



GREAT WATERS GROUP NEWSLETTER

WWW.GREATWATERSGROUP.ORG greatwatersgroupsc@gmail.com

Summer, 2015 NO. 2

Earth Day focuses on climate change

By Dianne Dagelen, Conservation Chair

Dedicated Sierrans, knowledgeable speakers, talented musicians and exhibiting tablers were among 58 guests, including Mayor Tom Barrett, who came together for a successful educational Earth Day Celebration for 2015.

With graphics and humor, Dr. Paul Roebber of UW – Milwaukee’s Innovative Weather made the case for climate change as it affects Lake Michigan and Wisconsin. Milwaukee Riverkeeper Cheryl Nenn explored climate change impacts to our rivers and talked about strategies and adaptations to counteract those effects.

Bonnie Mayer from the Congregation of the Great Spirit provided inspiration for protecting *Michigumee* with a Native American perspective on history and culture. Her reverence for the Great Lakes was apparent in her personal stories.

Interspersed among the presentations were a series of short “climate change Wisconsin” video clips, courtesy of Clean Wisconsin. Topics ranged from Great Lakes shipping and fishing to urban heat waves. Dan Buckler presented a special video on Dick Silberman and sea kayaking on Lake Michigan.



The band Embedded Reporter drummed up enthusiasm at the Earth Day celebration.

Decorative fish created by artistic Sierrans and water-focused environmental tablers lent a fun marine atmosphere to the festivities. Musical entertainment provided by the Embedded Reporter band included guitar, acoustics, fiddle and a sing-along. Organic food and beverages rounded out the “Earth Day” experience. We left the event hungry for more involvement to save our great lake.

Growth of oil trains proving to be explosive

By Eric Hansen

“Without our consent or even notification, Wisconsin has become one of the busiest routes for dangerous oil train traffic in the nation.”

– U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin

Seven years ago, 9,500 railroad tank cars of crude oil traveled our nation’s railways. Today that figure is almost a half

million tank cars, many of them in mile-long trains of highly explosive North Dakota Bakken crude oil.

One route the oil trains take is along the Canadian Pacific tracks that enter Wisconsin at La Crosse. Those tracks cross Great Waters Group’s territory, traveling through Oconomowoc, Pewaukee, Brookfield, Elm Grove, Wauwatosa and Milwaukee.

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Notes from the Chair

Welcoming spring and looking forward to summer, I finally put away my cross-country skis – and my biathlon rifle – and brought out my binoculars for birding. The spring neotropical migration has begun. Wait a minute, you say. A Sierran with a gun who likes birds? How incongruous.

Some people have difficulty envisioning shooting a target while skiing in the woods as an acceptable outdoor pursuit. Questions arise. Is it not anti-environmental to discharge a firearm in the forest? Or is it a metaphysical exercise to control your breathing while transitioning from the mantra of repetitive striding for speed to the precise focus of target shooting and then returning to skiing?

I imagine it was how our ancestors were able to survive in the wilderness, stalking deer in frozen forests by becoming

the deer, dashing through trees, stopping abruptly to zoom in on danger, then fleeing from harm's way.

I enjoy target practice with my .22 caliber biathlon rifle. Shooting takes place in a special biathlon zone at the Southern Kettle Moraine McMiller range. Steel bullets enter a dirt berm behind the targets, which is periodically cleaned out. All metal casings are collected for recycling. As one who wears ear protectors when vacuuming, I notice little noise from a .22. But not all ranges are the same.

There is currently a debate over the proposed relocation of the Cudahy Sportsmen's Club shooting range at Warnimont Park. The state Department of Natural Resources has ordered Milwaukee County and the club to clean up contamination
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Betsy Abert and 20 plus fellow bird lovers warmed to the occasion on a Snowy Owl outing along Lake Michigan's shores. The owls decided not to appear, but many other birds filled in for them.

Communications options offered to GWG members

Our goals include providing environmentally-friendly and cost-effective communications with our Great Waters Group members. We share information with this newsletter four times each year, as well as with the GWG e-letter, our website (www.sc-gwg.org) and our Facebook page (Search "Great Waters Group" and "Like" us).

If you'd like to switch to electronic newsletter notification to help us save paper and mailing costs, notify Janet Anderson at janeta16@sbcglobal.net. If you're not currently receiving our monthly e-letters for updates and would like to, also contact Janet.

Thank you for helping us conserve our resources.

Bird explorers learn about global warming

By Cheri Briscoe

More than 20 participants turned out on a sunny, warm winter day on Feb. 14 to join Betsy Abert on a Snowy Owl outing along the Lake Michigan shores where we learned about the impact of global warming both on the lake and on the insects that are vital to the birds as they migrate along this critically important flyway.

"Warm" meant above 32 degrees, but alas, the owl that had been predictably present from November through January did not show up because of a recent cold snap that froze the inner harbor. So instead, we roamed from the Coast Guard Station to the Red Lighthouse by the Milwaukee River to Veterans Park searching for other birds.

We saw lots of diving ducks including golden eyes, scaups, white-winged scoters and red-breasted mergansers. Some were floating on ice chunks. And thanks to the keen eyes of several experienced birders, we got to see a long-tailed duck formerly known as an oldsquaw and a glaucous gull, which is fairly rare in these parts.

As John Muir said, "When we try to pick out anything by itself we find that it is bound fast by a thousand invisible cords that cannot be broken, to everything in the universe."

There were several ardent birders with scopes, so participants got a good look and were able to learn how to adjust their binoculars better. Thank you, Betsy, for putting together a most rewarding outing. We encourage others who have outdoor interests to become outings leaders. Sharing your nature interests is an important part of our Sierra Club.

Penokees trip to explore mining impact

Don't be fooled into thinking that interest in mining the Penokees has gone away. Wisconsin still has its new mining law that limits conservation considerations and our constitutional right to challenge those limits. And Gogebic Taconite (G-Tac) still has an interest in mining the Penokees – just not now.

The Milwaukee Audubon Society is committed to supporting resource-respectful sustainability in the Penokees area. Its 26th annual Penokee Field trip will be held September



Colorful sandstone cliffs will provide the backdrop when Sierrans explore the shores of Gitche Gumee this summer.

Hikers learn about Superior shoreline

Come join your Sierra Club friends from July 30 to Aug. 2 as we explore and learn about the shores of Gitche Gumee, including the multi-colored sandstone cliffs of Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore on Lake Superior near Munising, Mich.

On Friday we will walk six miles, including return, to picturesque Chapel Falls, and if the group feels ambitious we may hike an extra three miles to Spray Falls, which drops high over the cliffs into the lake. The splash of color is caused by minerals: red and orange from copper, green and blue from iron, white from lime and black from manganese. Waves, wind, rain and ice have eroded the landscape into arches, columns, promontories and thunder caves.

On Saturday we will hike three miles along the lakeshore and tour the historic Au Sable Light House built in 1873. The hike provides a great opportunity to view the colorful sandstone cliffs and high bluff dunes known as the Au Sable Dunes. We will camp at Hiawatha National Forest's Pete's Lake campground south of Munising. Saturday night's activities include a potluck dinner around the campfire. The terrain can be hilly, and it requires moderate physical ability.

Call Ed Anderson at 414-520-2751 to RSVP.

Summer

28-30. A second field trip will be held on Oct. 5-7 if there are enough participants. Sierrans are welcome to both trips.

The focus of the field trip is to explore the environmental, economic and public health impacts of open-pit mining on local communities, including the Bad River watershed. By backing off, G-Tac has made the mining a non-issue for the presidential campaign. Governor Walker is suing the EPA on its mining oversight, which G-Tec claims forced it to withdraw. The suit alleges that Wisconsin lost a big investor due to the governmental oversight, which EPA denies.

The route for each three-day field trip is organized to help participants acquire a sense of place for an area of approximately 500 square miles, between the crest of the Penokee Range and coastal Lake Superior. The wildlands within the area include some of the most spectacular waterfalls and vistas in Wisconsin. This area has been described as one of the seven best places in the world for fall color.

We will carpool and then caravan between several sites each day. None of the stops includes more than one mile of walking. Some of the walks rely on outdoor stairways, and a few participants have elected to sit out portions of the walks. No pets are allowed.

Telephone Jim Uhrinak (414-873-3676) for more information. He has conducted forest restoration and field work in the Penokees for 25 years. He will be giving an educational overview of the field trip at our September program.

May Program

Mayfair Mall Community

Room G110-Garden Suites East

Free and open to the public

Enter the east side of the Mall by the AMC Theatre

“Understanding the Global Water Crisis” Monday, May 18, 7 p.m.

Here in Wisconsin we have a special responsibility to protect the resources of both our groundwater and that of the Great Lakes. Jenny Kehl, Endowed Chair and Director of the Center for Water Policy at UW-Milwaukee's School of Freshwater Sciences, will help us understand the water challenges ahead for our state, as well as the need for strategic thinking, innovative policies and sustainable technologies inherent in water resource issues.

Milwaukee mayor environmental hero

By Dianne Dagelen, GWG Chair

Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett's accomplishments for Urban Sustainability are a model for every city. His ingenuity and resourcefulness have turned challenges into opportunity to move the city forward.

Among the many challenges he has faced have been racial segregation, thousands of manufacturing jobs lost, the spread of foreclosures and vacant lots accompanied by poverty and homelessness, inherited brownfields and polluted waterways, state funding cuts for public education while private schools are being promoted, and loss of transit support while the Wisconsin Department of Transportation digs up green space to add acres of new concrete for highway and street expansion.

Mayor Barrett has engaged in public/private partnerships to rejuvenate the Menomonee River Valley, Tower Automotive and more recently the South Harbor clean-up and development project. He has created jobs while improving the environment. Besides bringing the Blue BublR Bike Share System to Milwaukee, he has achieved the following:

1. In 2004 he created a community focused "Green Team"



Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett's many contributions to providing a sustainable environment have included lending a hand to converting vacant city-owned lots into garden space.

with reports of recommendations for action on energy, water and economic activity; 2. In 2006 he opened the city's Office of Environmental Sustainability, which improved more than 1,600 homes and 200 businesses with energy efficiency efforts; and 3. In 2013 started the HOME GR/OWN Program which empowers local communities to repurpose vacant lots into healthy food production or distribution sites.

Since coming into office in 2004 Mayor Barrett has saved
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RiverWalk promotes urban sustainability



The scenic Milwaukee RiverWalk now includes naturalized nesting areas for ducks and other water creatures.

Even though our monthly programs don't resume until September, summer doesn't mean you can't get together with your Sierra Club friends and learn about natural areas nearby. Join us July 23 for our second annual summer stroll on the impressive Milwaukee RiverWalk.

We'll meet at 5:30 p.m. at the Fonzi statue just south of Wells Street on the Milwaukee River and explore recently built naturalized nesting areas for ducks and other water creatures and learn how the walkway has contributed to urban sustainability. What was once an industrial corridor has become a wildlife refuge that has breathed new life into the Downtown area.

Afterward, we will meet for dinner on the deck of the Ale House at 233 N. Water St. in the cool Third Ward. If you can't make the walk, then just join us for dinner at 6:30 p.m. Come and tell us about your summer adventures. Call Ed Anderson at 414-520-2751 to RSVP.

Boundary Waters a treat for paddlers

You can learn firsthand about the beauty and importance of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness by taking part in one of the scenic canoe trips offered by John Muir Chapter Outings.

Participants will paddle through a wild northwoods area that spans the international border between northeast Minnesota and southwest Ontario and offers the largest expanse of wild, public access lands in the region. With more than 2,000 lakes and almost 1.2 million acres of remote wilderness, Quetico Provincial Park features picturesque rivers and lakes and the rugged beauty of towering rock cliffs, majestic waterfalls and virgin pine and spruce forests.

Our trip leaders are experienced veterans with Wilderness First Aid and SC's Outings Leadership Training approvals, in addition to their own personal outings, life, and leadership experiences. No experience is required for participants, but a friendly personality, positive attitude and good physical fitness are important assets. Trips normally last eight days and seven nights from put-in to take-out. Crews up to a maximum of nine can be limited by trip leaders.

There are no fees to participate, but the Quetico outings have direct shared costs of \$600 which cover group supplies, equipment, food and lodging, park permits and taxes. A refundable deposit reserves your spot. Not included are personal pre/post trip travel costs, passports, permits, fishing licenses or personal gear. Costs are less for other outings. Participants customarily make carpooling arrangements to the outing's starting point.

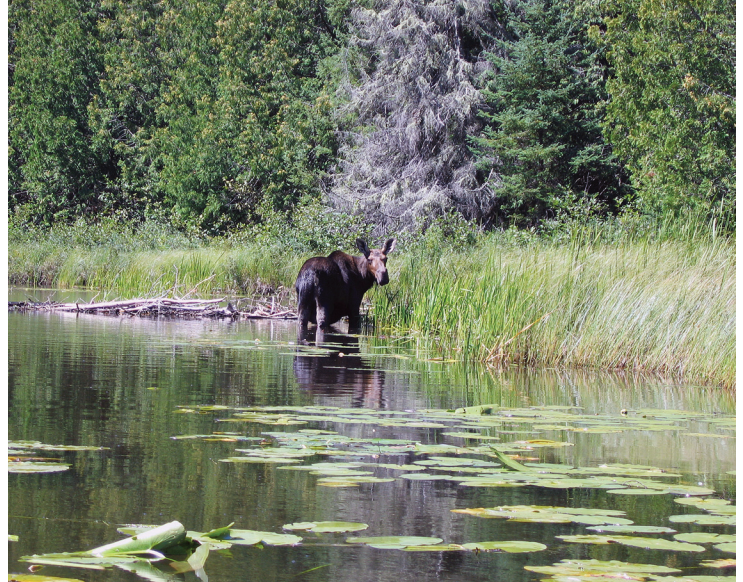
For more details on all trips, visit greatwatersgroup.org link to "Events and Outings" and then to "Boundary Waters/Quetico". Contact trip leaders for additional information.

Trip dates:

June 20-28 – Canoe trip is 8 days, 7 nights. Leader: David Thomas 414-344-1044, thomasdp@thomerwald.net.

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



A canoe adventure through the Boundary Waters wilderness comes with a wide variety of scenic delights including the four-legged kind.

Departure Point: Gunflint Trail area in northeast Minnesota.

August 7-16 – Canoe trip is 8 days, 7 nights. Leader: Vicki Christianson 715-827-0379 vchristianson@cornell.k12.wi.us.
Departure Point: Moose Lake in the Ely, MN area.

August 27-September 7 – Canoe trip is 8 days, 7 nights.
Co-leaders: Peter Brands 262-888-3516 pbrands@gmail.com
and Tim Karaskiewicz 414-397-8768
tkaraskiewicz@mitchellairport.com
Departure point: Ely, MN, area.

Other trips of interest from our leaders:

June 19-23 – 5 days, 4 nights Sylvania Wilderness: Service Project Leader: Dan Wallace, 608-835-5144, dwallace@src.wisc.edu
Trip cost: \$50 per person

September 24-27 -- 4 days, 3 nights. Women's Paddle Adventure: Leaders: Janet Clear 608-833-1339, janetclear@gmail.com and Nancy McDermott 608-238-1421, njmcderm@gmail.com.
Departure point: Trego, WI;
Trip cost: \$150. Limited to six participants.

Save the date for Autumn Assembly

The Four Lakes Group will be hosting the 2015 Autumn Assembly at Camp Perlstein on scenic Lake Blass in the Wisconsin Dells on Friday-Sunday, October 2-4. Mark it on your calendar and stay tuned for details.

Members to tour Champion trees



Milwaukee County boasts some of the most spectacular trees in Wisconsin. There's a reason why they are called Champions.

Some trees in Milwaukee County are called Champions because they are the biggest of their kind known in the state or country. Participants will learn about these giants and the practices that have saved them over the years on an Aug. 15 driving tour.

Participants are responsible for transportation. Contact Dan Buckler for more information and options.

Date: Saturday, August 15 from 10 a.m. to approximately 2 p.m.

Level: Easy

Location: Starting point to be determined. Please contact Dan beforehand.

Leader: Dan Buckler.

Please RSVP at Daniel.c.buckler@gmail.com or 330-261-2088.

Rifle sports need the right environment

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from the current trapshooting range along the Lake Michigan shoreline where 80 years of lead shot has accumulated in lake sediment, beaches and surrounding soil.

It poses a health risk to wildlife and the public. Depositing lead ammunition in Lake Michigan is a violation of the Clean Water Act. Other contaminants include broken clay pigeons and plastic wadding from shotgun shells.

The gun club shooting range has operated at the park since 1932. It is negotiating for a nearby lakefront site with a tall shot-blocking fence to prevent lead shot from reaching the lake and shoreline. However, it would be located next to a picnic area, and according to County Parks Director John Dargle Jr., would require rerouting a portion of the Oak Leaf Trail.

Wisconsin Metro Audubon Society is concerned about the club's proposed relocation spot because it's a diverse landscape of prairie grasses, an old orchard, deciduous trees and conifer stands that are irreplaceable nesting and stopover habitat for dozens of bird species, such as rare sparrows, bank swallows and more than a dozen warbler species. Situated along a critical and already compromised migratory flyway, this parkland is a vital link for birds that have traveled thousands of miles to reproduce.

It also attracts rare butterflies and the endangered Butler's Garter Snake. According to Milwaukee County Supervisor Pat Jursik, there are alternative shooting sites, such as the Winchester Gun

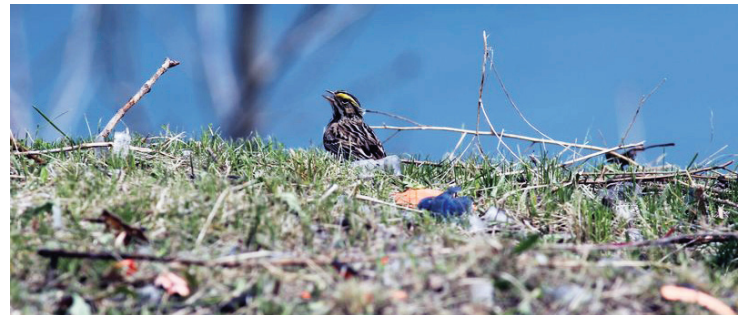


Photo by Jennifer Ambrose

A Savannah Sparrow shares space with some shotgun wadding at Warnimont Park.

Club in Racine, which is willing to accommodate the Cudahy club.

Some members of the Cudahy Sportsmen's Club believe an anti-gun bias is behind opposition to their preferred relocation within Warnimont Park. But even as a rifle sports woman, I support preservation and stewardship of important natural areas and would prefer a range away from Lake Michigan, picnickers, a densely populated neighborhood and the Oak Leaf Trail.

You can go to the various websites including Cudahy Gun Club Cudahytrap.com, Wisconsin Metro Audubon Society Wimetroaudubon.org and Friends of Grant Park www.FoGp.org for more information and decide for yourself.

*Dianne Dargelen, Chair
Great Waters Group, Sierra Club*

Citizens resisting oil train menace

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Forty-seven people died in Lac Megantic, Quebec, in July of 2013 when a crude oil train derailed and exploded. Before that train entered Quebec it had crossed Wisconsin, traveling through Milwaukee on the Canadian Pacific tracks.

During February and March of 2015, four oil trains derailed and exploded in a four week-period – including one near Galena, Ill., that had left Wisconsin just minutes before. The Galena train explosion created one of the spectacular twenty-story-high fireballs that typically mark these accidents.

Wisconsinites and other citizens all across the country are organizing to resist this dangerous intrusion of the oil industry. When citizens push, governments move into action.

Citizens Acting for Rail Safety (CARS), a La Crosse area group, led the way on grassroots action on this issue in Wisconsin, mobilizing citizen testimony, documenting unsafe railroad bridges and highlighting the urgent need to stop the expansion of crude oil train traffic.

Great Waters Group area citizens have also been in motion locally by initiating leafletting and a trackside press conference in Milwaukee's Walker's Point area. Increased coverage by local media, notably a front page article in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, has added to public awareness.

The Public Works Committee of Milwaukee's City Council held hearings on crude oil train traffic on April 8 and April 29. The pointed citizen testimony at those hearings led to even more publicity.

Wisconsinites have excelled at creating grassroots citizens campaigns that have successfully blocked polluting industrial giants time and again. Think of the DDT hearings in Madison some 48 years ago and the vast ripple effect of that victory. Similarly, Wisconsinites stared down Exxon and its



Freight trains carrying highly explosive oil present a growing menace to closely-packed urban areas. Almost a half million of them are now on the tracks, some as long as a mile.

plans for a dangerous metallic sulfide mine on the headwaters of the Wolf River.

Now is the time to stand up for common sense and an end to dangerous crude oil train traffic. Be aware that when you do that you're dealing with a problem that extends far beyond your own local community.

The sand mines that plague western Wisconsin are enablers for fracking, and fracking's product then returns to Wisconsin in the form of explosive crude oil trains.

Mayor Barrett model for urban sustainability

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taxpayers more than \$500,000 a year through energy reduction efforts on City facilities; reduced GHG emissions by nearly 30,000 metric tons in CO2 avoided; raised more than \$100 million in private capital for the City's sustainability initiatives; stimulated nearly \$30 million in economic activity in the City through sustainability initiatives; converted 13 vacant City-owned lots into food-related uses like community gardens, orchards and a pocket park; and installed the only wind turbine on the shore of Lake Michigan to "create" the Summer

City's first net zero energy building (the Port Administration Building). The City's Office of Environmental Sustainability provides a 7 to 1 return on investment, with every one dollar spent providing seven dollars in benefits to taxpayers.

Mayor Tom Barrett is a rare politician who doesn't shy away from being asked about climate change in public and is not afraid to use the phrase at work. As a model for Urban Sustainability, Tom Barrett stands as a great man in a great city on a great lake.



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

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Falk Park Wetlands are a muddy delight

By Chris Zapf

A big thanks to Great Waters Group Outings Chair Dan Buckler and Julia Robson, assistant Natural Areas Coordinator with Milwaukee County Parks, for taking us deep into the ephemeral wetlands of Falk Park, a natural treasure just south of Milwaukee. Falk Park is conveniently located at 2013 W. Rawson Ave. in Oak Creek, but most of us had never even been there before.

The spring temperatures were comfortable and the trail wet, but we were entertained and educated by Julia as she courageously jumped into the dark ponds and pulled out many a critter to examine and then release. Among her catches were blue-spotted salamanders, fairy shrimp, digger crayfish and an eight-inch long tiger salamander.



Julia Robson of the Milwaukee County Parks Department is handy with a lot of critters, including this tiger salamander.

We also learned about tree and wildflower identification. Birds including yellow-bellied sapsuckers, golden-crowned kinglets and hermit thrushes were active, and chorus frogs were downright deafening. Between the birds above and the amphibians below, the hike was a complete delight.

We encourage you to explore the park on your own. In fact, volunteers are needed for a citizen-based wetland monitoring program Julia runs for the County. More information can be found at:

<http://county.milwaukee.gov/CitizenScienceOpportunities>.



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