



# GREAT WATERS GROUP NEWSLETTER

WWW.GREATWATERSGROUP.ORG greatwatersgroupsc@gmail.com

Summer 2021 NO. 2



*Demonstrators let their feeling be known about the proposed Enbridge Pipeline that would carry crude oil through Wisconsin and Minnesota to the Gulf Coast.*

## You can fight Enbridge pipeline from home

*By Eric Hansen  
Conservation Chair*

Few and far between are the opportunities to leverage 10 minutes of our time into a major win for the common good. This is one of those crucial moments.

Ferocious resistance from our Minnesota allies is slowing Canadian oil pipeline company Enbridge’s attempts to construct a new tar sands crude oil pipeline - a pipeline that would add to the flow of crude oil through Wisconsin. That increased flow of

Alberta tar sands crude oil would go on to the Gulf Coast for export.

This dangerous pipeline project known as Line 3 threatens Minnesota and Wisconsin waters including Lake Superior, indigenous treaty rights and our planet’s climate. Minnesotans made 72,000 public comments on the pipeline proposal, including 68,000 that were opposed.

Defunding Line 3 is a key tactic that we can employ from our  
*(Continued on page 4)*



## Notes from the Chair

As the new chair of the Great Waters Group, this is my first letter to GWG members. There is much to be excited about in upcoming GWG programs and activities.

With vaccinations on the rise in Wisconsin, we are cautiously optimistic that we'll see a return to in-person outings and other gatherings by the late summer or early fall. We were able to move our monthly educational programs to an online format over the past year and had great response from all of you. Thanks so much for showing up to these and to the virtual outings that we rolled out in recent months.

After our May 17 program, we'll pick back up in September with a great lineup of new programs, so keep an eye out for announcements in future newsletters.

In keeping with our 2021 priorities of addressing climate change, activating our membership, and building a multi-cultural environmental organization that champions racial justice, we have several proud recent accomplishments and many events coming up soon.

Through our work with a coalition of organizations concerned about the

proposed expansion of Hwy. I-94 in Milwaukee, we met with Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett, signed on to letters to decision makers, and provided public comments that resulted in Wisconsin Department of Transportation's recent decision to expand their review of the project, conduct a supplemental environmental impact statement, and allow more time for public comment.

We also partnered with another coalition of organizations to co-author a report showing that Black and Latinx Milwaukee neighborhoods experience nearly double the energy burden (the percentage of household income that is spent on home energy bills) compared to predominantly white neighborhoods. The report spurred Milwaukee County Board Chair Marcellia Nicholson to request a report from the county's housing division on the impact of energy burden on county residents and to present policy solutions to the county board.

Regarding the events I mentioned earlier, we have several opportunities during the spring and summer to plant trees, clean up local waterways, explore urban parks, and introduce children and teens to the wonders of nature. Read on for more details about these activities and more ways to get involved with GWG.

JennyAbel



*The Harriet Tubman Walk shined a light on equity issues the GWG is seeking to address.*

## Study circles focus on white supremacy

By David Thomas  
Equity Chair

Several Great Waters Group leaders and members are participating in study circles focused on Layla Saad's book, *Me and White Supremacy*. It's all part of a project called Building a Multiracial Environmental Community.

The project was initiated by the Milwaukee Environmental Consortium, Nearby Nature, and is led by activist and blogger Mandi McAlister of [HummingbirdMKE.com](http://HummingbirdMKE.com). Participants have called the study deeply moving and inspirational, learning how white supremacy is embedded in our culture and personal lives. It is helping us grow and develop skills to fight its effects.

GWG has signed on as a partner, committing to dismantling white supremacy and racism in our community and in the environmental movement. The project is designed to include both study and action. Watch for more information as this develops.

## Programs to return in fall

by William Baurecht  
Programs Chair

Public educational programs will return this fall and continue in winter/spring 2022.

At this time, it is not known if fall programs will be virtual or face-to-face, where programs will meet once public gatherings are safe and permitted, or if future program venues will circulate throughout Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Waukesha, and Washington Counties. While Sierra Club outings are still on hold at press time, we hope we will be able to meet in person later in the summer. Check [www.greatwatersgroup.org](http://www.greatwatersgroup.org) on our Facebook page for updates.

If you have suggestions on where and when to meet or would like to help with programs or outings send an email to [greatwatersgroupsc@gmail.com](mailto:greatwatersgroupsc@gmail.com).

# Governor joins tree plantings

After the pandemic canceled local Earth Day celebrations last year, some tree plantings and cleanups resumed this year, though they looked a bit different.

Among the April tree planting activities was one at Milwaukee's Havenwoods State Forest, where Gov. Tony Evers' attendance on Earth Day showed the importance of environmental activities and supporting Wisconsin's only urban state forest.

The governor, who dug holes and got his hands into the soil to plant two trees, was accompanied by Department of Natural Resources Secretary Preston Cole, Milwaukee County Executive David Crowley and others.

The tree planting was part of two planting events organized by Dan Buckler, the Great Waters Group outings co-chair, and the Friends of Havenwoods. The 225 young trees, including oaks, hickories, and maples, will help replace invasive buckthorn as well as trees dying from the emerald ash borer.

Two days later, Milwaukee Riverkeeper's annual Spring Cleanup drew around 3,000 people to pick up trash along waterways at more than 80 locations in the Milwaukee River Basin. The group expected to collect 100,000 pounds of trash, mostly plastic.

Great Waters Group partner Nearby Nature, which focuses on environmental justice and equity in Milwaukee, continued its tradition of hosting a cleanup site along a stretch of Lincoln Creek north of N. 35th and W. Congress streets that it has adopted. Volunteers picked up about 35 bags of trash at just the northern end of the stretch.

Environmental groups such as Riverkeeper were acutely aware of the trash that piled up last year when the spring cleanup was canceled. To safely hold this year's events, Riverkeeper required advance registration, staggered start times, face masks and social distancing.

While the Sierra Club has not resumed in-person activities yet and the Urban Ecology Center held smaller volunteer efforts instead of its usual Earth Day big event at Washington Park, some members joined the cleanups and tree plantings as individuals, and the GWG encouraged members to pick up litter in their own neighborhoods.

Although Earth Day events have passed, the need to pick up litter, plant native species and care for the planet has not.



*Volunteers picked up more than thirty bags of trash along a stretch of Lincoln Creek in Milwaukee as part of Nearby Nature and Milwaukee Riverkeeper's Earth Day celebration.*

## Waste Management plan raises concerns

Waste Management Wisconsin's Menomonee Falls landfill is massive, and part of it is so polluted that the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has designated it a Superfund site, meaning that it's dangerous enough to require ongoing federal supervision.

Now Waste Management wants to exhume 1.3 million cubic yards of this site that includes pesticides and chemical compounds and move it to another area of the landfill complex. Nearby residents have legitimate concerns about the wisdom of this proposal.

Great Waters Group shares those concerns and has joined the Waukesha Environmental Action League, Midwest Environmental Advocates, Wisconsin Conservation Voters, Milwaukee Riverkeeper and Milwaukee County League of Women Voters in requesting the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources apply its most rigorous review: an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

For more information see [WEAL.org](http://WEAL.org)

### Volunteer Leadership Council (VLC) Contact List

Jenny Abel, Chair: [jabel209@gmail.com](mailto:jabel209@gmail.com)  
Bill Baurecht, Vice chair: [wbaurecht@gmail.com](mailto:wbaurecht@gmail.com)  
Crystal Hoecherl, Secretary: [choecherl@yahoo.com](mailto:choecherl@yahoo.com), 414-614-3034  
Jane Schneider, Treasurer: [janes0502@yahoo.com](mailto:janes0502@yahoo.com)  
Linda Frank, Chapter Delegate: [linda@frankenvironmental.com](mailto:linda@frankenvironmental.com)  
Rose Both, Political Chair: [rboth@wi.rr.cim](mailto:rboth@wi.rr.cim)  
Veronica Bell, Outings Co-Chair: [mabellmela@gmail.com](mailto:mabellmela@gmail.com)  
Eric Hansen, Conservation Chair: [ehansen@wi.rr.com](mailto:ehansen@wi.rr.com)  
Von Roberts, Trails Chair: [vroberts47@gmail.com](mailto:vroberts47@gmail.com)  
Dan Buckler, Membership Chair, Outings Co-Chair, Communication Team  
[daniel.c.buckler@gmail.com](mailto:daniel.c.buckler@gmail.com)  
Karen Samelson, Publicity Chair, Communication Team: [ksamelson16@gmail.com](mailto:ksamelson16@gmail.com)  
David Thomas, Equity Chair, Communication Team: [david@thomerwald.net](mailto:david@thomerwald.net)  
Laura White, Newsletter Chair: [lmwhite7676@gmail.com](mailto:lmwhite7676@gmail.com)  
Janet Anderson, Communication Team: [janeta16@sbcglobal.net](mailto:janeta16@sbcglobal.net)  
Dale Hofmann, Newsletter Editor: [dhofmann@yaho.com](mailto:dhofmann@yaho.com)



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for Our Families, For Our Future*

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*Great Waters Group of the John Muir Chapter  
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## Nearby Nature adds agencies to youth program

*By David Thomas  
Equity Chair*

Great Waters Group continues to support Nearby Nature Milwaukee as part of its equity and inclusion agenda. The Nearby Nature project recently added two youth-serving agencies to its youth environmental education program and is reaching out to expand it further.

Nearby Nature Youth Educator Martina Patterson has a busy summer ahead. In addition to the expanded youth programs, she has taken on a land stewardship intern position with Urban Ecology Center. Plus, Martina is the Milwaukee Coordinator of the Rural/Urban Flow project, connecting farmers in Sauk County with urban counterparts. Those interested can find more info at [www.ruralurbanflow.org](http://www.ruralurbanflow.org).

Nearby Nature Programs Director Steven Hunter planned a full summer of activities that started with a series of bike rides exploring Lincoln Creek on the second Saturdays of May, June, and July. On May 8, the first ride kicked off at the 76th and Good Hope Pick 'n Save, exploring Lincoln Creek's trajectory from its headwaters to Havenwoods State Forest.

Nearby Nature staff attended the virtual Canoeopia paddling expo in March and met with Chicago Adventure Therapy to get

ideas about getting more people of color out on the water. They are also planning a backpacking training trip in June, inspired by Emily Ford who just became the first Black woman to thru-hike the Ice Age Trail in winter.

Celebrating Earth Week, Nearby Nature partnered with Northwest Side CDC and Friends of Lincoln Park to plant or distribute 200 trees. Nearby Nature Board member Dan Buckler is asking for volunteers to plant more than 200 trees in Havenwoods this spring.

## Fight Enbridge pipeline

*(Continued from page 1)*

homes. Executives of the banks that are financing Line 3's construction have been on the receiving end of more than 650,000 e-mail messages and 3,000 phone calls since the DefundLine3 campaign launched in February.

Find time now to plug into this righteous campaign and keep the pressure on the bank executives. Ten minutes of your time, or more if you choose, can be very effective. See the following websites for more information:

<https://stopthemoneypipeline.com>  
<https://www.stoline3.org>