



GREAT WATERS GROUP NEWSLETTER

WWW.GREATWATERSGROUP.ORG greatwatersgroupsc@gmail.com

Winter, 2015 NO. 4



The population of Wisconsin beavers has declined by 75% in the past 30 years largely because of misguided Department of Natural Resources management policies. See story on page 4.

Food and fun featured at GWG Holiday Party

Join us for our annual GWG Holiday Party and Fundraiser on **Sunday, Dec. 13** from **4-8 p.m.** at the **Wil O Way Recreation Center in Wauwatosa**. Please note the change in date from the usual first Sunday in December to the second Sunday.

Doors open at 4 p.m. with drinks, snacks and a silent auction followed by a delicious Middle Eastern dinner at 5:30 p.m. with vegetarian and non-vegetarian options available.

Afterward, relax to entertainment by *Green Sails*. Inspired by the winds of Lake Michigan, *Green Sails* plays music, dances, sings and tells silly stories. The name denotes “Green” for Irish music and for ecology sustainability and “Sails” for sailing.

If you have items to donate for the auction, or if you have any questions, please
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WINTER PROGRAMS

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

“Pacific Paradise” documentary film

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 journal 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. It never goes away. Where DOES it go? Learn about something we can do to make a change.

Monday, Nov. 16, 7 p.m.

Annual GWG Holiday Party

Sunday, Dec. 13, 4 p.m.-8 p.m.

See article in this newsletter for details or visit www.sc-gwg.org.

“Merchants of Doubt” documentary film.

Monday, January 18, 7 p.m.

“Merchants of Doubt” shows how the playbook developed by big American tobacco companies to deny the link between smoking and cancer has been redeployed by the fossil fuel lobby to deny the link between industrial emissions and climate change. These ‘merchants of doubt’ have kept alive misinformation and fears about the eco-

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Notes from the Chair

“We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing and its human roots concern and affect us all.” (Laudato Si, #14)

As a champion for the environment of our “common home” Earth, Pope Francis addressed members of Congress this September, and through them, all Americans. Referencing Martin Luther King, he called us a nation of dreams. “Dreams which lead to action, to participation, to commitment.”

Focusing on four American heroes, King, Abraham Lincoln, Dorothy Day and Thomas Merton, the Pope dealt with issues of liberty, plurality, social justice and the capacity for dialogue. His talk touched on topics ranging from immigration to children living in poverty and violence, repeatedly returning to the concept of working for the “common good.” In particular, he addressed averting “the most serious effects of

environmental deterioration caused by human activity” and the necessity of “protecting nature.”

Pope Francis’ document *Laudato Si* and his US visit seem a giant step forward in tackling climate change. Since then I’ve heard folks who previously laughed at global warming now begin to think and talk about it seriously. “Well maybe....”

Those who talked about it before now are encouraged to action. Those who were in despair or denial now are hopeful and energized. Apparently a dream is more powerful than fear or apathy. Inclusiveness and justice are stronger than judgment.

There are a number of environmental groups working for a positive change as described in our current Newsletter. If you’d like to join those who put their dreams into action, I encourage you to contact a representative and get involved.

Dianne Dagele, Chair



There are many lakes in the Mukwonago River Unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest where snowshoers will explore in January.

Snowshoers explore new ground

Want to explore one of the newest additions to the Kettle Moraine State Forest? Want to learn how plants and animals survive the winter? We will talk about all of those things while we explore this new property on a snowshoe excursion on Jan. 30.

If there’s no snow, we will still enjoy hiking this lovely area.

Date: Saturday, Jan. 30. **Time:** 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

Level: Moderate.

Location: Mukwonago River Unit, Kettle Moraine State Forest, Mukwonago.

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

New coalition has ‘breakfast with Pope’

Three inter-faith gatherings discussed the issues and values raised by Pope Francis on Sept. 24 after watching the Pontiff address the US Congress on wide screen TV.

Climate Action Round Table (CART) of Greater Milwaukee, a new coalition of environmental groups including our Great Waters Group, organized the “Breakfast with Pope Francis” event at three locations in the metropolitan area, including the First Unitarian Society on Astor St., Park Lutheran Church on N. Stowell Ave, and Coffee Makes You Black on N. Teutonia Ave.

The viewings were attended by almost 100 people, and the discussions were later reported by WUWM public radio. If you are interested in working with this coalition, contact Mark Gill (1markanthony@earthlink.net or 414-759-3818)

Facebook and Twitter Training for Climate Activists

CART’s next event will be held on Monday, Nov. 16 at 7 p.m. at the First Unitarian Church, 1342 N. Astor St, Milwaukee when Keith Schmitz of Grass Roots Northshore, and Paul Geenen from Organizing For Action (OFA) will discuss how you can amplify your messages during the Nov. 28 People’s Climate March and the Paris Climate Conference that starts Nov. 30. You will be taught how to communicate directly with your state and federal legislators. Bring a 4G phone or a laptop.



*Paddlers were out in force as the coalition promoting oil train safety got together for a media event in the Milwaukee harbor.
Photo by Sue Bietila*

Oil and water don't mix at media event

Supporters of a new coalition committed to promoting rail freight transport safety in the Milwaukee area gathered on Oct. 13 for a media event called "Convergence at the Confluence" to focus on the risk of damage from oil train spills.

The event was held in the Lake Michigan harbor at the confluence of the Milwaukee and Menomonee Rivers directly beneath an aging swing rail bridge on the route where an oil train passed through Milwaukee County before derailling in Quebec, Canada in 2013. Forty-seven people were killed from the resulting explosion.

Have a holly (and ivy) jolly time at the Boerner Botanical Gardens

Why do we sing about the holly and the ivy, or kiss under the mistletoe, or chop down an evergreen and dress it up in colors? Join us to celebrate the holiday season by learning about the plants that play such a large role in traditional holiday celebrations.

We will hike around the Boerner Botanical Gardens and talk about the biology of, and traditions behind, such holiday plants as mistletoe, holly, ivy, poinsettias and of course, the Christmas tree.

Date: Saturday, Dec. 5. **Time:** 10 a.m.-noon.

Level: Easy.

Location: Meet at the Boerner Botanical Gardens, 9400 Boerner Dr., Hales Corners.

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

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Great Waters Group members joined Citizens Acting for Rail Safety-MKE, 350.org, and Milwaukee Riverkeepers as a coalition to emphasize the need for safety regulations to prevent heavy crude oil spillage that could sink to the bottom of the estuary and be carried up and down the rivers. The impact of such a spill on public safety, water quality, fishing and tourism would be costly and long lasting.

Sierran participants in the event included Anne Steinberg, Eric Hansen, Chris Zapf, Joan Janus, Dianne Dagelen, David Thomas, Diane Steigerwald, Laurie Szpot, Mike Arney and many others.



Dan Buckler will explain the historic importance of mistletoe and oak trees to young nature lovers in winter solstice celebrations.



Beaver dams like this one provide protection from predators such as coyotes, wolves and bears while providing access to food.

DNR policy dead wrong on beavers

By Robert Boucher
Executive Director, Cedar Lakes Conservation Foundation

Beavers are keystone species with crucial beneficial impacts on our wildlife habitat, and their population is being decimated in Wisconsin by the Department of Natural Resources' misguided management policies.

According to the DNR's own figures, there were about 41,000 beaver colonies in Wisconsin in 1985, and there are an estimated 9,791 colonies now. The DNR uses 5.5 beavers as the average number of animals per colonies, which means we have about 54,000 beavers now – down from 225,000 in 1985.

The actions of beavers have shaped the Wisconsin landscape for thousands of years. They create wetland habitats used by many other species, and this 75% crash in their numbers has led to the

impoverishment of the landscape to ducks, herons, kingfishers, amphibians, reptiles and mammals.

DNR fisheries staff use trout stamp dollars and pay USDA Wildlife Services to destroy beaver dams along 1,500 miles of trout water. From the years 1993 to 2014, a total of 16,183 beavers were killed and 2,594 dams removed by blowing them to smithereens with dynamite. That policy also killed about 1,000 otters. This is erroneously defended by DNR and Wildlife Services as “protecting valued resources in Wisconsin trout habitat.”

All fish studies of the *American Fisheries Society* show that trout are quite capable of passing beaver dams and have done so for thousands of years. This battle with beavers to maintain trout habitat sounds as absurd and as wasteful as a land war in Asia.

It is true that in some areas of the state beavers can cause problems by flooding roads, agricultural fields and other property, but Wisconsin has not adopted non-lethal methods of beaver control. These include a variety of flow devices such as the “beaver deceiver” that have proven to be less expensive and more effective than lethal methods.

The wetland habitats beavers create increase the carrying capacity and biodiversity of the landscape. Next to humans, no other animal has the capacity to improve the structure and hydrological stability of waterways. Beaver dams are created as a protection against predators, such as coyotes, wolves and bears and to provide easy access to food. The basic unit of beaver social organization is a family colony consisting of an adult male and an adult female in a monogamous pair and their kits and yearlings.

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Volunteer Leadership Council (VLC) Contact List

Dianne Dagen, GWG Chair & Conservation Chair 414-771-1505
 Bill Moore, Vice Chair & Membership Chair 262-785-9022
 Dan Buckler, Outings Chair & Secretary 330-261-2088
 Ed Anderson, Political Chair & Volunteer Coordinator 414-520-2751
 Chris Zapf, Program Chair 414-429-8069
 John Bahr, Energy Chair 414-256-0932
 Roy Krueger, Treasurer 262-544-6893
 Heather Hansen, JMC Delegate 812-360-0652
 Communication Team:
 Janet Anderson, E-letter & Webmaster 414-258-5624
 Dave Wehnes, Website Administrator 414-453-1689
 Sandy and Dale Hofmann, Newsletter Editors 414-476-8636

Beavers are crucial assets to wetlands

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The wetlands they do so much to enhance are the link between land and water, and they are some of the most productive and beautiful ecosystems in the world. They collect and hold floodwaters like sponges and help keep rivers at normal levels.

The mismanagement of beavers is a tragedy for Wisconsin, because it impoverishes the biodiversity of our landscape and weakens the structural stability and regenerative capacity of our land.

In Wisconsin our landscape would be improved if we restored beavers to the 1985 population levels. To achieve that goal, regulations need to be changed to permit only a limited trapping season or suspend all trapping to allow the population to recover.

Perhaps we should re-institute the original tagging method to enforce control and consider forest policies to assist in the rebound of the resource. An important effort needs to be made to encourage them in southern Wisconsin and the Milwaukee River watershed.

All of the agencies involved need to embrace a land ethic and manage for the greater landscape health throughout Wisconsin. Greater efforts are needed in education to have citizens and regulatory staff recognize the significant benefits beavers offer our land and water.

As the pioneering conservationist Aldo Leopold so elegantly put it:

“The last word in ignorance is the man who says of an animal



Photo by David Thomas

Conservation Chair Dianne Dagele joins Robert Boucher to examine an urban beaver dam.

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Photo by Dianne Dagele

Robert Boucher (left) and Sierra Club Outings Leader David Thomas examine the work of some industrious Milwaukee County beavers.

or plant, “What good is it?” If the land mechanism as a whole is good, then every part is good, whether we understand it or not. If the biota, in the course of aeons, has built something we like but do not understand, then who but a fool would discard seemingly useless parts? To keep every cog and wheel is the first precaution of intelligent tinkering.” — Aldo Leopold, *Round River: From the Journals of Aldo Leopold*

If you would like to help in the restoration of beaver populations in southern Wisconsin please contact Bob Boucher at rboucher1@wi.rr.com.

Beavers in Milwaukee another victory for urban wilderness

An intriguing presentation at our GWG October program on beavers creating wetlands, and wolves balancing forests led to an exploration paddle of the Milwaukee River in Lincoln Park. We went in search of beavers.

During the program Bob Boucher, executive director of the Cedar Lakes Conservation Foundation, talked about efforts to spread beaver populations in Wisconsin in order to increase wetlands. Although Milwaukee is the only county in the state which bans trapping and is therefore more protective for transplanting beavers, suburban Washington and Ozaukee Counties were thought to provide better habitat.

However, David Thomas, an avid urban paddler and Sierra Club Outings leader, announced from the audience that beavers were already in Milwaukee County on the Milwaukee River. Thomas
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Members of the Milwaukee Climate Crisis Coalition staged a die-in at the Federal Building in Milwaukee on Oct. 14 to dramatize the dangers of global warning.

Photo by Susan Ruggles

City Hall rally will kick off Climate March

Milwaukee environmentalists will join a Global Day of Climate Marches on Saturday, Nov. 28, with a rally inside the Milwaukee City Hall rotunda at 12:30 p.m. followed by a march to the WE Energies headquarters.

The event will precede the international Paris Climate Conference, which is intended to produce a binding agreement to reduce global CO2 emissions. In Milwaukee, a national leader with its sustainability program and promotion of solar energy, we will challenge WE Energies' regressive alternative energy policies and call for moving quickly to solar, wind and other sustainable alternative energy sources for a livable future.

Saturday, Nov. 28. 12:30pm
International Global Climate March - Milwaukee Action

Rally inside Milwaukee City Hall Rotunda, 200 E. Wells St.
 March to WE Energies headquarters, 231 W. Michigan Ave.

Keep Fossil Fuels in the Ground!
 100% Alternative Energy by 2050!

Contact Julie Enslow / George Martin: 414-964-9478
niiadjetey@gmail.com MKE Climate Crisis Coalitio

Scenic adventures await Northwoods paddlers

Don't miss the opportunity to enjoy the wild Northwoods on canoe and other outings offered by John Muir Chapter. In addition to outings to Quetico Provincial Park, an annual offering since 2004, we have several other offerings in Wisconsin, some in locations governed by the National Park Service and in commemoration of the NPS 100-year anniversary in 2016.

Our outings leaders are experienced veterans with Wilderness First Aid training and Sierra Club's Outings Leadership Training approvals. No experience is required for participants, but a friendly personality, positive attitude and good physical fitness are invaluable assets.

There are no fees to participate, but the Quetico outings have direct shared costs of about \$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 outings travel costs, passports, permits and fishing licenses. Contact outings leaders or visit greatwatersgroup.org for more details.

Longer trip dates include:

July 28-Aug. 7 Quetico Outing. Trip is 9 days, 8 nights. Co-Leaders: Nancy McDermott 608-238-1421 njmcderm@gmail.com and Will Stahl 920-725-9185 wrsy55@sbcglobal.net. Departure Point: Moose Lake - Ely, MN area. Cost is \$675 including \$100 deposit

July 29-Aug. 6 Quetico Outing. Trip is 8 days, 7 nights. Co-Leaders: Mike 253-219-9208 sumcqu@comcast.net and Scott McQuilkin 253-988-4394 lo86blazer@aol.com. Departure Point: International Falls, MN / Atikokan, ON. Cost is \$600 including \$100 deposit

Aug. 5-15 Quetico Outing. 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. Outing departure point: Atikokan, ON. Cost is \$600 including \$100 deposit.

Three nominated for ExCom posts

The Great Waters Group Nomination Committee, chaired by Dan Buckler, presents the nominees for the GWG Executive Committee for the 2016-'18 term. Following are biographies submitted by the candidates:

John Bahr

John is presently serving on the GWG Executive Committee and chairs the Energy and Global Warming Committee. He organized and directs Tosa Bag-It, a group focused on reducing the use of single-use plastic bags in our community. John believes this work must start at the local community level to serve as a model for other communities. He appreciates this opportunity to help make the GWG a strong presence in this four-county area.

Dianne Dagenen

Dianne is currently GWG Chair, and she continues as Conservation Chair, a position she has held for the past six years. She represents GWG on several organizations committed to environmental justice, including the Coalition for More Responsible Transportation, Cleaner Milwaukee Coalition, Interfaith Earth Network and Milwaukee Inner-city Congregations Allied for Hope (MICAH).

Working toward a transit alternative for the I-94 Corridor, conversion of We Energies' Valley coal plant and preservation



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

Party entertainers offer music, stories

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contact Janet Anderson at janeta16@sbcglobal.net or 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. Donations are not tax-deductible.

The Underwood Wil O Way Recreation Center is at 10602 W. Underwood Creek Parkway, Wauwatosa, located across from Hansen Golf Course just a bit west of the clubhouse, up the hill and into the woods.

The cost of this very enjoyable full evening is **\$25.00 per person**.

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Official Ballot: 2016-2018 GWG Executive Committee Election

Mark an X on the line next to your selections.

Each member may vote for only/up to three candidates.

Voter #1 ___ John Bahr ___ Dianne Dagenen ___ Bill Moore
Voter #2 ___ John Bahr ___ Dianne Dagenen ___ Bill Moore

Mail completed ballot to:

SC Great Waters Group Election Committee
PO Box 26798; Wauwatosa, WI 53226, postmarked by Dec. 28
or bring to our GWG Holiday Party Dec 13.

of parkland from clear-cutting are some of these groups' recent efforts. She helps organize educational Earth Day celebrations each year. She enjoys cross-country skiing, sailing, paddling, cycling and hiking.

Bill Moore

Bill is the Vice Chair of the GWG's Executive Committee, and he has served in various capacities during his 15 years of activism. He is encouraged by the growing realization in the community that creating huge coal-burning power plants is harmful to our health and that global warming is the greatest danger to the planet. He is especially pleased to have met so many wonderful members who have participated in the Boundary Waters/Quetico Wilderness canoe outings since he started them in 2004 and in the growing local outing programs that the GWG has initiated. He looks forward to continuing to support the motto of the Club "to Explore, Enjoy and Protect."

To vote, clip out the ballot provided here (or print out emailed page), mark the ballot with your selected candidates and return by mail or in person.

Support your Executive Committee members by voting.



The group Green Sails will provide lively entertainment at the annual GWG Holiday Party and Fundraiser.

Reservations are due by Friday, Dec. 4. Checks should be made payable to "Great Waters Group-SC" and sent by Dec. 4 to:

Janet Anderson
2130 N 85 Street
Wauwatosa, WI 53226



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Winter Programs

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conomic consequences of climate action. View this movie to learn how these professional climate deniers are paid to spread doubt and confusion about the reality of global warming.

The Ecology of fossil Fuels: of pipelines, oil trains, refineries, and more

Monday, Feb. 15, 7p.m.

Hear from Margaret Swedish, author and spiritualist, about her long study into and first-hand knowledge of the fuels industry. Ms. Swedish focuses her work on the ecological crises confronting humanity.

Join us to learn about how interconnected all of this is, the intentions of the industry now and into the future, and what is happening to it in the time of near record-low oil prices.

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. .*

Wauwatosa resolution a victory for transportation coalition

The Coalition for More Responsible Transportation enjoyed another success on Oct. 6 when the Wauwatosa Common Council voted unanimously for a resolution calling for the Wisconsin Department of Transportation not to expand the I-94 Corridor and to add a transit option to run parallel to the Corridor.

The resolution also has the support of both the City and County of Milwaukee, and we are looking ahead to explore support from West Allis.

Beavers urban success story

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agreed to lead Boucher, along with GWG Conservation Chair Dianne Dagenel, on an urban wilderness discovery canoe trip.

During our paddle we saw a beaver lodge and the dams the beavers have built. We also saw the expanded wetlands the beavers have created. The area was surrounded with beaver calling cards: chewed tree stumps and floating bark-stripped branches. We got out to explore an island adjacent to the beaver lodge and even walked the length of a dam to cross the river bank to Lincoln Park. The furry creatures proved to be quite the construction workers.