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**GREAT WATERS GROUP  
NEWSLETTER**

WWW.GREATWATERSGROUP.ORG

PHONE 414-258-5624

SUMMER, 2012

NO. 2

## Colorful Earth Day party draws a crowd

By Dianne Dagelen

John Muir would have been pleased. It was standing room only at Hart Park’s Riverview Room in Wauwatosa where more than 100 people of all ages attended the Great Waters Group’s 2012 Earth Day Celebration on April 20th.

Musicians Jeff Bray and Jahmes Finlayson played “This Earth Is Your Earth” for the opening ceremony and a parade of “eco-puppets.” Preserve Our Parkway advocates carried giant transmission poles attached to dwarfed houses, and the Park People rolled by with a red-tubed bicycle. The puppets were designed under the guidance of Judy Dubrosky, and all were made from recycled material. Diversity reigned as participants ranging from Waukesha’s Water Sentinels to the children’s dance class from Core El-Centro in Milwaukee gathered to honor Mother Earth. Inter-faith readings on earth stewardship were drawn from ancient faiths.

Wauwatosa Mayor Kathy Ehley introduced photographer/blogger and fellow Sierran Eddee Daniel as the keynote speaker. We learned about the struggles of maintaining biodiversity in a densely populated city when he showed his local slides.

Butterfly Lady Barb Agnew described the sustainability challenges for monarch migration on the Monarch Trail, and Erin Lee of Fight Asthma Milwaukee Allies demonstrated how particle pollution from coal plants and other sources could lead to respiratory disease, heart attack and stroke.

Earth poet Suzanne Rosenblatt energized the audience with a reading of her dramatic poem “Consequence Sequence” written specially for this event and accompanied by percussion and Joanna Jobson’s interpretive dance. (See the poem at the [sc-gwg.org](http://sc-gwg.org) website.)

Recycle art activities were available to children during the entire program, and 19 civic partners provided a variety of information from bicycle maps by Bike Fed of Wisconsin, carbon reduction ideas by Green Neighbor and Transition Milwaukee and river clean-up registration with Friends of Hart Park. Author Eric Hansen began the closing ceremony with his essay “A Place Where Water Sparkles” before Rev. Willie Brisco, president of  
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*Young dancers from Core El-Centro in Milwaukee joined our Earth Day celebration.*

## Public to be heard on power lines

Now is the time to let the Public Service Commission know how you feel about the environmental damage that would be caused by American Transmission Co. proposals for new transmission lines running to a County Grounds substation to be built behind its aging coal plant. The PSC will be accepting public comments on the project through Sept. 19 when it holds its Public Hearing.

Encourage alternatives to intrusive routes that require 70- to 100-foot transmission towers trampling wetlands and the clear cutting of huge swaths through Underwood Creek Parkway and the Oak Leaf Bike Trail. See our Spring Newsletter or view [sc-gwg.org](http://sc-gwg.org) to understand how all of us would be affected.

Your comments would be most effective if you describe the personal impact that the proposed tower lines would have on you and your community. A much better alternative would be using an existing industrial corridor or rail or highway right-of-way. Where that’s not possible, the lines should be buried.

Send your comments to Commissioner Ali A. Wali. Reference: Docket #5-CE-139. You can write to PO Box 7854, Madison, WI 53707, email [Wali@wisconsin.gov](mailto:Wali@wisconsin.gov), call 608-267-3592 or file electronically at [psi.wi.gov](http://psi.wi.gov).

**Monthly programs will be on vacation for June, July and August.  
Enjoy your summer.  
Programs will resume in September.**

# Summer activities . . .

Dogs, dog owners and people who just like dogs are invited to take a spirited walk on the breathtaking Kohler Andrae Dunes and beach in Sheboygan on **Aug. 4**. We'll get together at the north parking lot past the Kohler Andrae park office between 9:30 and 9:45 a.m. Carpoolers can meet at 8:30 a.m. at the North Shore Park and Ride on Port Washington Road off of Silver Spring and I-43.

After we hike the Dunes Cordwalk, we'll lunch on the beach, so bring food for you and your pet, along with doggy bags and a leash. Swimsuits are optional. Contact Heather Hansen at [heather.lee.hansen@gmail.com](mailto:heather.lee.hansen@gmail.com) (812-360-0652) by **Aug. 3** with a head count.

## Bike outings

Celebrate the 105 Days of Summer with a family-friendly bike ride on the Oak Leaf Trail on **June 9**. We'll meet at 10:30 at South Shore Park and ride the eight miles to Grant Park and back again. Be sure to pick up your Oak Leaf Discovery Tour passport from The Park People. Contact Gary at 262-993-7888.

One week later on **June 16**, Cheri Briscoe will lead a leisurely ride for the Oak Leaf Trail Discovery Tour starting at 9 a.m. at the Whitnall Park Golf course and ending three or four hours later. The 20-mile round trip includes a couple of fairly challenging hills. If you have an OLDT Passport, you can collect three stamps on this tour. If it rains, we'll try again on **June 23**. Contact Cheri Briscoe 414-239-7883 or [cherib@wi.rr.com](mailto:cherib@wi.rr.com).

## Exploring Perrot State Park

You can hike up Brady's Bluff for an

incredible view of the Mississippi River, bike the Great River Trail or take the back roads to the Wildlife Refuge, or you can paddle the scenic waters near Trempealeau when you join us on a visit to Perrot State Park **June 8-10**. Arrive after 3 p.m. Friday at Group Campsite C. The cost of the campsite will be shared by the group, but you'll be on your own for meals except for a Saturday night potluck. Contact trip leaders Chris at [zapfchristine@sbcglobal.net](mailto:zapfchristine@sbcglobal.net) or 262-786-9584 or Bill at [environ1@sbcglobal.net](mailto:environ1@sbcglobal.net) or 262-785-9022.

## River Rhythms

Meet us for music at Milwaukee's downtown Pere Marquette Park at Third and Kilbourn as we listen to some of Wisconsin's liveliest bands. We'll be at the picnic table with the Sierra Club sign on the center-right side of the park. Bring your own beverages and snacks or buy them on the grounds.

Kicking off the Wednesday night series on **June 20** will be Brother, which fuses vocals and guitar with the unique sound of the didgeridoo, bagpipes, and tribal percussion. Then on **July 18**, it's Madison County, a seven-piece country show band from Madison, and on **Aug. 22** the highly danceable 5 Card Studs. Music goes from 6:30 to 9 p.m. We've listed only three performances, but we may take in some more during the summer, so feel free to e-mail Chris at [zapfchristine@sbcglobal.net](mailto:zapfchristine@sbcglobal.net) for up-to-date information.

## Treasures of Oz

You can learn how our waters impact your everyday life as you hike, photograph



*Kit and Bernie Hansen's Libby had a tremendous time at last year's Dunes Hike.*

and geocache at different sites along the Milwaukee River and selected inland bogs and marshes at Ozaukee County's annual "Treasures of Oz" celebration on **June 16**. Explore Forest Beach Migratory Preserve, Tendick Nature Park, Riveredge Nature Preserve, Cedarburg Bog, Bike Path Island, Grafton Historical Corner, Mequon-Thiensville Dam, Ulao Waterfowl Production Area and Lion's Den Preserve. Check the website [www.treasuresofoz.org](http://www.treasuresofoz.org) for locations and times.

## Locally Grown, Nationally Known

Sponsors and volunteers are encouraged to join us for our "Locally Grown and Nationally Known" celebration of local food, sustainability and grassroots activism of the Sierra Club's John Muir Chapter. The event will be held on **June 19** from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. at Urban Ecology Center, 1500 E. Park Place in Milwaukee.

Chapter members and friends will prepare appetizers inspired by local ingredients  
*(Continued on page 4)*

# Discover Milwaukee County Parks for yourself

By Cheri Briscoe

Milwaukee County Parks are celebrating 105 years of maintaining a beautiful park system that intersects with three rivers and offers many excellent nature centers as well as a wide variety of woods and wild places.

As you travel through our parks this year on foot, by bicycle or by car, I challenge you to make 105 separate discoveries that demonstrate the diversity of our park system residents and users. Then make a list.

I suggest you find different species of the following: 20 birds,

20 plants or grasses, 20 insects (six-legged), 10 trees, five spiders (eight-legged), 10 four-legged animals, 10 amphibians, reptiles or fishes and 10 people (no names) of different cultural or national heritage. If you don't know the species' names, just write or draw a description, and don't forget to note where you saw them. We can talk about it at the Sept. 15 "End of 105 Days" celebration at Estabrook Park.

If you can't attend the party at Estabrook Park, send a copy of your list along with your Oak Leaf Discovery Trail passport to The Park People for a drawing. See the rules on the last page of the passport.

# From the Chair

By Janet Anderson

The year 2012 has been busy. Many issues. The usual clean air, clean water.

We have also taken on some local issues and events. We just had an exciting Earth Day event, which many of you attended.

We are continuing to be involved with the Cleaner Valley Coalition to improve the efficiency controls of the We Energies coal plant.

We are working with partners WEAL and DNR in working with the Milwaukee Brewers in optimizing the recycling in the parking lots at the stadium. We will be looking for volunteers this summer to assist with recycling in the stadium parking lots. Stay tuned.

Concerned about the excessive use and detrimental facts regarding plastic bags use, we have a group of members piloting a program to decrease plastic bag use in Wauwatosa.

If any of you have an interest in any of these or other issues, let us know. We can't be everywhere and know everything. We could always use more persons to be the eyes and ears to keep us up to date on the issues.

We've noticed, as we send out our GWG e-letters, that more and more email addresses bounce back to us as non-deliverable. And we notice that many of you are active SC members. I would appreciate it if you could send me a quick email so that I can enter a current email address. That will keep you apprised of things current.

As always, be sure to check our website from time to time to keep up-to-date on our activities. [www.sc-gwg.org](http://www.sc-gwg.org).

## Brewers help cut Miller Park litter

The Milwaukee Brewers have taken a long step in the direction of reducing environmentally damaging litter in their Miller Park parking lots by launching a "blue-bag" recycling program, and you can help to get it off the ground.

We're asking for volunteers to hand out recycling bags to tailgaters on any one of six home dates beginning with Brewers Green Week from June 18-20. The pilot program will resume for games on July 14, Aug. 18 and Sept. 15. We'll carpool on those dates, so paying for parking won't be a problem, and we'll also be allowed to run a recycling/anti-littering educational kiosk inside the park.

The bags will actually be clear instead of blue, but this is a win-win situation any way you color it. We reported previously on our efforts, in conjunction with the Waukesha County Environmental Action League, to urge the Brewers to step up their recycling efforts. There aren't enough recycling bins in the parking lots to collect the hundreds of cans and bottles that are

generated by tailgaters, and some of the litter blows into nearby areas including the Hank Aaron Trail. Adding recycling bins was not an option.

So we enlisted the help of Keep Greater Milwaukee Beautiful Executive Director Joe Wilson and met with the Brewers. The result was a "blue bag/anti-littering program" that's been used by several football teams including the Pittsburgh Steelers and the Carolina Panthers.

Initially, we had our doubts about an approach that would generate more plastic bags at a time when we're working on a program that strives to reduce their use. But the energy and natural resource savings that come with recovering recyclable aluminum, glass and plastic, along with the chance to teach fans the value of recycling made up our minds. We're confident that we can show the Brewers that their customers want more recycling opportunities.

Please contact Janet Anderson at [janeta16@sbcglobal.net](mailto:janeta16@sbcglobal.net) if you would be willing to help.

## Passports for sale

The Park People will be selling "passports" for the Oak Leaf Discovery Trail (OLDT) from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at their June 2 kickoff celebration at McKinley Park Marina on the Milwaukee Lakefront. There are 15 locations near the Oak Leaf Trail where the 20-page passports can be stamped. They sell for \$3 each or \$10 for a family of five, and the price includes a Milwaukee County Parks Map showing the trail and the passport stations.

Collect eight stamps and be eligible for terrific prizes. Proceeds will fund the activities of The Park People and enhancements for the Oak Leaf Trail. For more information visit the Park People website <http://www.parkpeoplemke.org/> or call Cheri Briscoe at 414-239-7883.

Summer

## Earth Day . . .

*(Continued from page 1)*

MICAH (Milwaukee Inner-city Congregation Allied for Hope), evoked conscience and commitment with his address on "Our Commission to Take Care of the Earth." He was introduced by Juan Carlos Ruiz of Cleaner Valley Coalition. We ended the celebration by singing "Blowin' in the Wind."



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



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

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Great Waters Group of the John Muir Chapter  
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CURRENT RESIDENT OR

*Recycled Paper*

## Local group seeks to reduce plastic bag glut

Americans throw away 12,000 non-biodegradable plastic bags every second. Except that there is no "away." The bags are with us for thousands of years, filling our landfills and washing into the oceans where they pose a major threat to marine life.

Now a local group is forming to develop a campaign to reduce the use of plastic in our communities. And you can be a part of the team. To join the cause, contact John Bahr at [jpbahr@wi.rr.com](mailto:jpbahr@wi.rr.com). For more on the subject, link to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UscMhW9tYbe>.

Plastic bags break down into small particles in the oceans, threatening 260 marine species, many of which wash up on beaches with their digestive systems full of plastic. The first step in reversing this process is education, and the second is to

develop practical plans to reduce the number of bags distributed by stores. When Ireland required stores to charge customers 22 cents for each plastic bag, their use dropped by 93%. Seattle banned all plastic bags. It can be done.

## Donations welcome

Donations to the Sierra Club Great Waters Group are gratefully accepted. If you would like to help us financially in our environmental stewardship, please send a check to: **Treasurer, Great Waters Group-Sierra Club, P.O. Box 26798, Wauwatosa, WI 53226-0798.**

For **tax-deductible donations** such as education, certain outings and portions of our newsletter, make your check payable to "Sierra Club Foundation" and write "Great Waters Group" on the memo line of the check. For **non-tax-deductible donations** such as activities, office expenses, lobbying or similar items, make your check payable to "Great Waters Group-Sierra Club."

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### Volunteer Leadership Council (VLC)

Janet Anderson, GWG Chair: 414-258-5624  
Heather Hansen, Vice Chair & Membership: 812-360-0652  
Dianne Dagelen, Conservation Chair: 414-771-1505  
John Bahr, Energy Chair: 414-256-0932  
Gary Hofmeister, Outings Chair: 262-821-1088  
Susan Sedlachek, Treasurer: 414-755-0550  
Chris Zapf, Secretary: 262-786-9584  
Rosemary Wehnes, Delegate to JMC: 414-453-1689  
Ed Anderson, Political Chair: 414-962-6077  
Sandy and Dale Hofmann, Newsletter Editors: 414-476-8636

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### Summer activities . . .

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from the Farmer's Market and backyard gardens. At 6 p.m. there will also be a short program highlighting the chapter. To sponsor or volunteer, email Liz Wessel [lizard59sc@yahoo.com](mailto:lizard59sc@yahoo.com) or call 608.238.9934.