



**SIERRA  
CLUB**  
FOUNDED 1892

## GREAT WATERS GROUP NEWSLETTER

WWW.GREATWATERSGROUP.ORG

PHONE 414-258-5624

FALL, 2011 NO. 3

### Fall Programs

*Mayfair Mall, Community Room, G110.  
Garden Suites East  
Open to the Public*

#### “Creating Dairyland”

*September 19, 7pm.*

Food and dairy products from the family farm are vital to our economy, but they’re being threatened by new legislation. Most of us may not know that Wisconsin was on the verge of becoming an agricultural wasteland in the 19th century, because nutrients were being stripped from the land when dairy was introduced. Listen to Ed Janus, author of “Creating Dairyland,” as he teaches the history of the Wisconsin dairy farm and how it was transformed by new agriculture that brought prosperity and sustainability to the state. For more information, see [www.creatingdairyland.com](http://www.creatingdairyland.com)

#### Our Energy Future

*October 17, 7pm*

How sustainable are Wisconsin’s natural resources, and what effect is current legislation having on renewable energy potential? Michael Vickerman, Executive Director of RENEW Wisconsin, a sustainable energy advocacy organization headquartered in Madison, can get you up to date on renewable energy sources and what you as a citizen can do for our energy future. For more information, see [www.renewwisconsin.org](http://www.renewwisconsin.org).

#### Air Quality

*November 21, 7pm*

Learn how the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is working to improve air quality. Air Manager Supervisor Jerry Medinger will explain how the DNR is monitoring air quality, providing alerts, participating in community events and exploring new areas of transportation related to emissions, pollution controls, and more. For more information, see <http://dnr.wi.gov/air>.



## The Monarchs Are Coming!

*Saturday, September 10, 10 am*

Or rather, the monarchs are coming together as they leave us. Yes, the great monarch migration will arrive in Milwaukee right around September 10.

Before it’s changed forever by UWM Innovation Park, Zoo Interchange reconstruction and the American Transmission tower lines, come and hike the Monarch Trail to see these beautiful creatures hanging on branches like orange-black wall paper. Learn about monarch migration and the effects of development on their habitat. It’s open to the public.

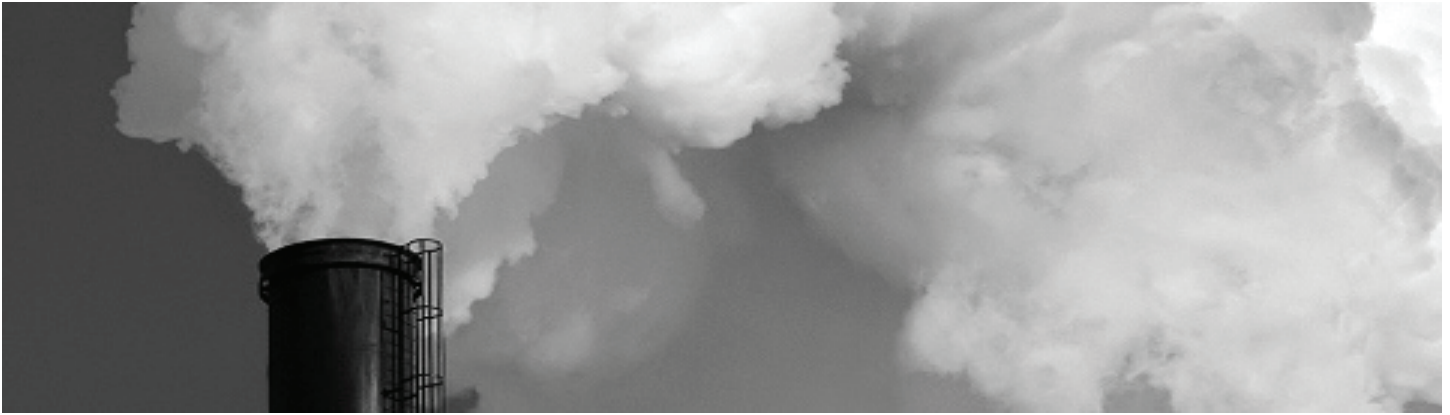
Date: Saturday, September 10, 2011.

Time: Arrive about 9:45 am. The hike begins at 10 am.

Where: Meet at the kiosk near the trail head at the County Parks Dept. parking lot at 9480 W. Watertown Plank Road.

Note: If it’s been raining, wear boots. If tall vegetation is scratchy for you, wear long pants. Be prepared for a trail that meanders up and down in some areas.

Contact: Conservation Chair Dianne Dagen 414-771-1505 or [ddagen@sbglobal.net](mailto:ddagen@sbglobal.net).



# Cleaner Valley Coalition Engages We Energies

by *Dianne Dagele*

The Cleaner Valley Coalition, a diverse group of local and national organizations that's been growing over the past year, is addressing the problem of unhealthy air on behalf of the 24,000 citizens who share Milwaukee's Menomonee Valley with the We Energies Valley coal plant. Most of those citizens are low income people of color.

At one point, we had reason to believe that the Coalition's efforts had helped We Energies to decide to redesign the plant to burn natural gas rather than coal in the near future. But it appears we got ahead of ourselves. Here's what happened:

After we met with Environmental Protection Agency officials to discuss coal plant permitting and current Clean Air Act Standards, we held a well-attended press conference at City Hall where local leaders and asthma sufferers addressed air quality problems and coal plant concerns. More than 1,000 signatures were collected on petitions as we made known to We Energies our expectations for cleaner energy production.

We Energies agreed to a meeting on April 16 when we were also asked to help gain community support for a pipeline upgrade should the company convert to gas.

We celebrated on May 5 when the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel reported that We Energies Chairman and Chief Executive Gale Klappa had told the company's shareholders at its annual meeting, "We believe we will need to convert the (Valley) plant from coal to natural gas." In the story, Klappa went on to say that a

first step would be to put in a larger natural gas pipeline that could supply that facility.

We took that as a commitment, believing that the next step would be to redesign the plant to burn gas rather than coal, and later in the day we issued a press release applauding the company. It looked like a clear victory for clean air.

However, our understanding of the situation changed after we met with We Energies again on July 13 when we were told that the decision to convert "would be considered later."

We were told the project was always intended to be done in two distinct steps, and that the first step -- updating the gas pipeline -- was the only one that had been approved by the company's Chief Executive and Board of Directors. The company said it wouldn't consider plant modification until the new pipeline was completed, and that wouldn't happen before 2014.

Apparently, we had misinterpreted We Energies' earlier statements. It seemed logical to us that with stricter EPA air pollution rules in the offing, the company would want to start the redesign now rather than facing a later approval process. But there have been recent attempts in Congress to diminish the EPA's ability to enforce Clean Air and Clean Water Acts, and We Energies may want to wait to see how the political process plays out after the 2012 elections.

However, we believe an important victory has already been achieved. Divergent groups of people -- national and local, legal and spiritual, Latino and African American, North Side and South Side -- have come together to pursue a variety of goals, and it has persuaded We Energies to take a first step toward cleaner air and environmental justice.

Current coalition members include: the Latino Health Coalition of Milwaukee, Black Health Coalition of Wisconsin, Milwaukee Inner-city Congregations Allied for Health (MICA), Midwest Environmental Advocates, Wisconsin Asthma Coalition, ACLU-Wisconsin, Wisconsin Interfaith Power and Light, Interfaith Earth Network, Walker Square Neighborhood Association., Milwaukee NAACP, Transition Milwaukee, Sierra Club, Clean Wisconsin and Milwaukee Riverkeepers

For more information, read the Cleaner Valley Coalition fact sheet on [cleanervalleycoalition.org](http://cleanervalleycoalition.org). To get involved, sign the Cleaner Valley Coalition petition on our GWG website.

# *From the Chair .....*

By Janet Anderson

## **New Editors, New Opportunities**

We said in our last edition that we'd be unable to continue publishing the GWG newsletter unless we found a new editor. Well, as you can tell since you're reading this, we found someone. Let me welcome Sandy and Dale Hofmann, who have stepped up and offered to take over. We appreciate their willingness to help.

There's a lot of great information in this issue, including a line-up of topics and speakers for our monthly programs and information about our annual Holiday Party and Fundraiser scheduled for Dec. 4 in Wauwatosa. If you haven't attended these before, make this year a first.

Another event you might want to put on your calendar is the state's annual Autumn Assembly, sponsored by our John Muir Chapter and open to all. It's set for Oct. 7-9 near Waupaca.

There's also a call for people interested in running for our GWG Executive Committee. Contact our Nominating Committee if you'd like to be part of our elected Executive Committee or if you'd like to nominate someone else. The election ballot will be in the winter newsletter.

## **Autumn Assembly set for October 7-9**

A beautiful rustic setting, entertaining speakers and abundant opportunities to learn about the environment and conservation will be featured at the annual Autumn Assembly for Wisconsin Sierra Club members Oct. 7-9 at Camp Helen Brachman west of Waupaca.

Hiking and other outside activities will be available as members from all areas of the state get a chance to meet one another. The public is welcome.

Last, but definitely not least, is this request to all members. Each year we honor someone for our GWG "Environmental Hero of the Year" Award at our Holiday Party. I'm sure many of our members qualify for this distinction, but we get only a few nominees annually. Please think of someone you believe is deserving. This person might be associated with a big project, or he or she might just be someone who consistently models a real commitment to the environment.

Send me an email at [janeta16@sbcglobal.net](mailto:janeta16@sbcglobal.net) about someone you know.

This is a time of uncertainty in our state. There have been significant challenges to legal protections for our environment that have existed for decades. Many environmental issues have been identified in our local area. The partisanship in Madison can be discouraging, but let's be hopeful. We can continue to stay informed and aware of what is going on in our state by focusing on our important environmental issues.

Let us continue making connections and staying connected. Let us continue to be vigilant and stay strong in our collective environmental strength. Let us continue to "explore, enjoy, and protect our planet" as our Sierra Club mission states.

It seems that summer was slow in coming, and as usual, it's ending too soon. I hope you all enjoyed your summer. Our outdoor world is precious, and it's meant to be enjoyed as well as protected.

The keynote speaker for the event sponsored by the state John Muir Chapter will be State Rep. Penny Bernard Schaber, the former chair of the Chapter.

See "The Muir View" or follow this link: <http://www/wisconsinsierra.club.org/Events/aa.asp> to access the agenda, speakers and reservation information. We hope to see you there.

# Help keep towers off the Monarch Trail



*The Eschweiler Buildings are seen in the background of one of the proposed transmission routes.*

*Photo by Eddee Daniel*

## ***By Dianne Dagelen***

Transmission towers could be coming to the Monarch Trail, and we need your help to keep them from doing serious damage to our wildlife. A public meeting is scheduled for Sept. 12 at the Wauwatosa Civic Center at 76th St. and North Ave. where American Transmission Company will present four possible routes for 138-kilovolt transmission lines designed to bring more electrical power to the developing County Grounds. Two of the routes will be selected by the Public Service Commission for construction. You can make your voice heard by attending the meeting, talking to ATC representatives and filing comments. The session will be held between 4 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Parts of the potential routes could be built underground where environmental damage would be less extensive. According to the US Fish & Wildlife Service, collision with transmission wires and towers is the second-biggest killer of song birds, next to habitat degradation and loss. Four-tiered, 60- to 100-foot towers and their magnetic field are likely to have a detrimental effect on monarch migration as well. According to Barb Agnew, founder of the Monarch Trail, the required tree clearance around towers would prevent much of the tree restoration that had been originally planned for the area.

The four possible routes include:

**Route A** running overhead down the center of the north and south berms of the Monarch Trail, east along Watertown Plank Rd., then north to the new We Energies substation, north of 93rd St. and Watertown Plank Rd.

**Route B** crossing east over Highway 45 and then going underground across the north berm of the Monarch Trail and following a UWM service road south of the Eschweiler Buildings to the substation.

**Routes C and D** running from an existing substation at 99th St. and Interstate 94, near or through a residential area and across the Medical Complex, to connect with the new substation. All of D and part of C would be recommended for underground construction. Although underground lines are possible, they are not common in the United States because they cost more. ATC's stated environmental goals are "avoid, minimize, protect." However, of the 2,000 miles of transmission lines constructed or upgraded by ATC in the past ten years, **only six miles are underground.**

The Public Service Commission will make the final route selection, and it may modify the various plans depending upon information submitted by ATC that includes public comments and cost estimates. You can file a comment by sending an email to ATC local relations consultant Mary Carpenter at [mcarpenter@atcllc.com](mailto:mcarpenter@atcllc.com). To view a map of ATC's proposed routes, go to: [www.atc-projects.com/SE-WMCR.shtml](http://www.atc-projects.com/SE-WMCR.shtml). To see ATC's map superimposed on the County Grounds and surrounding neighborhood, go to: [countygroundcoalition.org](http://countygroundcoalition.org).

After the Public Service Commission receives ATC's recommendations in January, 2012, we will post its contact information on our GWG website. ATC needs to hear from you.

# Annual Holiday Gathering Dec. 4 at Wil O Way

The Squeezettes will bring their blend of power polka, pop rock and whatever else they're in the mood to play to this year's Great Waters Group Holiday Dinner and Fund-raiser.

Drinks, snacks, and a silent auction will be featured at the annual event along with the popular Milwaukee band that got its start five years ago with a dream and a pint of beer. Doors open at 4 p.m. on Dec. 4 at the Wil O Way Recreation Center in Wauwatosa. Be sure to put the date on your calendar.

Among the items offered at this year's auction will be gift certificates, art work, movie tickets and potential holiday gifts. A delicious and healthy dinner catered by Aladdin will be served before the entertainment. The cost is an economical at \$25.00 per person.

Reservations are due by December 1. If you have questions or items to donate for the auction, call Dave Hetzel at 414-228-9512.



If you can't make the gathering, please consider sending a donation to help us continue our work in our four-county area. Because the Great Waters Group Sierra Club is not a 501c3 organization, donations are not tax deductible. Location: Underwood Wil O Way Recreation Center, 10602 W. Underwood Creek Parkway, Wauwatosa (located across from Hansen Golf Course up the hill into the woods) When: 4 p.m. till 8 p.m. Dinner at 5:30.

Checks should be made payable to "Great Waters Group-SC" and sent to:

Susan Sedlachek  
2878 S. Wentworth Avenue  
Milwaukee, WI 53207

## Learn about native plants, migratory songbirds - Oct. 8

You can learn how to use native plants to attract and sustain migratory songbirds and the insects they feed on at a seminar sponsored by the Wisconsin Stopover Initiative, the Endangered Resources division of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the Western Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory and others.

The keynote speaker will be Dr. Doug Tallamy, author of *Bringing Nature Home: Saving the Ecosystem - Sustaining Matrix of Insects and Animals*. Other speakers include Kim Grveles, Craig Thompson, Vicki Piaskowski, Mariette Nowak, Bill Mueller, Scott Diehl and Dr. Noel Cutright

**Date: Saturday, October 8** **Where: Forest Beach Migratory Preserve, just north of Port Washington, Ozaukee County**

**Fee: \$5** which includes lunch, excellent speakers, both indoor and outdoor presentations

**Contact: Kim Grveles at the WI DNR at 608/264-8594 or email [Kim\\_Grveles@Wisconsin.gov](mailto:Kim_Grveles@Wisconsin.gov)**



THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO CONTRIBUTED THROUGH WORKPLACE GIVING TO THE SIERRA CLUB FOUNDATION AND COMMUNITY SHARES OF GREATER MILWAUKEE.



# ***GREAT WATERS GROUP E-LETTER***

## ***News, Alerts, Outings***

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## **GWG Executive Committee (ExCom) Calls for Nominations**

Do you care about environmental issues? Do you wish you could do more about them? If so, here's your chance. The Sierra Club's Great Waters Group has seven openings on its Executive Committee for the 2012-13 term. By joining the Committee you can become part of the leadership of a well respected organization that keeps the heat on government officials to make the right environmental choices while helping people get outdoors to explore, enjoy and protect the planet.

The Executive Committee is an elected board of dedicated Sierra Club member-volunteers who meet nine times a year to determine policy for the Great Waters Group. Members are elected to two-year terms and are usually expected to chair a committee or hold another office as part of their commitment.

If you're interested in becoming a member or in nominating someone else, you're invited to submit your nomination in writing or by email to one of the members of the Nominating Committee. Nominees can also be placed on the ballot by a petition consisting of ten members of the Great Waters Group. In this case, the petition and a statement of consent must be received by the Nominating Committee. A nominee must be a member in good standing of the Sierra Club and the Great Waters Group and must give consent. Mail your written nominations to: Nominating Committee, SC Great Waters Group, P.O. Box 26798, Wauwatosa, WI. 53226-0798. Nominations must be postmarked no later than October 15, 2011. Nominating Committee members are: Heather Hansen, Chair, [heather.lee.hansen@gmail.com](mailto:heather.lee.hansen@gmail.com); Gary Hofmeister at [garyhis@gmail.com](mailto:garyhis@gmail.com) and Jane Schneider at [janes0502@yahoo.com](mailto:janes0502@yahoo.com).

If you would like to know more about how our Executive Committee and our Volunteer Leadership Council work, you're welcome at our next meeting on September 26 at 7pm. For more information on the meetings, please contact Janet at [janeta16@sbcglobal.net](mailto:janeta16@sbcglobal.net) or check our website at [www.sc-gwg.org](http://www.sc-gwg.org).