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GREAT WATERS GROUP NEWSLETTER

WWW.GREATWATERSGROUP.ORG

PHONE 414-258-5624

WINTER, 2011-12 NO.4

Snowshoers will trek the Ice Age Trail Jan. 28

“Over the ground lies a mantle of white.....” well, you know the rest. Come join us on Jan. 28 in the winter wonderland for a snowshoe trek on the Ice Age Trail.

Don't have snowshoes? We can offer some suggestions. Most of the trail is fairly level. Some parts are up and down --beginner to intermediate-- but it's only hiking in the snow.

If there is no snow that day, we will hike, or we will look for another trail. Chili and a hot beverage will be served afterwards. Here are the details:

Date: Saturday, Jan. 28, 2012 **Time:** Starts at 10am

Leader: Janet Anderson at 414-258-5624 or
janeta16@sbcglobal.net

Location: Final location to be determined later, depending on snow. If we hike at the above location, we will meet at the DNR station just west of Eagle on Hwy 59. No state park sticker is required to park in this parking lot. Call or email Janet to sign up and to get further details and the finalized location.



Intrepid snowshoe enthusiasts enjoy an outing.

EPA will hold session in Milwaukee Dec. 12

The Cleaner Valley Coalition will be taking its fight for environmental justice in Milwaukee to the federal Environmental Protection Agency when the EPA holds its first public meeting ever in Wisconsin on Dec. 12. You're encouraged to relay your concerns about the health impacts of one of We Energies' dirtiest coal plants at a meeting scheduled for 6 p.m. at Ascension Lutheran Church, 1236 S. Layton Blvd.

The We Energies downtown coal plant is surrounded by predominantly low income people of color, and its pollution effects can extend more than ten miles depending on wind conditions. Earlier this year, We Energies announced plans to explore cleaning up the plant and then fell silent. Meanwhile, more than 30,000 children in Milwaukee County are suffering from asthma, and their numbers are growing.

Our Great Waters Group believes that the EPA needs to better enforce clean air standards with respect to the plant, and we're determined to create a powerful community conversation about environmental justice and the health effects of poor air quality. Your presence at the meeting is important.

When: Monday, December 12th, 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Where: Ascension Lutheran Church, 1236 Layton Blvd.

Who: Susan Hedman, Head of the Environmental Protection Agency, Region 5 in Chicago.

See: <http://www.epa.gov/aboutepa/region5ra.htm>

Who: Lisa Garcia, Associate Assistant Administrator for Environmental Justice, Washington DC

Contact: Dianne Dagen, Conservation Chair
ddagelen@sbcglobal.net; 414-771-1505.

Citizens Climate Lobby seeks volunteers and focuses on action

By Sue Loomans

A nationwide organization with a focused mission and an effective strategy for tackling climate change issues is coming to Milwaukee, and this is your chance to participate in an exciting approach to a growing problem.

The Citizens Climate Lobby (CCL) has 50 groups in cities across the United States and Canada writing Op-Ed pieces and letters to the editors of newspapers, meeting with federal legislators and encouraging their neighbors to take action. I have volunteered to help form a group here. We are in the process of gathering interested contacts, and we will soon begin our meetings and projects.

Like many of you, I have been involved in a number of climate change organizations and activities, and while I've witnessed a lot of passion, I've often been discouraged by the results. But CCL is different.

The organization's stated mission is "to create the political will for a sustainable climate and to empower individuals to have breakthroughs in exercising their personal and political power." Its strategy is to foster a national policy that puts a price on carbon and speeds the transition to a clean energy economy. The policy drafted and supported by CCL is called "Carbon Fee and Dividend."

Carbon Fee and Dividend legislation would impose a carbon fee on all fossil fuels at the point where they first enter the economy. The fee would be collected by the Internal Revenue Service and would begin at \$15 per ton of CO₂ equivalent emissions, increasing incrementally in the future. All fees would be placed in a Carbon Fees Trust Fund and rebated 100% to American households.

How is CCL working to accomplish this? Group leaders meet once a week via phone and gather their individual participants monthly. The focus is on action, and action does happen. The CCL national staff is getting the attention of representatives from both political parties as well as the national news media. Once legislation is formally introduced, grassroots activity will ramp up all across the country.

You are welcome to join in. The time commitment and level of activity will be flexible. Any help would be appreciated.

If you're interested in learning how to promote Carbon Fee and Dividend legislation, please contact me at climatecall@aol.com. For more information on CCL, visit www.citizensclimatelobby.org.



Oak Leaf Discovery Trail Passport and spring parks projects are planned

Cheri Briscoe, an avid cyclist, Milwaukee County Parks lover and former Great Waters Group chairman, wants to create a major spring parks event that would include an Oak Leaf Discovery Trail Passport program.

Cheri sits on the board of the Park People and volunteers at the Urban Ecology Center. Using the passport outline created in 2008 under the direction of Marty Weigel, she will be working with Casey Renn, another Park People Board member. She's looking for volunteers to help with planning, outreach, marketing, volunteer recruiting and coordination, funding and other details.

The Milwaukee County Parks system has 144 parks, 13 parkways and more than 15,000 acres of parkland that help to clean our air and water and give people a chance to share the urban landscape with wildlife. This would be an ideal opportunity to promote the Sierra Club mission to get people outdoors and to create some Great Waters Group outings.

There is an excellent passport program for the parks in Ozaukee County called the Treasures of Oz Passport. See <http://treasuresofoz.org/past-events/2010-event/summer-tour-2010/event-passport-and-map> for details of that effort. The committee might want to borrow some ideas from it.

If you are interested in learning more about this project and feel passionate about our parks and trails, give Cheri a call at 414-239-7883 or send an email to cherib@wi.rr.com.

Geothermal wells in Tosa save money and reduce carbon dioxide emissions



Mike Arney (on right) earned the GWG Sierra Club's Environmental Hero Award last year for his work in reducing global warming, and now he's taken his work home with him. Evidence of his dedication to the cause could be found in November in the form of some very deep holes in his front yard.

Contractors drilled three 180-foot wells in the Arney lawn in Wauwatosa to accommodate a geothermal heating and cooling system that will save the family a little bit of money and the planet thousands of pounds of carbon dioxide emissions.

Water from the wells will be pumped to a basement heat exchanger that will send warm air through the house during the winter and cool it during the summer. The water stays at about 50 degrees all year long, making the pump more efficient than the common "air to air" heat pump that relies on cold outside air for heating. And the water temperature is low enough that almost no additional energy is needed for cooling.

Costs for a system like this normally range between \$20,000 and \$30,000, but the Arneys were able to stay on the low end of the scale at \$19,000. The price gets better when a 30% geothermal tax credit that runs until Dec. 31, 2016 is factored in. Mike

figures his net outlay will be \$13,300, but that doesn't count what it will cost to put his yard back together.

"Another side benefit is hot water," he said. "The waste heat from the compressor running in either summer or winter is used to pre-heat water in a buffer tank. This then goes into our water heater, lowering our water heating costs."

But saving money wasn't the primary goal. "I'm doing this to get off fossil fuels," Mike said. "The switch will cut our carbon dioxide emissions by about 6,000 pounds per year. We don't use very much air conditioning, which is where you save a lot with geo, and we had a natural gas furnace. Natural gas is very cheap now, so I don't expect to save much over the old system unless the price of natural gas rises or we start needing more air conditioning. Which over time is likely as the climate warms."

According to Mike, his is the third "vertical well" geothermal installation in Wauwatosa, at least as far as the DNR has records of it. The other two were both put in last summer.

If you'd like to learn more about geothermal wells, there are some pictures, text and videos at <http://greenneighbor.org> (click on "blog.")

Holiday Party Set for Dec. 4

Lively music, tasty food and a good time with friends will be featured once again when the Great Waters Group holds its annual Holiday Dinner and Fund-Raiser Dec. 4-8 p.m. at the Wil O Way Recreation Center in Wauwatosa. Reservations are due by Dec. 1. If you have questions or items to donate to the auction, call Dave Hetzel at 414-228-9512.

Drinks, snacks and a silent auction will be provided, along with entertainment from the Squeezettes, a popular Milwaukee band that plays everything from power polkas to pop rock. A healthy dinner catered by Aladdin that includes vegetarian and gluten-free selections will be served before the entertainment. Gift certificates, art work, movie tickets and holiday gifts will be offered at the auction.

Doors open at 4 p.m. Dinner will be served at 5:30 p.m. The price is \$25 per person. Checks should be made payable to "Great Waters Group-SC" and sent to Susan Sedlachek at 2878 S. Wentworth Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53207.

If you can't attend, please consider sending a donation to help us continue our work in the four-county area. Donations are not tax-deductible because Great Waters Group Sierra Club is not a 501c3 organization.

Underwood Wil O Way Recreation Center is located at 10602 W. Underwood Parkway, Wauwatosa, across from Hansen Golf Course and up the hill into the woods.

Brewers pitch in on recycling efforts

By Nancy Gloe

Professional sports teams have an enormous impact on the environment, and many of them have begun to address that issue. The Milwaukee Brewers are no exception.

Since the beginning of the 2010 season, the Brewers have taken steps to become more environmentally friendly. In August, the Sierra Club-GWG and Waukesha County Environmental Action League sent them a joint letter commending their efforts while at the same time pointing out one big area that could stand improvement: their parking lots.

The Brewers did begin a parking lot recycling program a few years ago, but it is still “bare bones” at best. Hundreds of single-use beverage containers continue to be trashed at each game.

We understand that baseball is a business, and improved recycling may not have a “pay back period” the way saving water and energy does. The team did say, however, that it intends to add more bins and improve the labeling of some of the existing bins during the off-season.

We hope to meet with the Brewers soon to learn more about these plans and to urge them to adopt a more effective and progressive parking lot recycling program.

In the meantime, the team deserves credit for the steps it has taken to become a good environmental neighbor. In June, the Brewers hosted a “green week” in which they donated money to the Urban Ecology Center, collected old electronics from fans, planted trees, and cleaned litter along the Hank Aaron State Trail near Miller Park. The trail and the adjacent Menomonee River receive a considerable amount of wind-blown garbage from tailgating activities.

The team has also had an in-stadium recycling program for many years, and that continues to be improved. That’s a pretty good start by any measure.

Like the Brewers, Major League Baseball in general has demonstrated an increased awareness of environmental concerns. In 2005 MLB teamed up with the Natural Resources Defense Council to create the Green Advisor, an online environmental resource guide that has been customized and distributed to each team in the league.

The Green Advisor is designed to help each team and stadium operator identify and pursue environmentally superior operations and supply chain options. These include office operations, stadium operations and maintenance, team and fan transportation, energy use, paper use, concession operations, events planning, recycling and waste management.

With this move, professional baseball took its first step in a fledgling green initiative, and several teams have made major leaps toward becoming sustainable operations. For example, the San Francisco Giants, Colorado Rockies, Cleveland Indians, Boston Red Sox, and Arizona Diamondbacks have installed solar systems at their stadiums.

The Sierra Club-GWG applauds these moves. Check our newsletter for updates on what more can be accomplished in this arena.



Thank you to everyone who contributed through workplace giving to the Sierra Club Foundation and Community Shares of Greater Milwaukee.

Winter Programs

Mayfair Mall, Community Room, Room G110
Garden Suites East
Free and Open to the public.

There will be no programs in December. Instead, be sure to mark your calendars for our GWG Holiday Party Dec. 4. See details elsewhere in newsletter.

John Muir’s Forgotten Park: Rediscovering King’s Canyon

Monday, January 16 7pm

See six Sierra Club members conquer a 7,000-foot climb to Glen Pass at King’s Canyon National Park, one of John Muir’s favorite sections of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Join them as they encounter wildlife, swim in a beautiful snow-fed lake, overcome illness and find dramatic mountain scenery. Share their experience in planning for health and

safety issues, food, timing, travel and costs of this challenging 46-mile, six-day hike. And learn how to get there on your own. After viewing the spectacular images of this area, you might just be planning your next summer vacation.

TBA

Tuesday, February 20 7pm

This 2012 election year hints that there may be an opportunity for a program with a political theme.

Find us –

The GWG sponsors monthly programs at Mayfair Mall on 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. These programs are open to members and the public.

From the Chair.....

By Janet Anderson

“The idea of wilderness needs no defense, it only needs defenders.” *Edward Abbey*

Our state John Muir Chapter recently held its annual meeting. What a pleasure to meet other Sierra Club members from around the state and learn what’s happening in their neck of the woods. Perfect weather, leaves changing colors, and a beautiful view of a lake added to the charm of the weekend.

Our big annual fundraising event is coming up fast. Our GWG Holiday Party is scheduled for Sunday, Dec. 4. Join us as we partake in a delicious meal, find great items at our silent auction, and enjoy some lively, power-polka music! Details are elsewhere in this issue. Send in your reservations soon.

In the last issue, I asked for suggestions for our “Environmental Hero of the Year” Award, which we give at the Holiday Party. Surprisingly, we did not get any suggestions. I ask again if you’ll take a minute and suggest someone who might deserve this honor. Send an email to me at janeta16@sbcglobal.net with the person’s name and why you think he or she might deserve this honor.

This issue includes our annual election for members on our Great Waters Group Executive Committee (ExCom). This is the group of active member-volunteers who have chosen to be part of setting the direction of our Great Waters Group. Please take a few minutes to read about the nominees in this election and send in your ballot. I appreciate and thank you for your participation in our election process.

Sierra Club is a grassroots organization and – you’ve heard it before – we couldn’t do what we do without our fellow members. As this year has gone on, legislative changes have put environmental and conservation issues in the forefront. Issues like recycling, protection of our natural areas, sand mining, and easing of laws that provide us clean air and clean water are good examples. This upcoming election year looks to be a big one. We need your help. Looking ahead, we will probably need people interested in helping with our political process. Further, if you would like to offer us some of your passion or expertise or interest in any way, whether on an issue or complet-

Are you a certified Outings Leader?

We are seeking to identify all of our Wisconsin-based certified Outings Leaders for groups, inner city outings, river touring, chapter, and national outings. Please contact Eric Uram, John Muir Chapter Outings Chair, with your name, contact information and dates when you have completed the necessary training and certifications. Those who attended the recent Outings Leader Summit do not need to reply.

If you are not an Outings Leader now but would like to learn

Winter

Newsletter Delivery Options

Mailing a newsletter four times a year to all our members is costly. It uses a lot of paper and postage and takes a big bite out of our overall budget. We are committed to providing optimal communication with our members, but we also want to reduce waste.

Our policy is to mail a paper newsletter to those for whom we do not have an email address or to members who specifically request a paper copy. If you would like to receive your newsletter via email instead, please contact Tom at tbriscoe@wi.rr.com and he will add you to the list. Two bonuses to getting the email version are that you get the color photographs instead of gray ones AND you get the newsletter sooner than you’d get it through the mail.

In addition, to keep communication timely, we send out occasional e-letters. We currently have email addresses for only about a third of our GWG members. If you would like to stay current and receive these timely e-letters, please contact Janet at janeta16@sbcglobal.net, and she will add you to the list.

We are also looking for donations, printers or sponsors to help us continue to be able to print hard copies to the extent we would like. Please let us know if you are aware of any potential sources of support or would like to donate a nominal amount to help defray our newsletter costs.

Thank you for your support, which helps us use our funds more efficiently and effectively to do our environmental work and sponsor events.

ing clerical tasks, please let me know. Even if you only have limited time, we could identify tasks that need to be done on an occasional basis.

Aren’t we fortunate to live in an area that gives us four different seasons to savor? Though the cold winds are starting to blow, let me encourage you to get outside anyway and continue to “explore, enjoy, and protect our planet” as our Sierra Club mission states. You just have to put on another layer or two, but get outside!

Would you like to become one?

how to become one, please let us know. The John Muir Chapter is seeking to build its capacity and offer more outings in more locations across the state. From exploring urban centers to wilderness experiences, outings go straight to the heart of the Sierra Club -- exploring, enjoying, and protecting our planet for now and for the future.

Thank you for your response!
Eric.Uram@sierraclub.org or 608.233.9022



Oleg Broytman poses with an artifact he found along a portage trail. Given its size, the pitcher was probably used in a lumber camp many years ago. Oleg returned the item to its original location.



This is our crew posing near a lumber-era chain that was attached to the tree on Bentpine Lake. Members of the crew (L-R): Diane Schwartz, Oleg Broytman, Nan Huai, Pete Brands, Jane McMillan, Frank Remfrey and Bill Moore.

Registration available for Boundary Waters Canoe Trips

Registration is now open for three 2012 Quetico Provincial Park/Boundary Waters canoe trips. Canoeists are invited to paddle, portage and camp in a pristine wilderness with new friends under expert guidance.

Participants can expect to see some of the same wildlife that the voyageurs, trappers and ancient Ojibway saw while traveling the waterways they traveled in centuries ago. A minimum of two layover days are planned for swimming, photography, fishing, hiking, exploring or just relaxing.

All Quetico trip leaders are experienced veterans of the area with Wilderness First Aid training. You don't have to be a veteran paddler to join the fun, but a good attitude and physical fitness are essential. All trips are eight days, put-in through take-out. Crews are limited to nine participants.

Travel to and from the base/starting point is not considered part of the trip, although carpooling is encouraged and coordinated by participants. Fees include canoes, group equipment, meals, necessary lodging and park permits and taxes. Not included are pre- and post-trip travel, passports, personal permits and fishing licenses. Contact trip leaders for additional information, including registration. A \$100 deposit is required.

August 10-18, 2012

Trip Leaders: Mike McQuilkin (253-219-9208)
 (email: sumcqu@comcast.net)
 Scott McQuilkin (253-988-4394)
 (email: lo86blazer@aol.com)

Departure Point: Camp Quetico, Atikokan, Ontario
 Optional Meeting Point: International Falls, Minnesota.
 Cost: \$600.

Chapter Sponsor: Cascade Chapter, with a hearty welcome to John Muir members.

Mike and Scott's trip emphasizes Quetico's world class fishing for bass, walleye and northern pike, spectacular scenery through 20 of the area's lakes and three layover days.

August 17-26, 2012

Trip Leader: Nancy McDermott (608-238-1421)
 (email: njmcderm@gmail.com)

Departure Point: Canoe Canada, Atikokan, Ontario.
 Cost: \$525.

Nancy's trip covers a shorter distance and features ancient Ojibway pictographs, a waterfall, fishing, two base camps and delicious home cooked, lightweight meals with camp-baked breads a treat.

August 25-Sept. 3, 2012

Trip Leaders: Jane McMillan (815-543-2756)
 (email: janellmcmillan@sbcglobal.net)
 Bill Moore (262-785-9022)
 (email: environ1@sbcglobal.net)

Departure Point: Sommers Canoe Base, Moose Lake, Ely, Minnesota.

Cost: \$495.

Jane and Bill's adventure features pictographs, waterfalls, two layover camps, voyageur history, laser-lit stargazing, fishing opportunities and Bill's famous fire-baked bannock bread.

CST 2087766-40. Registration as a seller of travel does not constitute approval by the State of California. In order to participate in a Sierra Club Outing, you will need to sign a liability waiver. The Club does not have insurance for carpooling arrangements and assumes no liability for them. Participants assume the risks associated with this travel.



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

Great Waters Group of the John Muir Chapter
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Stand up for clean air and water by telling our Senators to oppose S1751

When a bluff collapsed at the We Energies Oak Creek Power Plant on Oct. 31 sending an estimated 2,500 cubic yards of toxic coal ash and soil cascading into Lake Michigan, we were reminded that this kind of damage is almost sure to happen again if we're not vigilant.

Coal ash is the waste product of coal-powered plants, and it contains arsenic, mercury and lead. That's not something we want in the source of our drinking water, especially when there's more than 200 dump trucks full of it. This is especially frustrating because it follows a similar disaster three years ago.

The Environmental Protection Agency has been working to enact national protections to stop coal ash spills ever since the disastrous TVA spill in Tennessee in 2008. But Congress is trying to thwart this effort. Late in the fall, the House of Representatives passed a bill that would limit the EPA's ability to

regulate coal ash as a hazardous substance and leave that job to state regulators, who often lack the will or the ability to do it.

Now it's the Senate's turn. We need you to contact Senator Herb Kohl and Senator Ron Johnson and tell them to stand up for communities by opposing S1751 or any legislation that would keep the EPA from protecting our water supply from toxic pollutants associated with coal ash dumps and setting common sense regulations for disposal of coal ash, monitoring of deposits and beneficial re-use of coal ash.

Volunteer Leadership Council

Janet Anderson, GWG Chair: 414-258-5624

Heather Hansen, Vice Chair & Membership:
812-360-0652

Dianne Dagen, Conservation Chair: 414-771-1505

John Bahr, Energy Chair: 414-256-0932

Dave Hetzel, Fundraising Chair: 414-228-9512

Gary Hofmeister, Outings Chair: 262-821-1088

Susan Sedlachek, Treasurer: 414-755-0550

Rosemary Wehnes, Delegate to JMC: 414-453-1689

Ed Anderson, Political Chair: 414-962-6077

Sandy and Dale Hofmann, Newsletter Editors: 414-476-8636

*"Unless someone like you
cares a whole awful lot,
Nothing is going to get better,
It's not." -----The Lorax*