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**GREAT WATERS GROUP
NEWSLETTER**

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Fall, 2013 NO. 3

Fall Programs

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

**Expanding the Region’s Approach
to Storm Water Management**

Monday, Sept 16, 7 p.m.

The Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District has a plan to capture the equivalent of 740 million gallons of storm water storage by 2035. Find out how and why it intends to meet its goal of capturing the first half-inch of rainfall on impervious surfaces when Karen Sands, Manager of Sustainability for MMSD, presents an educational program on the District’s newly adopted Regional Green Infrastructure Plan.

**How Clean Energy Can Create
a Brighter Future for Wisconsin**

*Monday, Oct. 21, Program 7 p.m.
Soup & salad potluck at 6:15 p.m.*

Wisconsin’s Sierra Club Director, Shahla Werner, will discuss ways people can take charge of their own energy use with the Sierra Club’s new solar homes partnership, which aims to expand solar use in Wisconsin. Learn about the program, offered to Sierra Club members as well as non-members, that will teach you how to go solar. Learn, also, how to get a discount through the program and provide critical support to the Sierra Club – John Muir Chapter.

Join us before the talk for soup and salad. It will be appreciated if you bring something to share, but it is not necessary. Reservations aren’t required, but contacting Rosemary Wehnes at rwscmke@sbcglobal.net or 414-828-1357 four days prior helps us plan the food.

November Program: Watch for details on our website: <http://www.greatwatersgroup.org> Monday, November 18th, 7 p.m.

Save the date: Sunday, December 1 for Annual GWG Holiday Party and Fundraiser. See story on page 4.

The GWG holds its programs at Mayfair Mall on the third Monday of some months in the Community Room on the lower level, Room G110.



Four-year-old Sergey Finnegan got up close and personal with the grasshopper family at Bug Day where youngsters learned about the little creatures that fly, hop, crawl and chirp. See Page 3 for details on the event.

**Transit issues offer
good and bad news**

Some good news, some bad news and some surprising news made headlines as Wisconsin headed into fall facing a number of controversial issues in transportation.

The good, cars: The Milwaukee Innercity Congregations Allied for Hope (MICA) and the Black Health Coalition of Wisconsin (BHCW) filed suit against the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and the National Highway Administration over plans for Milwaukee’s Zoo Interchange. And they got some encouragement from a federal judge.

The suit was based on the DOT’s failure to adequately ad-
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Nature trail hikes highlight autumn

Two Ice Age Trail nature hikes in the Kettle Moraine State Forest and one at Pike Lake are scheduled for October, and all of them are designed to take advantage of Wisconsin's beautiful fall.

Washington/Ozaukee: Saturday, Oct. 5, 9:00am-11:00 a.m.

The fall colors should be spectacular for this one. Hike 7.2 miles one way in the Northern Unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest on the Milwaukee River Segment. Meet at the DNR's New Fane parking lot. We will carpool to Sunburst Ski Hill then hike back to New Fane. Highlights include learning about rolling moraine topography and wetlands abounding with wildlife. There may be a group lunch in Kewaskum afterwards.



Scenic Pike Lake will be the site of a four-mile hike where walkers can learn about our state's glacial history while taking in the glory of a Wisconsin fall day.

The hike is rated moderately strenuous because of the hills and distance. A State Park sticker is required. Contact: Craig Sanford by email at craigsan@wi.rr.com or phone him at 262-370-3322.

Waukesha/Milwaukee: Saturday, Oct. 5, 9:30 til 11:00 a.m.

Volunteer prairie restorer Mike Fort will lead a seed picking adventure through a prairie located near the new Hausmann Nature Center at the Lapham Peak Unit of the Southern Kettle Moraine State Forest. This has been a very popular educational event in the past for families and hiking enthusiasts of all ages.

Join us for the 1.5 mile hike on a paved nature trail loop following the seed picking. We'll be set up with a gazebo at the Homestead Hollow Trecker Lodge. Watch for the yellow and black Ice Age Trail Event signs. Beverages and snacks will be available. Contact: Kris Jensen by phone at 262-966-9788 or by email at krjonorthlk@yahoo.com.

Pike Lake, Sunday, Oct. 27, 1 p.m.

We will meet in the Pike Lake Powder Hill Road parking lot

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Notes from the new chair

Fellow Sierrans, as your new Chair, it is an honor for me to serve the Great Waters Group. Our Volunteer Leadership Committee invites you to join us in pursuing our goals of protecting green space, promoting environmental justice and celebrating sustainability.

Like a bridge over troubled waters, your continued membership supports our Sierra Club's efforts toward a cleaner and more enjoyable planet. And like a paddle in the water, your involvement guides us to move forward.

Your participation at programs, events and outings helps to build a strong environmental community for positive change. Your company is appreciated. We look forward to seeing you.

Dianne Dagelen

Wetlands concerns delay Waukesha bypass

Environmental advocates led by the Coalition to Stop Waukesha Bypass have won a delay in work on the West Waukesha bypass while environmental concerns about displacing wetlands are addressed.

The bypass would replace Highway TT and Meadowbrook Road, both of which slice through upscale, residential areas that are dotted with farms. A portion of the West Bypass is designed to go through the Pebble Creek Environmental Corridor, which would damage it environmentally.

Project proponents say the West Bypass will provide a safe and quick north-south corridor for commercial and private traffic to access I-94 and I-43 to the south. Opponents agree

that that the west side roads need to be improved to enhance traffic safety, but they say it can be done just as effectively with a rebuilt two-lane road with turning lanes at the intersections.

Federal officials are still reviewing plans for the project. It hasn't been shut down, but the delay will give the Coalition more time to continue to bring attention to the environmental problems it poses.

Meanwhile, the Coalition will continue to write letters, attend all the hearings and hold more rallies. For more information contact Allen Stasiewski at astasiewsk@aol.com or see facebook.com/StopWaukeshaBypass.

September outings offer wide variety

From stars to bugs to box turtles, September offers an intriguing mix of environmental outings. Take your pick or go to all three.

Night Sky Viewing: Sept. 13. 7-11p.m.

Check out the observatory at Harrington Beach in Belgium to see craters and mountains on the moon, the giant planet Jupiter with its cloud bands and moons, star clusters, stellar nurseries and even other galaxies! This informative program is presented by the Northern Cross Science Foundation. Contact Harrington Beach State Park (262-285-3015).

Bug Day: Sept. 15 1-4p.m.

Come to the Wehr Nature Center in Whitnall Park to celebrate the misunderstood creatures that run our world. See “The Bug Whisperer,” watch beekeepers work on Wehr’s resident honeybee hives, and meet lots of live insects and their arthropod relatives. Experts will be on hand to answer your bugging questions. There will also be crafts for kids and even a chance to enjoy an insect snack.

Take your family on an insect discovery walk and catch some local arthropods. Bring the camera as kids get to dress up as their favorite bug with Dr. Arthra Pod. Special demonstrations include “Who wants to be an entomologist?” and Lepidopterist (Butterfly specialist) Phil Holzbauer.

No pre-registration required so grab the larvae and scurry over for all the six-legged fun. General Admission, Age 3 & up: \$2 per person; Friend of Wehr: \$1 per person. Regular parking fee in effect. Wehr Nature Center, 9701 W. College Ave in Franklin, WI. For more information contact: friendof-wehr.org or 414-425-8550.

Hibernating Animals: Sept. 21, 6:30-7 p.m.

Get ready for the oncoming winter with Waldo the woodchuck, Maize the corn snake and Jewel the ornate box turtle. Learn what animals do to get ready for their long winter’s nap. This program is brought to us by The Wildlife in Need Center. Meet at the Ottawa Lake Amphitheater in Eagle, WI. Contact: Kettle Moraine State Forest-Southern Unit at 262-594-6200.

ExCom nominations welcome

Every year at this time we look for members with energy and ideas to step forward and help steer us in our environmental efforts. There are openings on our Executive Committee for the 2014-’15 term. If you’re interested in becoming an ExCom member or would like to nominate someone else, contact our nominations chair, Heather Hansen, for details at heather.lee.hansen@gmail.com or 812-360-0652).

Fall



The UWM School of Freshwater Sciences would dominate a new Inner Harbor landscape under the newly launched “ReFresh Milwaukee” plan.

ReFresh Milwaukee looking for solutions

Two promising projects have been launched by “ReFresh Milwaukee,” a new plan aimed at encouraging citizens and businesses to engage in solutions that are economically, environmentally and socially smart for the community.

The first is “HomeGr/Own,” a program that seeks to convert foreclosed properties into urban farms. The second is Milwaukee Inner Harbor Redevelopment, which involves developing the UWM School of Freshwater Sciences and reinvigorating the ecological growth of the inner harbor.

The program is headed by Matt Howard, director of Milwaukee’s Office of Environmental Sustainability, which will implement and report on the progress of the plan. For information on how you can be involved, contact our Political Chair, Ed Anderson at 414-962-6077 or maidenlakewisconsin@yahoo.com.

Speaking of We Energies’ plans to convert its Menomonee Valley coal plant to gas, Professor Peter McAvoy said, “The coal is going to go away. The wetlands are going to be expanded. We’re going to have bike trails.”

Trail hikes spotlight fall

(Continued from page 2)

to hike an approximately four-mile loop in the park and enjoy the beautiful fall landscape. Learn about the glacial history of Wisconsin by walking on the varying terrains that are unique to the Kettle Moraine State Forest. Pike Lake is off of State Highway 60 between Slinger and Hartford. Please contact Heather Hansen at heather.lee.hansen@gmail.com to RSVP or for more information.

Coalition will build on Valley success

Small groups are coming together to plan strategy and build upon recent success in persuading We Energies to commit to natural gas conversion at its Menomonee Valley coal plant. If you are interested in joining that effort, you are encouraged to contact Conservation Chair Dianne Dagelen (ddagelen@sbcglobal.net or 414-771-1505).

The Cleaner Valley Coalition, made up of environmental, health, interfaith, civil rights and local grassroots organizations, played a major role in the company's decision to convert the Valley plant to gas. Now as the Cleaner Milwaukee Coalition, it will continue working for environmental justice, but in a broader sense. It will be focusing on four main subjects: transportation, We Energies accountability, cleaner communities and climate change education.



These unsightly coal piles in Menomonee Valley will disappear soon when We Energies converts its Valley plant from coal to gas.

The Valley coal plant smoke stacks can be seen poking the sky near Interstate 94 as travelers approach Lake Michigan. Their particle pollution contributes to asthma, stroke and heart attack – especially for the working class families who live in the Menomonee Valley. Our vision is for all residents of Greater Milwaukee to equally enjoy clean air, clean water, and a healthy environment.

Movement aims to reduce plastic bag glut

Americans throw away more than 100 billion plastic bags a year. Every hour, approximately 200,000 plastic bags are sent to landfills in the United States where they will take up to 1,000 years to break down.

But now a global movement has begun to dramatically reduce the amount of disposable plastic shopping bags. If you'd like to be part of the cutting edge on changing the culture and public policy of plastic bags, contact Energy Chair, John Bahr (jpbahr@wi.rr.com or 414-630-0608).

When plastic bags become litter, they can travel through our local waterways and eventually reach the global oceans. Great ocean currents combined with large amounts of non-biodegradable waste have resulted in two swirling vortices—twice the size of Texas—full of plastic trash. These vortices

did not exist 50 years ago before the bags became popular.

In Wauwatosa, shoppers and shopkeepers are coming together with the city government to educate the public and to encourage alternative totes. This is your chance to promote recycle bags and to work to change attitudes throughout Wisconsin.

Monarch habitat seeded

Our Monarch Butterfly Habitat area is now seeded with prairie seed. Because the process of establishing a prairie takes about three years, the Friends of the Monarch Trail have purchased 400 three-inch potted plugs of various nectar plants and milkweeds to add to the new seed. Keeping everything watered has been challenging, and we appreciate everyone's help in planting and working to maintain the habitat area.

Annual holiday party scheduled for Dec. 1

Join us for our annual GWG Holiday Party and Fundraiser on **Sunday, December 1, 2013** at the Wil O Way Recreation Center in Wauwatosa.

Doors open at 4 p.m. with drinks, snacks and a silent auction. We'll offer many great auction items and sit down to a delicious, Middle Eastern dinner at 5:30 before relaxing to musical entertainment. The cost is \$25 per person.

Reservations are due by Monday, November 25. If you have any items to donate for the auction or any questions, please call Janet Anderson at 414-258-5624. If you can't make the

party, please consider sending a donation to help us continue our efforts in our four-county area.

Location: Underwood Wil O Way Recreation Center, 10602 W. Underwood Creek Parkway, Wauwatosa (located across from Hansen Golf Course - up the hill and into the woods).

When: Doors open at 4 pm; dinner at 5:30 pm

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

Janet Anderson
2130 N. 85 St.
Wauwatosa, WI 53226

Empire Builder track to get upgrade

(Continued from page 1)

dress social justice and clean air considerations in its reconstruction design. Federal Judge Lynn S. Adelman sided with MICAH and BHCW's concerns that billions are being spent on increasing the interchange by 83 acres of additional concrete, while nothing is being invested in mass transit. The judge agreed that the current reconstruction plan will increase segregation while it ignores the transit needs of the poor and seniors.

His decision sent DOT and NHA rushing to negotiations in June. Preparatory construction continues as a settlement is negotiated. MICAH and BHCW have reviewed a draft and hope to sign an agreement soon. Details cannot be discussed until the settlement is signed, but the outcome so far has been encouraging.

The bad, buses: Milwaukee County Executive Chris Abele has awarded a contract to operate the county's bus transit services to a private corporation, MV Transportation Inc, headquartered in Dallas, Tex. The county buses have been operated by a local non-profit, Milwaukee Transit Services, Inc., since 1975, but that will end on Jan. 1.

"I have a hard time believing you could come to the conclusion a for-profit is somehow going to provide more transit service at a lower cost than our current non-profit," said County Supervisor John Weishan Jr. MV posted \$829 million in revenue in 2011.

Autumn Assembly features talks, tours

Tom Heberlein, author of *Navigating Environmental Attitudes*, will be the featured speaker at this year's Autumn Assembly, scheduled for Oct. 11-13 at the Green Lake Conference Center.

A variety of topics ranging from protecting Wisconsin from destructive metallic mining to reducing the impact of sand mining will be explored by other experts. Workshops include writing effective letters to the editor, expanding clean energy in Wisconsin, increasing oversight to protect water resources, and advocating locally for transit, biking and walking. There will even be a songwriting workshop on applying verse to Sierra Club campaigns.

Musical entertainment will be provided by Ken Lonnquist, Fall



Riding the bus could get more popular if a suit filed over plans for Milwaukee's Zoo Interchange is successful. The plans would spend billions of dollars on concrete and nothing on mass transit.

The surprising, trains: Although Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker turned down \$800 million in federal funding for high-speed passenger rail service, the Minnesota Department of Transportation announced in May that it will draft plans to upgrade track for high-speed service along Amtrak's existing Empire Builder route between Milwaukee and the Twin Cities.

Wisconsin is not paying for any of that \$1.2 million study, but it will split the \$125,000 bill to study adding a second train to Amtrak's existing Empire Builder route linking the two cities. That route would hug the Minnesota side of the Mississippi River before crossing over into Wisconsin at La Crosse. The route has stops in Portage, Watertown, Wauwatosa and Milwaukee, but not Madison.

Volunteer Leadership Council (VLC) Contact List

Dianne Dagelen, GWG Chair and Conservation 414-771-1505
Janet Anderson, Communications 414-258-5624
Heather Hansen, Membership 812-360-0652
John Bahr, Energy 414-256-0932
Gary Hofmeister, Outings 262-821-1088
Chris Zapf, Secretary 262-786-9584
Rosemary Wehnes, JMC Delegate and Programs 414-453-1689
Ed Anderson, Political Chair 414-962-6077
Bill Moore, Member at Large, 262-785-9022
Camille Faherty, Treasurer 414-529-1826
Sandy and Dale Hofmann, Newsletter Editors 414-476-8636

and there will be a tour of Glacier Hills Wind Park, in addition to a solar homes demonstration, a hike to John Muir's boyhood home, a 50th anniversary celebration and mining and factory farm updates.

Please register on or before September 15 by using the Muir View form or online at: <http://action.sierraclub.org/site/Calendar?id=168841&view=Detail>



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

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Symposium explores students' research

Great Waters Group of Sierra Club, along with other esteemed environmental groups such as Sea Grant, SEWISC, Milwaukee Riverkeeper and The Nature Conservancy, will be a sponsor for the Riveredge Nature Center's First Annual Student Research Symposium event to be held on Saturday, November 9.

The theme, "Connections in Nature," will focus on interconnections among species and how changes in the environment can impact ecosystems. This is an opportunity for students throughout the region to present and discuss their research in ecology, environmental science, and natural systems.

Presentation submissions will be accepted until Sept. 30. Presenters and non-presenters alike are invited to attend and learn more about this cutting-edge research. For more details about registration fees and attendance, visit <http://www.riveredge.us/default.aspx?id=371>



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

GWG has new email address

You can reach GWG more easily now with its new group email address: greatwatersgroupsc@gmail.com. Of course, you're also welcome to contact our VLC members directly.

Tosa Green Summit focuses on sustainability

More than 25 exhibitors will provide awareness and education on topics ranging from home energy, conservation, water, gardening, transportation, and food at the fourth annual Tosa Green Summit to be held Oct. 26 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the Wauwatosa Civic Center, 7725 W. North Avenue.

The event is a free informational open house designed to help us make our community green and sustainable. We will also feature the documentary "Bag It," which discusses the effects of plastic bags on our environment. And a community forum entitled "Sustainability: It's Not Easy Being Green" will be led by 6th District Wauwatosa Alderman Jeff Roznowski.

Visit <http://www.tosagreen.ning.com/>, like us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/TosaGreenSummit> or contact Jeff Roznowski at jroznowski@wi.rr.com or 414-258-0633 for more information.