's waterways and its people for the long term.
- The rules will affect nearly everyone who lives in the state. However, the rules for agriculture have serious loopholes that may undermine our ability to better control polluted runoff.
- Standards for the establishment of vegetative buffers along waterways should be strengthened — these buffers are some of the best ways to reduce sediments that wash into our waterways.
- Farmers should receive financial assistance with implementing practices that will prevent pollution, but the current rule goes far beyond what is fair and responsible by offering money for practices that should be paid for by producers.
- For example, the rule would pay farmers for lost "opportunity costs" and offers to pay farmers to maintain practices for up to ten years, putting the majority of farmers, who already are good stewards of the land, at a competitive disadvantage.
- The rule should also provide greater enforcement tools than currently exist.
- Many good stewards are already implementing practices that control polluted runoff. This rule would not provide the incentives needed to make the biggest polluters change their practices.
- The draft rule also must include requirements to curtail the use of phosphorus, one of the most damaging nutrients currently washing into our waterways. Too much phosphorus running off into surface waters causes excessive algae growth, deterioration of water quality, and can kill fish.
- County conservation agencies should have adequate resources to help to implement and enforce these new rules.

3. Sign it with your name, organization, address and phone number and mail it to your local paper.