



**SIERRA
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GREAT WATERS GROUP NEWSLETTER

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County Grounds trees clear-cut without warning

Every tree east and immediately south of the Milwaukee County Parks administration building was clear-cut on Jan. 19, purportedly to make way for Innovation Parkway, even though the parkway would take up only a small part of that width.

Hundred-year-old oaks and maples were among the more than 50 trees that were cut down, and while it was claimed that most of them were “diseased” with insects, more than a dozen were healthy. Local officials fielded numerous complaints about why all of them were taken.



Aftermath of the destruction at the County Grounds. More photos at Eddee Daniel’s blog “Urban Wilderness”: <http://urbanwilderness-eddee.blogspot.com/2013/01/slaughter-on-milwaukee-county-grounds.html>

David Gilbert, president of UWM Real Estate Foundation, said that every cut tree would be replaced. But saplings don’t replace century-old habitat for

birds and butterflies. Citizens are asking for public notice of future tree removals to prevent indiscriminate clear-cutting in the future.

Spring Programs

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

Carl Jung’s “New Age”

Monday, March 18, 7 p.m.

Carl Jung believed a paradigm shift was needed to avoid the Apocalypse described in the last book in the Bible—drought, disease, famine and massive destruction of the planet. That could literally come true from climate change. Jung envisioned an age of greater feminine energy, the emergence of new spiritual forms and people experiencing an eco-consciousness. This lecture offers a chance to learn about the major changes that have to occur in what Jung called a “new age” in order to address climate change. Presenter Denis Merritt is in private practice as a Jungian psychoanalyst in Madison and Milwaukee and is a pioneer in the developing field of ecopsychology.

Earth Day Program

Friday, April 19 (No Monday night program in April)

Grand Canyon Adventure

Monday, May 20, 7 p.m.

Private river trips through the Grand Canyon are controlled by an annual lottery. A group of Wisconsin boaters was lucky enough to obtain a permit and paddled the Colorado River through the canyon in March of 2012. Fifteen people participated, and they were on the river for twenty days. In addition to showing photos of the canyon, river and white-water, presenter Dave Wehnes will lead a discussion on the geology of the canyon as well as some of the water management issues. Wehnes is an avid sailor who began kayaking with the JMC River Touring Section in the early 1970’s.

Find us –

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. 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.

From the (former) Chair

By Janet Anderson

I have served two-plus years as Chairman of the GWG Executive Committee, and now it's time for someone with a fresh, new perspective to take over. I'm hoping a candidate will emerge in the next few months, although none of the members of our newly elected Executive Committee was able to accept the position of Chairman or Vice-chairman at our meeting Jan. 28.

GWG members elected three new members and re-elected two continuing members to the ExCom. Congratulations to Ed Anderson, Heather Hansen, Gary Hofmeister, Rosemary Wehnes and Chris Zapf on their election. They join Dianne Dagelen, John Bahr and myself, who are continuing two-year terms, filling eight of a possible nine seats.

Some of the goals I pursued as chair were accomplished, and some were not. The vacancy in the chairmanship raises some questions about our future. Can we continue without an official chair or leader? Do we regroup? Do we reorganize? How do we do it now? How do we continue to thrive?

Sierra Club is a grassroots, national organization, divided into geographical units throughout the US. We're proud to have 3,100 members from a four-county area making up our Great Waters Group. We are all volunteers. We give our time and effort

Get to know your farmer at free local open house

You can meet and support your local farmers at the eleventh annual Local Farmer Open House on Saturday, March 9, at the Urban Ecology Center in Riverside Park. The event is free, and it runs from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Whether you are just learning about Community Supported Agriculture (CSAs) or have been a member of one for years, this is a great once-a-year opportunity to talk with local farmers, learn about their growing practices and share options, and choose which farm is best for you.

Lunch can be purchased from Jeppa Joes & MKE Localicious. You're invited to stop by the Resource Table to learn about food preservation and cooking classes, or to find out more about how to find locally grown and produced food, and how to connect with other good food enthusiasts.

Short workshops include:

- Intro to CSAs – 1 p.m. or 2:45 p.m. with Jamie Ferschinger
- Cooking from your CSA box -- 12:15 p.m. or 2 p.m. with Chef Annie Wegner LeFort
- Multiple Biological Effects from Low Level Pesticides in Foods – 11:30 a.m. with Warren Porter

to support our environmental values – and we fit that in with all of the other important things in our lives.

Ideally, GWG would have a large number of member-volunteers following through on a variety of tasks. Instead, we have a small group of member-volunteers trying to do a great many things. The paradigm is upside down, and when that happens, our most active members risk running out of time and energy.

You may have noted that we have fewer people participating in many of our outings, which results in our offering fewer outings. And when we have fewer people attending programs, we have to change the programs. When we ask our members to help us do the things that need doing to keep our Group going, we often get little or no response. Don't get me wrong. I am deeply appreciative of all of the efforts of our volunteers and contacts. But right now, we simply don't have enough volunteers to lead our group.

Can you help us with some of the many smaller tasks? Can you give a consistent two to three hours a month? Or would you prefer to help out at one or two events during the year?

For now, we will continue to function without an official Chair as we perform the tasks to which we're currently committed. And we will continue to keep in contact with the John Muir Chapter to discuss our future.

Please contact me at janeta16@sbcglobal.net or 414-258-5624 or join us at our next Volunteer Leadership Council business meeting on Feb 25. Take part in our discussion and offer some ideas. Please be part of our strong future.

Earth Day celebration scheduled for April 19

This year's Earth Day celebration will be held at the Urban Ecology Center's newest education outpost on the Hank Aaron Trail in the Menomonee Valley. Mark your calendars for Friday, April 19, for family fun and building environmental community.

The usual sustainability suspects will be rounded up as we learn about environmental justice in transportation needs, clean water and the food we eat. The Notre Dame Middle School girls' choir will lead us in song. Socializing and refreshments begin at 5 p.m., with the program starting at 5:30 p.m.

See you at 3700 W. Pierce St. in Milwaukee. If you'd like to volunteer at the celebration, contact Dianne Dagelen at ddagelen@sbcglobal.net or 414-771-1505 (h); 414-232-3208 (c).



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

Plan leaves Eschweiler fate in doubt

By Dianne Dagelen, Conservation Chair

When UWM Real Estate Foundation purchased about 89 acres of the northeast quadrant of the County Grounds in 2009, citizens were told that there would be a large underground parking lot immediately north of the new UWM Engineering Accelerator Building designed to conserve green space. Milwaukee County's condition for selling the land was the preservation of the historic Eschweiler Buildings. Now both expectations are being challenged.

The northeast quadrant of the County Grounds includes two tax incremental financing districts (TIFs). TIF No. 6 in the amount of \$6.5 million is slated for city roads and utilities on the land purchased by UWM Real Estate. TIF No. 2 in the amount of \$5.5 million is for Eschweiler Campus development. Cities borrow TIF funds to pay for infrastructure expenses that encourage business development in a specific area. They're designed to be repaid from the property taxes collected from the new businesses in that area. The city would like to use TIF No. 2 funds toward the \$12 million needed for Innovation Parkway, but these can't be used

unless development takes place on the Eschweiler Campus.

The original plan presented to the Wauwatosa Common Council by the developer, The Mandel Group, was to renovate all five of the Eschweiler buildings, yielding 168 units at a cost of \$46.1 million, and requiring an additional \$6.6 million in public financing. However, the firm's most recent proposal was to tear down four of the buildings to maximize profits by putting up 192 rental units at a cost of \$41.7 million. The buildings are so sturdily built that it will cost about \$1.5 million to demolish them. Even after using "preservation" grants, the developer would need an additional \$2.5 million to finish the construction, and it is demanding that this money come from public financing.

John Gee, executive director of the Forest Exploration Center (FEC) has presented a plan to renovate all of the Eschweiler buildings for a grades six-through-twelve charter school, using the nearby Monarch Habitat and DNR Forest for environmental studies. The school would lease part of its 12-acre campus from UWM Foundation, with a reduced Mandel residential development built next to it.

Multi-national technology company ABB is making plans to locate on the Innovation Campus, but it has recently requested an additional \$2 million in TIF money to pay for underground parking, and it has indicated it may pull out if it doesn't get the funds. TIF No. 6 is on a fast track to be amended for a much larger amount. Some city officials are concerned that if six more developers come to the campus, a \$12.8 million above-ground parking structure would be needed.

Some are concerned that the parking structure and roads will exhaust TIF No.2 money meant for the Eschweilers. But there are alternatives to an enlarged TIF debt. For example, building a greener, smaller parkway with two lanes instead of four and no center boulevard would reduce cost and traffic. The TIFs could be increased more gradually, and underground parking could be financed for each new development rather than building a structure for businesses that might never materialize.

The Forest Exploration Center's proposal offers a lifeline to both the Eschweiler buildings and to the Monarch Habitat. It would preserve our dwindling green space as well as our historic pride.

Disputed mining bill endangers environment

By Dianne Dagelen, Conservation Chair

A controversial bill that would allow Gogebic Taconite (Gtac) to extract low grade iron ore from the Bad River watershed near Lake Superior is on a fast track through the State Legislature, and Sierra Club members need to voice their opposition to it.

Concerned citizens met on Feb. 12 with Chairman Mike Wiggins and other members of the Bad River Tribe at the Urban Ecology Center where they were told that it's not about the mine, but the water.

According to Al Gedick's article in this month's Z Magazine, the bill "contains widespread exemptions from existing environmental regulations, severely limits public and tribal participation in the mine permitting process and ignores Ojibwe treaty rights on the lands sold to the U.S. in the 19th century. The giant open pit mine, which would discharge pollutants into the Bad River Ojibwe Tribe's sacred wild rice beds, would be the largest mine in state history."

The company's argument is based upon the misconception that iron mining is different from metallic sulfide mining, and Spring

therefore the existing sulfide mining laws don't apply. But Gedick points out that while iron ore doesn't contain sulfides, there is a sulfide-bearing layer of rocks immediately above the iron formation that would have to be removed. The sulfides in the waste rock can react with water and oxygen to produce sulfuric acid and release heavy metals like arsenic, lead and mercury into surface and groundwaters.

According to the written testimony of former DNR secretary George Meyer, the measure could allow the Department of Natural Resources to exempt an iron mining company from the environmental protections written into the bill. It also means waterways could be filled with mining waste, contaminating groundwater. High volumes of water could be taken from rivers, lakes and streams, even if that draws down nearby waterways.

Supporters tout thousands of jobs, but irreversible heavy metal pollution would far outweigh short-term job creation. To view the Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters' clever TV add on this issue, go to: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vub6TOhjJNs&list=PLC1DAAB8A55FD75E9&index=1>.



**Protect America's Environment
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Chris Zapf honored at festive holiday party

By Janet Anderson

Members of the Great Waters Group and guests enjoyed a wonderful gathering as they shared a delicious Middle-Eastern meal from Aladdin Deli at our annual Holiday Party Dec. 2 at the Wil O Way Recreation Center in Wauwatosa.

The evening was highlighted by the presentation of the "Environmental Hero of the Year 2012" award to a well-deserving Chris Zapf, who is an excellent example of an active volunteer member. Chris has been very dedicated to the Sierra Club and specifically to the Great Waters Group. She is serving as our secretary, and she has planned many, many outings and activities.

Fellow Sierra Club member and violinist Liisa Church provided a repertoire of lively Irish, bluegrass, and original music after dinner. We have a lot of talent within our Great Waters Group!

Special thanks go to Chris, Dave Hetzel, Joan Janus and too many others to name for their Special Events Committee help, and to the GWG members who made the tasty home-made desserts. Friends and members who donated auction items included Chris, Dave, Liisa, Ed Anderson, Janet Ander-

son, Cheri Briscoe, Barb Donaldson, J Hansen, Joan Janus, Vicki Samolyk, James Steeno, and Jane Stoltz. Thank you.

GWG members are encouraged to patronize the generous businesses that also donated items. They include:

Arbor House, An Environmental Inn, Madison; Art and Soul Gallery, B Green, Cold Spoons Gelato, Fair Trade Viroqua, Four Corners of the World Fair Trade Store, Jody Janus Massage and Yoga, Lakefront Brewery, The Little Read Book, Lowlands Group – Café Hollander, Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, REI, Rishi Tea, Samara Garden and Home and Usinger's Sausage.

Volunteer Leadership Council (VLC)

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