



GREAT WATERS GROUP NEWSLETTER

WWW.SC-GWG.ORG

PHONE 414-258-5624

SPRING, 2011

NO. 1

Spring Programs

Mayfair Mall

The World's Great Lakes: Science and Management

March 21, 7pm

We are fortunate to have the School of Freshwater Sciences located in our area. Learn from our speaker, Harvey Bootsma, Ph.D., a professor at this UWM institution talk about the complex and multifaceted issues facing the world's freshwater resources. Open to GWG members, students, and the general public.

To Be Announced

April 18, 7pm.

Check our website at www.sc-gwg.org and our E-Letter for more information.

Journey Through Indochina

May 16, 7pm

For a month this winter, Dale and Joelyn Olen are hiking and boating their way through Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, and finally up to Myanmar to learn about the people, land, water, and animals of these intriguing places. Dale will help us experience the people and areas of Indochina through his stunning pictures and insightful narrative. We will see how Vietnam has moved on from its civil war and the U.S. involvement in the 60s and 70s. We will also get a look at the forces at play in Myanmar (Burma) as it struggles with military rule and many human rights issues.

Find us

The GWG holds monthly programs at Mayfair Mall. They are held the third Monday of the month in the Community Room on the lower level, Room G110. The room is located in the Garden Suites East area, entered most directly from the covered parking area on the east side of the mall, in the area of Fox World Travel and Treats.

Mike Arney Receives Environmental Hero Award

Mike Arney, a relative newcomer to the GWG Sierra Club, has already made a major impact on our environmental work. Dedicated to reducing global warming, Mike worked with the Austin, TX Green Neighbor program and is attempting to implement a similar program here in Wauwatosa. As a result of his efforts, he was awarded the Environmental Hero Award of 2010 at the Holiday Party on December 5. Congratulations, Mike.



Janet Anderson, Mike Arney, and John Bahr

From the Chair

By Janet Anderson

New Officers, New Energy

The Great Waters Group (GWG) of the Sierra Club recently elected Heather Hansen and Gary Hofmeister to the Executive Committee of the GWG, joining ongoing elected members Janet Anderson, John Bahr, and Dianne Dagen.

At the January meeting of the Great Waters Group's Volunteer Leadership Council (VLC), the officers for this 2011 year were elected. I accepted the nomination to become our Group's new Chairperson. I would like to acknowledge and thank all the volunteers who served the GWG in the past year, especially retiring VLC members, Treasurer, Denise O'Meara and Membership Chair, Kathy Brenner. And I welcome and thank those who will be leading us in 2011. Heather Hansen has accepted the position of Vice-Chair and Susan Sedlachek as Treasurer. The following people have also accepted roles as our volunteer leaders: Conservation – Dianne Dagen; Outings – Gary Hofmeister; Member-

ship – Heather Hansen; Fundraising – Dave Hetzel; Newsletter Editor - Dale Olen; E-letter Editor - Kim Hall; Energy – John Bahr,



We had several changes in the past year including losing our local Midwest office's Rosemary Wehnes who was our integral link to national and state issues, offered us a meeting place, and provided other support for us. We are trying to finalize plans for a consistent place for our VLC meetings. Our new mailing address is SC

– GWG, P.O. Box 26798, Wauwatosa, WI 53226. Anyone is welcome to attend our VLC meetings (fourth Monday of the month) and our monthly programs (third Monday of the month). Do you have ideas for programs? Let me know.

We are a grass roots organization and we are all volunteers. I ask that you help us out by supporting our efforts and giving some of your time and talent to the Great Waters Group. We need a Secretary, a Publicity person, a new Newsletter Editor, and more people to add to our Outings, Conservation, Programs, Fundraising, Water and Energy areas. Or consider liaison work with Community Shares. These efforts do not require a lot of time, but help us stay involved with all we would like to do. Do you have ideas for outings or events? Let me know.

Being true to our Sierra Club mission to “explore, enjoy, and protect the outdoors,” I will do my best to provide support and leadership to all the approximately 3,000 members in our Great Waters Group. To be effective at providing value to our members and our community, we need more help. There are more environmental issues than GWG and its volunteers can manage – and there are many opportunities for us to address local environmental issues and activities – please join us.

Also check out our new website at www.sc-gwg.org for more information and contact information. Contact me directly if you'd like at jandersn@execpc.com or 414-258-5624.

It's Time to take climate change personally

by Mike Arney

The Sierra Club has been fighting to preserve natural spaces and systems for a long time. At first it was about creating and expanding parks and wilderness. As we became aware of the toxic byproducts of our society, the Club fought water

pollution and helped pass the Clean Air Act. Energy efficiency was promoted both to reduce pollution and to preserve what it was becoming clear were limited fossil fuel resources.

Global climate change is a new kind of problem. It is a pollution problem, but the main pollutant, carbon dioxide, is natural and non-toxic. It is a wilderness and species protection problem, but the ecosystems affected span the globe from the poles to the tropics, from oceans to mountain tops. It is a resource depletion problem, but the resource in question is a livable global climate.

Unfortunately, the scale and speed of changes needed to mitigate climate change are also new. Over 80% of electricity generated in the US comes from burning fossil fuel. Transportation is 95% fossil dependent. Yet atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide are already at 390 parts per million. In the past 450ppm was considered a safe threshold, now many scientists believe 350ppm should be the goal. To actually reach these goals would require us in this country to reduce our fossil fuel use by 80% in the next 20 to 40 years.

Right now, our government is not leading us down that path. The recession slightly reduced US emissions in 2008 and 2009. The Obama administration has taken many positive steps. But we do not have a climate bill. The best hope for government action in the next few years appears to be the EPA which, of course, is under attack.

Where the government will not lead, the people must.

The beauty of this new kind of pollution is that we don't have to chain ourselves to some factory to stop it. No need to live



in a tree to save this resource – it's in our every breath. More to the point, it's in our every mile driven, therm burned, coal-powered kilowatt hour. If you are a typical American and believe in personal responsibility, this is the issue for you.

I plan to reduce my direct carbon emissions 80% by 2020. What might your goal be? “Direct” emissions are easiest to think about. These are the ones under our immediate control, basically just four things:

- Home heating (mostly natural gas in Wisconsin).

- Electricity, including air conditioning.
- Car travel.
- Air travel.

What does an 80% reduction in fossil fuel use look like in these items?

- Heating: Start thinking about wood heat and geothermal. This may be a hard one – that’s why we’re looking out 10, 20, or 40 years.

- Electricity: This is the easy one. If you have not already, sign up for 100% renewable power. If you are a We Energies customer, the program is *Energy for Tomorrow*. At the website greenneighbor.org you will find a coupon code that gets you a \$5 Alterra gift card when you sign up for Energy for Tomorrow. For an average consumer, the added cost to buy renewable power is about \$5 per month. Do it, forget it, feel the love from the future people of the world.

- Car travel: In case you’re not in a position to get around on foot, bike, and bus, start to save for an electric car or plug-in hybrid.

- Air travel: Another hard one, but it has to be said – air travel has to become a luxury and an exceptional event again. The carbon cost of plane flights is very high.

It is harder to make big changes like these without leadership from the top and without a big popular movement. But that does not mean we have to go it alone. Community support can make change a lot easier and more fun.

“**Green Neighbor – Wauwatosa**” is the new name of a group that has emerged from the Great Waters Group, the Wauwatosa Energy Committee, and the Wauwatosa neighborhood associations. We want to help people live green, including reducing their carbon footprint. We are available to help form local study/ action groups. These give neighbors a chance to get to know each other over a fixed number of sessions as they grapple with the lifestyle changes the earth is calling for us to make.

Climate change has become such a political football, and the debate can be draining. (If you find yourself mired in it, a good resource is www.skepticalscience.com). Once you get past that though and realize that this is a very different, huge problem to which the majority of Americans are major contributors, you might, possibly, feel a sense of ... hope. This is our problem. And just as Sierra Club members have been doing since 1892, we can come together, supporting each other’s leadership in taking it on.

If you are interested in the work of “Green Neighbor – Wauwatosa,” send me an email or sign up at our new (work in progress!) web site, <http://greenneighbor.org>.

Me2: Milwaukee Energy Efficiency Program

By Rosemary Wehnes

Do you own a home in Milwaukee that was built before 1970? Is your home drafty and uncomfortable? If you reside in Milwaukee, you may have an opportunity to lower your energy costs by investing in energy improvements with a new financing program.

“Milwaukee Energy Efficiency Program or Me² is a federally funded program to help homeowners make their properties more energy efficient. This program can help you by

- making your home more comfortable
- providing the support of a trained team to navigate your efficiency upgrades
- saving money
- finding rebates on energy improvements
- making your home energy smart” [City of Milwaukee]

This program gives Milwaukee residents an opportunity to improve the efficiency of their homes by providing a loan to homeowners for improvements like insulation and air sealing. An energy advocate helps you with the process from the energy audit to selecting certified contractors. You must apply to participate in the program. What is the advantage to this program compared to a home equity loan? For instance, you may be able to stretch out the payments over a longer term and there is the benefit of working with an energy advocate who can help you find and qualify for rebates. The cost of the energy audit is subsidized by the City of Milwaukee.

Learn more at www.smartenergypays.com and save on energy costs today!



Outings



Day Trip to Canoecopia & Dinner

Saturday, March 12, 2011

As many of us in the Sierra Club love to spend time paddling a canoe or kayak, what better way to plan our summer events than attending Canoecopia in Madison, the World's largest Paddlesport Expo held at the Alliant Energy Center.

The day is filled with various programs on canoeing and kayaking, be it techniques, exciting travelogues, or equipment. Distributors are on hand to show off their latest products. Outdoor travel outfitters are there to entice you with their upcoming adventures. Canoecopia is a weekend exposition that never fails to excite any lover of nature or travel. When the expo ends we will meet at an area restaurant and discuss the day's events over dinner.

Where: Meet at Goerke's Corners Park and Ride on I-94 and Barker Road in Brookfield, the next exit west of Moorland Road. Look for the burgundy, black, and silver van with license plate of VNCTII at the Park and Ride entrance.

When: 8:30 a.m. Saturday, March 12 – return in the evening

How: Car pool

Contact: Bill Moore at Environ1@sbcglobal.net or Chris Zapf at 262-786-9584



Family Fun Hiking Day

Saturday, March 19, 2011

Families, don't let the cold of winter keep you inside! Why not bundle up and enjoy the beauty of the season at Urban Ecology Center. The Great Waters Group will be hosting a Family Fun Hiking Day for children of all ages. In March we will learn about birds who live here year round and search for nests, tracks and count how many birds we find. Participants will engage in a hands-on learning experience when we tour the eco-friendly building and visit the live animals at the center! We'll also have hot chocolate/coffee and snacks available in the main building to chase away the winter chill! This FREE event is open to the public!

When: 1-3:30 pm

Where: Urban Ecology Center

1500 E. Park Place, Milwaukee, WI – just west of Oakland Avenue on Park Place.

Contact: Joanne at 414-321-2660 or j.monyelle@yahoo.com to register. Advance registration is recommended so we can plan accordingly.

Biking along Gitchee Gumee

Friday, August 5 through Sunday, August 7, 2011

Bike the shores of Lake Superior on Grand Island near Munising in Upper Michigan. This gorgeous island is almost entirely owned by the Forest Service and offers a beautiful 26-mile mountain biking trail around a nearly untouched island above the steep cliffs of Lake Superior. We will have lunch at the remote North Beach where the bolder ones among us may want to swim in Gitchee Gumee. We will be camping at Pete's Lake just south of Munising. This National Forest campground offers swimming and is situated on Bruno's Run - a nine mile biking and hiking trail which runs through the woods and along eight lakes in the Hiawatha National Forest. Those who can arrive by Thursday or early Friday may want to join us to bike or hike this great trail on Friday. Plan to bring a dish to share for a Saturday night group dinner at the camp site. These are moderate to difficult trails and a mountain bike is recommended but a cross over bike may suffice.

Where: Pete's Lake, Munising, Upper Peninsula

When: Friday, August 5 through Sunday, August 7

Contact: Ed Anderson at 414-520-2751 for more details.



Quetico / Boundary Waters Paddling Adventures, 2011

Five Separate Outings:

July 29 - August 6, 2011, Trip Leaders and contact info: Mike McQuilkin at 253-219-9208 or Scott McQuilkin at 253-988-4394.

August 6 - 14, 2011, Trip Leader and contact info: David Thomas; email david@thomerwald.net or call 414-344-1044.

August 13 - 21, 2011, Trip Leader and contact info: Eric Uram; email Eric.Uram@SierraClub.org or call 608-233-4120

August 22 - 31, 2011, Trip leader and contact info: Bill Mathias; email wj.mathias@gmail.com or call 920-339-0437.

August 27 - September 5, 2011 Trip Leader and contact info: Frank Remfrey; email: fremfrey@wi.rr.com or call 262-542-0176. Co-leader: Bill Moore; email environ1@sbcglobal.net or call 262-785-9022.

For specific details and descriptions of these trips go to the GWG website at <http://sc-gwg.org> and follow the Outings and Events link.

Snowshoe Hike



It was a beautiful sunny day with blue skies as 16 people trekked across fields and woods to enjoy some snowshoeing in the Southern Kettle Moraine. Despite getting onto a “road less traveled” and multiple ‘equipment malfunctions,’ we had a good workout and then enjoyed a delicious chili pot luck afterwards.

From the Editor's Desk

E-Letter, Website, and Newsletter

By Dale Olen

We have been working hard on improving our communication with you our members. This Newsletter has been the main tool in letting you know what your Club is up to. The Newsletter had been coming out six times a year when I took it over nearly six years ago. Issues then were six pages long. We upped it to eight pages and kept it coming every other month. Because of expenses, however, we have had to reduce the number of issues to four a year and the size to four pages per issue. We knew then, we needed other ways of communicating with you more frequently.

So, we have initiated an E-Letter—The Great Waters Group E-Letter. We were able to create a listserv of about 1,000 of our GWG members and have been sending out the E-Letter for four months. We send out announcements of outings, events, and action alerts on issues where members can contact a State or Federal legislator, the Governor or the President and advocate for the protection of our water, energy, land, and air. In our GWG we have about 3,000+ members. Some of you do not have email addresses and so will not be able to receive these regular, brief updates. But many of you not on our present mailing list do have email access and might be interested in receiving the E-Letters. We keep them short and not too frequent. If you have not been receiving the E-letter and would like to please send your name and email address to Kim Hall at kimdancin@gmail.com. Kim is our new E-Letter editor and she will make sure you are added to the list.

Finally, we have re-created our local GWG website with the help of Dave Wehnes. He has made the site cleaner and much easier to navigate. You can access the site at <http://se-gwg.org> or still use the old address, <http://greatwatersgroup.org> and it will forward you to the new site. Please take a look. I think you will enjoy it. And if you have anything you would like to put on the site, just email it to me at daleolen@sbcglobal.net and I'll get it online.

GWG Holiday Dance Party Memorable

The grins came early at the 2010 Holiday Party as eighty Sierrans enjoyed tasty food, memorable visits, and danced the night away.

GWG Conservation Chair Dianne Dagen led the crowd onto the dance floor. Freddy and the Blifftones lit up the night with soulful tunes and dance music. Tim Maher, a well-known local musician, set the beat, and the party was on. The dancing and energetic conversations ended only when the doors closed.

Mark your calendars for **December 4, 2011** and join us for a great party. Good food, conversation, auction, music, and dancing. Best party in town!



***Protect America's Environment
For Our Families, For Our Future***

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Dale Olen, Newsletter Editor, 262-255-3628
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Susan Sedlachek, Treasurer, 414-755-0550

Calling All Who Breathe

If you breathe, then the air pollution from We Energies' dirtiest coal plant—in Milwaukee's Menomonee Valley—will be of interest to you. Our Great Waters Group has joined the Cleaner Valley Coalition, along with other local health and faith organizations. We want We Energies to improve pollution controls to meet current standards of the Clean Air Act. More than 30,000 children in Milwaukee County suffer from asthma. The plant emits mercury and other pollutants that increase asthma and heart attacks, plus childhood respiratory illnesses. Because the 24,000 residents nearest the Menomonee Valley tend to be working class families of Latinos, Native and African Americans, the pollution is an environmental justice issue.

Got used inhalers? Save them for our future photo op and public meeting. Go to www.cleanervalleycoalition.org for more info. Contact me at ddagelen@sbcglobal.net with questions.

Dianne Dagelen
Conservation Chair