



GREAT WATERS GROUP NEWSLETTER

WWW.GREATWATERSGROUP.ORG greatwatersgroupsc@gmail.com

Fall, 2015 NO. 3

Plastic bags the wrong choice



Photo by Allen Becker

Bag It's very own bag lady danced to jazz while participating in the Wauwatosa Fourth of July parade. The organization is using entertainment to educate people on the hazards of single-use plastic bags.

*By John Bahr
Energy Chair*

Paper or plastic?

That's the familiar question heard at most grocery check-out lanes. With 190,000 bags used by Americans every second – each lasting 500 to 1,000 years – requiring 12 million barrels of oil annually, the environmentally friendly group Bag It has an answer.

The primary goal of Bag It is to reduce the number of single-use plastic bags taken from retail stores and thrown away. Many of these bags end up marring our landscape or finding their way into our waterways and then our oceans, injuring or killing aquatic animals.

With movies, meetings and surveys we have tried to help people understand the consequences of discarding plastic bags. This year we educated with entertainment by participating in Wauwatosa's Fourth of July parade with a "bag lady" dancing to jazz music as she marched. A committee member followed her along the parade route passing out Bag-It information.

We have also been working with a group of students from Wauwatosa East High School who bring a younger perspective to our work. We hope to partner with other community groups who also share our goals.

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Fall Programs

*Mayfair Mall Community Room G110-Garden Suites East
Free and open to the public*

Pristine Penokee Range Update
Monday, Sept. 21, 7 p.m.

Mining issues in Wisconsin's spectacular Penokee Range have been creating a hotbed of political and environmen-

tal activism. Stay up to date on the issue with forester Jim Uhrinak's latest review of the subject based on his 25 years of forest restoration and field work in the area. An outline of his Sept. 28-30 trip to the Range will be included.

Examining the Leopold Legacy and GWG Harvest Potluck
Monday, Oct. 19, 6:15 pm – potluck followed by the program at 7 p.m.

Bring your garden delights (or other dish) and share a meal
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Notes from the Chair

It seems a perfect storm this summer: Great Lakes water diversion, oil train accidents and highway expansion conflicts. Three environmental issues that affect us all.

Waukesha's thirsty water diversion request is a matter of environmental justice with impacts on the world's largest source of fresh water as well as local surrounding communities. The Department of Natural Resources is conducting an Environmental Impact Study (EIS). (See water article this page).

Citizens Acting for Rail Safety (CARS-MKE), 350.org and Sierra Club have been staging a number of educational protests and press conferences this summer to highlight the dangers of explosive oil trains and failing rail infrastructure. Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-Wis.) is considering federal safety legislation. (See train article page 3).

State highway expansion is taking a downturn with state budget/borrowing problems coupled with a recent legal victory to stop the Highway 23 project between Plymouth and Fond du Lac because of the Wisconsin Department of Transporta-

tion's inflated traffic predictions. This impact is reflected in the series of resolutions passed by Milwaukee County and the City of Milwaukee and a final vote in Wauwatosa advocating against I-94 Corridor expansion and for a transit option accessible to all.

The Coalition for More Responsible Transportation has spearheaded the resolutions, moving now to the third city surrounding I-94, West Allis. From the comments collected by WisDOT over two years of public meetings, 388 records show that more than 81% are opposed to highway expansion (double deck or adding a fourth lane), while more than half call for increased investment in transit. Comments are still being accepted for consideration for the final EIS by WisDOT. (Jason.Lynch@dot.wi.us).

Bottom line: your voice matters. Let your government decision makers know your concerns so that they can take effective administrative action for a just, safe and democratic environment.

Dianne Dagelen, Chair

Your ideas count on lake diversion

*By Dianne Dagelen
Chair and Conservation Chair*

Eight states bordering the Great Lakes along with two Canadian provinces will be voting on whether to allow Waukesha to divert Lake Michigan water for municipal purposes, and this is your chance to affect that decision.

Our Great Lakes are a national treasure. They are a source of sustainability for surrounding local communities: for drinking water, agriculture and jobs. The Great Lakes Compact, comprised of Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, Michigan, New York, Ohio and Pennsylvania, is meant to protect our largest source of fresh water on the planet. Water diversion should be a matter of last resort, not a preferred option.

Public hearings on the issue were scheduled for the week of Aug. 17 while **written comments are due by Aug. 28**. Written **comments can be posted or emailed to:** Ashley Hoekstra, DNR Bureau of Drinking Water and Groundwater; Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707-7921 or DNRWaukeshaDiversionApp@wisconsin.gov.

Approval of the diversion requires a Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and technical review, and the DNR has already approved the diversion in its draft EIS.

Waukesha's utility authorities base their request on a projected growing population and diminishing groundwater which contains natural occurring radium. However, Waukesha is requesting twice the amount of water (10.1 to 16.7 million gallons daily) than it's using now so that it can service township growth outside its boundaries some time in the future. But that area already has its own safe water supply.

It is because the diverted water is perceived to be meant for Waukesha's urban sprawl and industrial job development
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Geology explored on Ice Age trail

One of the best places to observe the unique glacial geology of much of Wisconsin is along the Parnell Segment of the Ice Age Trail through the Northern Unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest.

Eskers, kettles, kames, drumlins and erratics can all be found here, in the birthplace of the Ice Age Trail. Hikers will enjoy not only a learning exercise but plenty of physical exercise as they cover 13.9 strenuous miles in a day.

Date: Saturday, Sept. 12. Time: 10 a.m.-7p.m.

Level: Strenuous.

Location: Mauthe Lake Recreation Area, Kettle Moraine State Forest, Northern Unit.

Leaders: Dan Buckler and Alex Tarra. Please RSVP at Daniel.c.buckler@gmail.com or 330-261-2088.



*Photo by Eddee Daniel
Protestors alarmed by the continuing danger of oil trains traveling through our communities gathered on July 9 at Wauwatosa's Hart Park to make their feelings known.*

CARS group confronts oil train danger

By Eric Hansen

Crude oil train traffic – the creation of a pipeline on rails snaking through our neighborhoods – continues to be a contentious issue in the Milwaukee area and across the country.

Citizens Acting for Rail Safety-Milwaukee Area (CARS), a group formed this spring to join other CARS chapters in La Crosse, the Twin Cities and Watertown, held a press conference July 7 to mark the second anniversary of the Lac Megantic, Quebec, tragedy when a crude oil train that had passed through Milwaukee exploded, resulting in 47 deaths. The press conference, one of more than 80 held throughout North America commemorating the disaster was held in the Walker's Point neighborhood near the First St. railroad bridge.

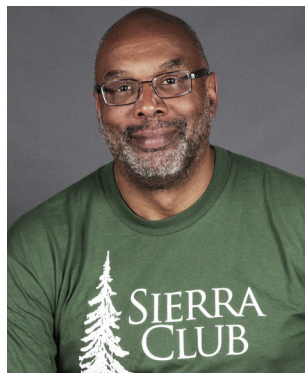
Two days later, the Milwaukee City Council learned that the Canadian Pacific Railroad would not share its inspection report for that 100-year-old bridge. Media reports have highlighted the corroded state of that bridge.

On July 10, Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-Wis.) wrote to the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) asking for an immediate inspection and access to the railroad's records for the bridge. FRA arrived at the bridge on July 13. Inspection report results are pending.

Follow the CARS-Milwaukee Facebook page for the latest local news and links to stories about the nationwide crude oil train campaign. You can check the Citizens Acting for Rail Safety-Milwaukee Area Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/SafeRails.MkeArea>)

Mair elected Club president

Aaron Mair, a Sierra Club volunteer leader for 25 years and an environmental activist for more than three decades, has been elected the Club's first African American president.



New President Aaron Mair

Mair of Schenectady, N.Y. is an epidemiological-spatial analyst with the New York State Department of Health. He became a Sierra Club member in 1999 after leading a successful decade-long battle to shut down a polluting solid waste incinerator in an inner-city community in Albany, N.Y.

Volunteers vital to GWG work

We need your help to make your Great Waters Group more effective. Like most organizations, we are only as good as the volunteers who contribute to our success. Volunteering is also an enjoyable way for you to make friends and expand your social network.

So what can you do? We are looking for people to help plan events, track environmental data, expand our political influence, perform membership, secretarial or computer tasks, coordinate global warming issues and do university outreach and fundraising and Holiday Party assistance. Tell us how you can give a hand.

Do you have a particular environmental interest or passion? We could use your skill. Contact Ed Anderson at maidenlakewisconsin@yahoo.com.

The scenic Perlstein Resort on Blass Lake in the Wisconsin Dells will be the site of our annual Autumn Assembly.



Autumn Assembly features local action

“Local Action, Statewide Impact” will be theme of this year’s Autumn Assembly when club members from around the state will gather at the Perlstein Resort on Blass Lake in the Wisconsin Dells Oct. 2-4. New Sierra Club President Aaron Mair will be in attendance.

Keynote speakers include Mike McCabe, former director of Wisconsin Democracy Campaign and author of [Blue Jeans in High Places](#), who will tell us how to move beyond our current two-party political dysfunction by focusing on the link between the environment and democracy.

James Edward Mills, author of [The Adventure Gap](#), will share

GWG’s annual holiday party offers food, fun, camaraderie

Join us for our annual GWG Holiday Party and Fundraiser. If you haven’t attended before, make this the year you do!

Doors open at 4 p.m. with drinks, snacks, and a silent auction. We’ll have a delicious dinner at 5:30 p.m. followed by music. More details on that later. Come with old friends and share the environmental camaraderie as you make new friends from the Sierra Club. The cost is \$25 per person.

Reservations are due by Sunday, Dec. 6. If you have items to donate for the auction or any questions, contact Janet Anderson at janeta16@sbcglobal.net or 414-258-5624. If you can’t make the party, consider sending a donation to help continue our efforts in our four-county area.

Date: Sunday, Dec. 13.

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).

Payment: Make checks payable to “Great Waters Group-SC.” Bring to an autumn program or send to: Janet Anderson, 2130 N 85th Street, Wauwatosa, WI 53226.

his vision on connecting more people with nature, especially people of color. And Scott Wittkopf of the Forward Institute will provide instruction on creating and framing progressive campaign messaging with workshops on your favorite issues.

The program includes sessions on clean energy, transportation, groundwater, tar sands and pipeline risks, as well as a young person’s perspective. Optional tours include the Aldo Leopold Legacy Center, the International Crane Foundation and a boat tour of the Upper Dells, plus canoeing on Blass Lake and morning bird walks.

To avoid a late fee, register before September 13. Early birds get the better rooms. More details can be found at <http://www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/2015-autumn-assembly>. Hope to see you there!

Volunteer Leadership Council (VLC) Contact List

Dianne Dagelen, GWG Chair and Conservation 414-771-1505
Bill Moore, Vice-Chair and Membership 262-785-9022
Heather Hansen, Delegate to JMC 812-360-0652
Ed Anderson, Political 414-520-2751
Janet Anderson, Communications 414-258-5624
John Bahr, Energy 414-256-0932
Dan Buckler, Outings and Secretary 330-757-1875
Chris Zapf, Programs 262-786-9584
Roy Krueger, Treasurer 262-544-6398
Sandy and Dale Hofmann, Newsletter Editors 414-476-8636

Nominations accepted for ExCom

Would you like to be more active on environmental issues? Nominations are being accepted for openings for the 2015-‘16 term of the Great Waters Group Executive Committee.

If you are interested in becoming an ExCom member or in nominating someone else, contact Dan Buckler at 330-261-2088 or Daniel.c.buckler@gmail.com.

Horicon hike is awesome

Halloween will not only be a time of fright, but a time of awe for those of you who join us as we take an approximately 4.5-mile stroll through part of the Horicon National Wildlife Refuge and learn about the thousands of birds making their way through the area on their migrations south. This will probably be one of the last weekends to observe large numbers of birds.

Date: Saturday, Oct. 31 Time: 9 a.m.-11:30 a.m.

Level: Easy

Location: Horicon National Wildlife Refuge

Leader: Dan Buckler. Please RSVP at Daniel.c.buckler@gmail.com or 330-261-2088.



The Horicon Marsh can be awe-inspiring.

Bikers, drivers to enjoy Harrington park

Join us as we pack our camping gear and ride bicycles up to lovely Harrington Beach State Park along Lake Michigan 40 miles north of Milwaukee.

Weather permitting, we can observe the breadth of our universe and learn about our place in it when the Northern Cross Science Foundation hosts an open house and luminary Haunted Hike at

the park's observatory on Saturday night. Those with less time or with children can travel by car and join us at the observatory at 6:45p.m. Call for details.

After camping out, we will ride back to Milwaukee on Sunday. Riders are responsible for their own bikes, gear and snacks, and they will chip in for communal food and camping sites.

 <p>COMMUNITY SHARES OF GREATER MILWAUKEE</p>	<p>Thank you to everyone who contributed through workplace giving to the Sierra Club Foundation and Community Shares of Greater Milwaukee.</p>
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Date: Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 17-18 Level: Difficult for riders, easy for drivers.

Location: Urban Ecology Center, Riverside Park to Harrington Beach State Park.

Leader: Dan Buckler. Please RSVP at Daniel.c.buckler@gmail.com or 330-261-2088.

Fall Programs

(Continued from page 1)

with like-minded members before hearing Cedar Lakes Conservation Foundation Director Bob Boucher, Wisconsin's original Riverkeeper and Madison Water Resource Management Graduate, present his study of current wildlife agency policies in Wisconsin today compared to the land ethics of Aldo Leopold.

Reservations are not required, but contacting Chris Zapf at (Zapfchristine@sbcglobal.net) prior to the meeting helps in meal planning.

“Pacific Paradise” documentary film.

Monday, Nov.16 , 7 p.m.

The plastic problem. This fascinating documentary details

the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, the mysterious phenomenon in the Midway Atoll, occurring as a result of our rabid use of plastics. Hear about a journalist's personal journey of discovery after interviewing researchers and volunteer activists on the issue. Remember: Every single piece of plastic ever created since the 19th century is still somewhere on our planet. If it never goes away, where DOES it go? Learn about something we can do to make a change.

Annual GWG Holiday Party

Sunday, Dec. 13, 4 p.m. – 8 p.m.

See article elsewhere in the newsletter for details – or visit www.sc-gwg.org.

Find us –

The GWG holds its monthly programs at Mayfair Mall. They are held the third Monday of most 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.

Monarch Trail group upbeat for celebration

Milwaukee area butterfly enthusiasts from the Friends of the Monarch Trail (FOMT) will gather for the tenth straight year on Sunday, Aug. 23, at the Milwaukee County Grounds in Wauwatosa to celebrate the beginning of the magnificent fall migration of Midwestern monarchs to their wintering sites in Mexico.

The Monarch Migration Celebration at the Monarch Trail begins at 5p.m. and will feature tours, food and drink, music and games. It's hoped that more than a few monarchs will be there, too.

The Monarch Trail was founded in 2006 by Wauwatosa resident Barb Agnew, who has fought tenaciously to preserve habitat on the County Grounds for monarchs and other wildlife. Extraordinary challenges posed by economic development projects, flood control projects and major street and highway projects have completely altered the landscape surrounding two small groves of trees where migrating monarchs stop over each autumn to rest and refuel for their journey.

Where once some 250 acres of meadows filled with wildflowers and milkweed stretched into the distance around those groves, almost no native habitat remains to feed hungry caterpillars or to provide nectar for adult butterflies.

Still, FOMT members are more optimistic than ever. Most

Field trip will explore Bad River watershed

Jim Uhrinak of the Milwaukee Audubon Society will lead a three-day field trip from Sept., 28-30 to explore the environmental, economic and public health impacts of open-pit mining on local communities, including the Bad River watershed.

With the recent job elimination of state DNR scientists who wrote the previous Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that described the ill-effects of mining, the stage is set for a rematch with mining interests. According to the *Wisconsin State Journal*, the La Pointe Iron Co., which owns property in Iron and Ashland counties, is seeking to revive iron ore mining plans in the area.

Participants on the trip will see spectacular waterfalls and vistas in fall color splendor while better understanding the importance of sustaining these endangered wild lands. Contact Jim at 414-873-3676 for more information, or see his presentation at our September Program.



Volunteers from the Friends of the Monarch Trail have worked hard to restore Monarch butterfly habitat at the Milwaukee County Grounds.

of the lost habitat remains as open space, and Agnew and her group have forged partnerships with every landowner and tenant on the properties involved to restore it.

The first and most important goal for FOMT was to preserve the migration roosting groves themselves when Milwaukee County proposed selling the property to the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in 2010. Agnew convinced the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors to preserve in perpetuity 11 acres, including the groves, as butterfly habitat.

The next task was to persuade UWM, the City of Wauwatosa and any tenants to adopt a native landscape plan for the remainder of UWM's Innovation Campus development project. Native prairie is in the process of being restored throughout. And finally, a 17-acre tract purchased by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) along U.S. Highway 45 as part of the massive Zoo Interchange Project is also being transformed in partnership with FOMT.

The most encouraging development of all came in May when President Barack Obama announced a federal initiative to commit resources for the conservation of all pollinators, including monarchs. FOMT, in alliance with Marek Landscaping, UWM, WisDOT and the Milwaukee County Parks Department has submitted an application for a \$160,000 grant to perform restoration work, with all partners providing significant in-kind matches. The grant awards will be announced in November, and if the FOMT application is accepted, the Monarch Trail will by the end of 2017 be returned nearly to its former glory.

“It has been a very rocky rollercoaster from the start,” Agnew said, but because we always did work cooperatively, and compromisingly when necessary, we kept partnership opportunities alive, so that now we are all working together toward a common goal of rebuilding. We're now all on the same path.”

Montgomery named organizer



Jayme Montgomery

Jayme Montgomery, a Milwaukee native with a strong desire to improve conditions in her city, has been hired as an Organizing Representative for Sierra Club's Great Lakes Program. She will be responsible for conducting a community mapping process in the 30th Street Corridor of Milwaukee to identify and work with community leaders and stakeholders. The project is part of an assessment of how Sierra Club can be most effective in adding value to a flood prevention project initiated by the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewer District (MMSD).

In 2010, a "100-year flood" resulted in heavy damage around the former A.O. Smith site and adjacent neighborhoods located in the 30th Street Corridor of Milwaukee. MMSD will invest millions of dollars in upgrading the storm water infrastructure in this area, and the Sierra Club wants to work with local partners and residents to get the community involved in this effort. Jayme hopes to engage Corridor residents, organizations and businesses to take a decisive and active role in reducing flooding through green infrastructure improvements.

As part of the mapping process, Jayme has compiled a list of Sierra Club members who live within the Corridor boundaries and has begun reaching out to them. Anyone would like to learn more about her work may contact her at Jayme.Montgomery@sierraclub.com, 414.236.1002.

Previously as the Wisconsin director for the League of Young Voters Education Fund and the Campaign Against Violence, Jayme played important roles in campaigns that increased voter participation, especially among non-college young adults.

She has been inspired by her work with the successful Keep Public Our Waters campaign in 2010 when the City of Milwaukee proposed "leasing" the municipal water utility to a private business for 99 years. Since 2012, she has been an organizer with Milwaukee Water Commons, a local group dedicated to bringing community residents and neighborhoods into the discussion about Milwaukee's future as a water city.

Jayme and her husband, Dr. Robert "Biko" Baker, have one child. She finds balance by staying active in the community, attending church and dancing with Signature Dance Company.

Fall

Make yourself heard

(Continued from page 2)

at the expense of Milwaukee that Milwaukee Mayor Barrett earlier denied diversion. Oak Creek is the new proposed provider.

Waukesha's diminishing groundwater claim is being questioned. The Compact Implementation Coalition (CIC), of which Milwaukee Riverkeeper is a member, and Circle of Blue have documented through hydrology reports from the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) that Waukesha's groundwater sources have actually been steadily rising since 2000. This information is missing from Waukesha's new DNR application.

Dan Ducniak, manager of Waukesha Water Utility, acknowledges the increase, but claims it relates to an earlier economic downturn. NWF says less water is being pumped because of conservation and water use efficiency, the addition of shallow wells and the fact that more eastern Menomonee Falls and New Berlin residents are getting water from Lake Michigan.

CIC contends that a few new shallow wells and more water conservation would provide the city an alternative safe drinking supply within the Mississippi River Basin, and at half the cost.

Plans for waste water return in the event of flooding are another major concern. During major events like the last three "100-year" storms we've had in the past seven years, Waukesha intends to dump its used water from Lake Michigan into the Root River, since its pumping system could not handle the large volumes of both rain and discharge at the same time. Folks living along the Root River are concerned about storm water management and flooding.

The water diversion issue is a matter of environmental justice. Great Waters Group is well aware of the proposed Waukesha diversion impact. Many of our members have testified at hearings held over the past five years. This is controversial within GWG since both Milwaukee and Waukesha counties are part of GWG.

There is a racial divide between the two counties that mirrors the fact that Milwaukee is one of the most racially segregated cities in the US. Should more water go to supply new industrial jobs and growth in Waukesha while Milwaukee has a high level of unemployment among people of color, but has lots of water and vacant factories?

Environmental justice, stewardship, water conservation, river preservation and urban sprawl are important concerns to Sierrans. Be sure to take the time to make your voice heard.



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

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'Bag It' teaches menace of plastic bags

(Continued from page 1)

We have a persuasive 45 minute movie called "Bag It" which educates with humor. When it was shown at the Wauwatosa Library, the Rosebud and Times movie theatres, viewers' response and support in follow-up questionnaires was encouraging. That was especially true when Wauwatosa Mayor Kathy Ehley was in attendance.

Food, wellness fair set for Sept. 12

Our annual Local Annual Food & Wellness Fair brings together great local foods and wellness practitioners and you're welcome to join us from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sept. 12 at the Urban Ecology Center at 1500 Park Place in Milwaukee.

The event formerly known as the Eat Local Resource Fair is intended to be a fun and educational event for the whole family. It provides local resources, cooking and wellness tips, workshops and hands-on demonstrations that can help people achieve greater vitality through local food and well-being.

Sponsored by Eat Local Milwaukee, a collaboration of Outpost Natural Foods and the Urban Ecology Center and Greensquare Center for the Healing Arts, the fair will include a Local Food and Wellness Marketplace, as well as food trucks.

To supplement our previous survey results, we now have Bag It members doing Tosa Tonight audience surveys at Hart Park. We ask people three questions: Do you understand the environmental impacts of plastic bags? Would you be willing to shop with re-usable bags? Would you approve of a city ordinance requiring a small fee for taking a plastic bag at check-out?

We hope to use the survey results to demonstrate to retail stores that there is public support for limiting the use of throw-away bags, and perhaps to encourage the City to take action requiring stores to charge a small amount for each bag taken at check-out.

Many places already have instituted successful programs to reduce the distribution of single-use plastic bags by encouraging people to bring their own reusable bags to stores. For example, when Washington DC placed a 5 cent charge on each plastic bag taken from a store, the use of new bags dropped by 80%. Ireland saw a 93% drop when stores were required to charge the equivalent of 22 cents per bag.

We will bring our movie and supportive material to any community group upon request. If you would like to join our Bag It group and help out in any capacity, please contact me at jp-bahr@wi.rr.com or 414-256-0932. Go to <http://www.bagitmovie.com/> for viewing or more information on the Bag It movie.