



**GREAT WATERS GROUP
NEWSLETTER**

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Summer, 2016 NO. 2



A song performed by UEC Washington Park’s Young Scientist Club lent a festive air to the Earth Day Celebration.

Protect and respect our planet

*By Dan Buckler
Outings Chair*

Treat the Earth with respect, for we have only one. That was the message given by Venice Williams, the keynote speaker at the Sierra Club’s annual Earth Day celebration in April.

Williams, the founder of Alice’s Garden in Milwaukee, used public participation to underscore her message that the Earth

must be collectively protected if it is to survive. When she threw a large ball into the audience, it bounced around for a few seconds before it fell to the ground. The metaphor was not subtle, but it was effective. We smack the Earth around and then let it fall.

Later, to bookend her presentation, she handed the ball to the audience, and people gently passed it between one another.

Williams’ speech was the capstone of an already successful day. This year the Great Waters Group partnered with the Urban Ecology Center – Washington Park to get people out into the park and then back into the UEC building to learn a few things about nature, sustainability and social action.

Hundreds of community members came to our Earth Day of Service and celebration, and the quantity and diversity of volunteers was inspiring.

In between and after pulling garlic mustard and other projects, 141 volunteers visited UEC’s auditorium at Washington
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Showing our reverence to Earth

By Janine Arseneau

Dear Planet Earth:

You were there, at the Urban Ecology Center, Washington Park, at noon on April 23, 2016, when a diverse group of youth, adults and elders, streamed into the great hall after a morning of planting and weeding and cleaning up the
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Notes from the Chair

One hundred years ago, the US Congress authorized our National Parks – providing and preserving pristine forests, canyons, wetlands, deserts, mountains and shorelines for future generations. These lands are not reserved for royalty or development by corporations. They belong to you and your fellow Americans.

The best way to celebrate our parks is to enjoy them. Please join us on our Apostle Islands adventure this July for lighting bugs, campfires, star gazing, camaraderie and other magical outdoor wonderment.

Just the other day a friend of mine took me for a wheelchair stroll along parkland overlooking Lake Michigan. Having been cooped up for two weeks following knee surgery, I couldn't seem to breathe in enough fresh air. Feeling the wind blow, hearing the cardinal twill, watching

a sailboat glide ... almost heaven in Wisconsin.

Urban wilderness is abundant in our Great Waters Group area. Our emerald necklace of parks, rivers and bike trails clasp at our sparkling lakefront. We have railway corridor wetlands and gratefully ignored prairie lots. These are the dots and dashes that connect us to nature.

Even more important, when we gather together to care for the Earth, nature connects us to each other. This is what happened at our Earth Day of Service and Urban Wilderness program when our Great Waters Group partnered with Urban Ecology Center at Washington Park. Four hundred people came together in service and gratitude. Environmental community at its best.

Dianne Dagen, Chair

CARS gathering focuses on safety

By Anne Steinberg

Clean water enthusiasts will meet Sunday, July 17, from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. on the water and the adjacent river walk where the Milwaukee and Menomonee Rivers converge near the railroad swing bridge that carries oil trains in the Third Ward.

This will be your chance to join Citizens Acting for Rail Safety-Milwaukee Area and Milwaukee Riverkeeper to say that you want to get explosive oil trains off the tracks and bridges.

The swing bridge at the Convergence is just one of many in the metro area where trains carrying volatile crude oil cross or travel near local rivers. Our railroad system was not laid out with this kind of dangerous cargo in mind.

Crude oil trains threaten the Milwaukee, Menomonee and Kin-
(Continued on page 6)



GWG member Chris Zapf and other kayakers will be delivering a rail safety message at the convergence of the Milwaukee and Menomonee Rivers.

Apostle outings salute Park Service

Pristine beaches and miles of wooded hiking trails await Sier-rans who will commemorate the centennial of our National Park Service with a choice of outings on the Apostle Islands. Options include a two-night stay on Stockton Island, a three-night stay on Oak Island or all five nights. A sea kayak day trip to the mainland sea caves is also available, weather permitting.

Enjoy ranger-guided presentations and campfires with island stories. Learn about the natural and cultural history of the area. There is no fee for this outing, but there are direct shared costs of campsite reservations, boat fare and food. Estimated costs

are: Stockton \$125, Oak \$150 and both \$250. Deposit is \$50, and there is a limit of 16 people.

Dates:

Sunday, July 17 – two nights at Stockton Island, Quarry Bay
Tuesday, July 19 – three nights on Oak Island, with 1.5 mile backpack to campsite

Friday, July 22 – evening boat returns to Bayfield

Saturday, July 23 – optional sea kayak day trip

Contact: David Thomas 414-344-1044 or
thomasdp@thomerwald.net

Water Commons plans celebration

Hundreds of Milwaukeeans will join Milwaukee Water Commons on Sunday, Aug. 7, for the group's second annual beachfront celebration of Milwaukee's water. The gathering will take place from 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the north end of Bradford Beach.

Artist in Residence Melanie Ariens will lead attendees in a participatory art installation, to be illuminated at dusk. The family-friendly event will feature a range of artists and cultural offerings, and all activities are free. Last year's celebration drew more than 250 people from all areas of the city.

"It was a joyous thing, celebrating our city's waters with folks from every corner of our city," said Ariens. "Amazing things happen when Milwaukeeans break through race and class barriers and come together around our shared water future."

Ann Brummitt, co-Executive Director, agreed. "Our vision is a simple one," Brummitt said. "Milwaukee Water Commons believes Milwaukee has the needed ingenuity, creativity and expertise to become a model water city. We think everyone



The beachfront will be aglow when Milwaukee Water Commons holds its second annual celebration on Aug. 7.

in every part of our city has a vital role to play in this effort, and we believe all of us should share in our water's care and benefits. Celebrating our precious waters is an important part of building that vision, and We Are Water is an important step toward the types of conversations and actions that will make Milwaukee a true water city."

For more information contact Ann Brummitt at 414-763-6199 or annbrummitt@gmail.com.

FEC session to update woods project

The Forest Exploration Center (FEC) of Wauwatosa will hold a June 27 public meeting designed to share updates and receive comments on Milwaukee County's only protected forest. The event is scheduled from 6 to 8 p.m. at Wil-O-Way at 10602 Underwood Parkway in Wauwatosa.

The FEC has been welcomed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to build on a unique urban wilderness. The DNR Woods on the County Grounds serves as a respite for city dwellers to hike, snow shoe and simply get lost in nature. Part of the DNR Woods to be developed is currently used by WisDOT to crush concrete, so here a planned educational building will be an improvement. However, the building will house a saw mill.

The FEC seeks to foster a deeper understanding of forest ecology and sustainable forestry practices while exploring the cultural, ecological, environmental and economic importance of Wisconsin's forests and our role as stewards.

These goals will be carried out in part by removing designated trees from the DNR Woods and milling them on site so as to demonstrate to urban dwellers the source of our furniture and other wooden structures and to engender an appreciation for forestry.

For more information about FEC, go to: <http://www.forestexplorationcenter.org/>.

Quetico adventure will explore wildlife

Don't miss the opportunity to enjoy the wild North Woods at our Aug. 5-15 outing in the Quetico Provincial Park on the Canadian side of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area. Learn what wilderness is all about.

The focus will be on wildlife, and so it will include a few early morning paddles. Great food and starry nights should make for a fulfilling trip as the dates coincide with the peak of the Perseid meteor shower. Two layover days are planned. Summer 2016

The outing is limited to nine participants.

For more details and a complete list of Quetico paddles, visit sierraclub.org/wisconsin/outings-events. If a trip is full you can get on a wait list. With cancellations, there is a good chance you will get to go.

Leaders: Peter Brands pbrands@gmail.com, 262-888- 3516 and Jane McMillan jane.e.mcmillan@gmail.com, 815-519-3310.

The piney woods between Manitowish Waters and Boulder Junction offer scenic wetlands views.



Vilas County bikers to see glacier effects

Come join us in welcoming summer as we bike the piney woods between Manitowish Waters and Boulder Junction on June 17-18.

As we ride the new Heart of Vilas County Bike Trail through the Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest, we'll be stopping often along the way to learn first-hand about the effects of the last glacier that created one of the most densely packed areas of fresh water lakes in the world.

On Saturday we will bike 10 miles into Boulder Junction where we'll also learn how smart environmental planning led to a village praised for its efforts to promote its natural north woods. On Sunday morning we will bike seven miles into Manitowish Waters through more glaciated areas.

Bring a dish to pass for our pot luck Saturday night at Big Lake Campground right on the trail. Don't forget your swim suit. Moderate physical ability will be required. Call Ed Anderson (414-520-2751) to make your camping reservations.

Monarch Trail Friends schedule three events

The Friends of the Monarch Trail (FOMT) will host three summer events at the Monarch Trailhead at 9810 Eschweiler Drive in Wauwatosa, beginning with their annual Milkweed Plant Sale on June 5 from noon to 3 p.m.

Also scheduled are a Planting/Restoration Day on June 26 from noon to 3 p.m. and a Migration Celebration with music and art on Aug. 28 from 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. More information, maps and directions can be found at www.themonarchtrail.org or on Facebook.

FOMT is expanding its restoration area again this year, collaborating with the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District and the Milwaukee County Parks in rehabilitating the 91-acre flood water detention basins and a 55-acre County Grounds Park.

More than 50% of this acreage is covered with invasive, non-



native crown vetch and teasel, which has already choked out all beneficial plants that support monarchs and pollinators.

The Friends have formed partnerships with both agencies and the Department of Transportation to apply for the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Monarch Butterfly Conservation grant. It will take years of hard work but ultimately, we have the potential to regain 165 acres of the Milwaukee County Grounds and create a continuum of habitats – a restored corridor for wildlife.

Speak your mind on transit system

Dianne Dagele
Conservation Chair

Two years and many public meetings ago, an alternative to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's (DOT) proposed I-94 Corridor expansion was presented by the Coalition for More Responsible Transportation (CMRT). Since then, that alternative has generated considerable controversy, and with it opportunities for you to make your voice heard on this vital public issue.

The CMRT proposal included a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system that ran parallel to I-94 from downtown Milwaukee to the Milwaukee Regional Medical Center (MRMC), connecting the two largest job centers in the county. The bus routes would run on Wisconsin Ave. and Bluemound Road on the north side of the expressway, and on National Ave. and Greenfield Ave. on the south side, crisscrossing at Miller Park.

Then in June of 2015 Milwaukee County Executive Chris Abele announced that the Milwaukee County Transportation Department (MCTD) would begin a design and feasibility study for a federally funded BRT plan.

Then in March of this year there was an impromptu BRT meeting at Wauwatosa's Hart Park. Many residents were angry at having the buses running down Wisconsin Ave as proposed in a recently published UWM study. Neighbors also questioned the need for more "empty buses."

A week later those neighbors were marching in protest, pushing children in strollers, carrying signs. They believed that adding BRT buses would bring more heavy traffic to Wisconsin Ave, Bluemound Road and 84th St., making it more dangerous for their children. They said that congestion is already out of control.

And it will actually get worse. According to the DOT's Environmental Impact Statement for the Zoo Interchange reconstruction, north-bound traffic on Glenview Ave (84th St.) exiting off I-94 is expected to increase by 1,000 vehicles per day by 2018. And most of those vehicles will be turning east or west onto Bluemound Rd.

Volunteers welcome

Come join your fellow Sierra Club volunteers and help plan our monthly meetings. We are looking for a Program Chair to help identify five program speakers per year. It's a great way to broaden your knowledge of local conservation resources and to network with a variety of environmental workers. You'll also make new friends and have an important hand in bringing timely topics to our members. Contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Ed Anderson, to find out more (maidenlakewisconsin@yahoo.com; 414-520-2751).



Smart bikers would know how to take advantage of a proposed Bus Rapid Transit System in the Milwaukee Metropolitan area.

However, if enough Bluemound drivers use public transit such as BRT, traffic will decrease. I stress "use" because merely putting new buses on Bluemound with fewer stops does not guarantee people will ride those "empty buses". The most applauded question asked at the March meeting was: "What is the Milwaukee Regional Medical Center doing now to encourage their 16,000 employees and 30,000 daily visitors to ride the bus there?" MRMC Executive Director Bob Simi responded humbly: "Nothing."

I see value in transit access, but that value is diminished if BRT on Bluemound means scaling back or eliminating existing bus service on Wisconsin Ave. Unfortunately that is what officials of the Milwaukee County Transit Services indicate is likely to happen.

BRT service in Milwaukee County is a good use of federal funding that's set aside for this specific purpose, and by law cannot be used on other infrastructure projects. BRT funding would provide the county with ten quiet, fume-free electric buses with signal control technology, protective bus shelters and flexible lane operation. On Bluemound Road it could connect with Miller Park and Waukesha's Metro BRT route west of 124th St.

While WisDOT is spending billions on expanding concrete in our neighborhoods, spending millions on new buses and shelters to reduce traffic is not a bad investment. Some neighbors are understandably opposed to BRT in Wauwatosa. I believe it would be welcomed if County Executive Abele could convince our state legislature to include funding for road re-pavement along the BRT route.

Find a BRT meeting and go to it. Ask questions and make your opinions known. There is one on May 18 at Marquette University's Memorial Union. For more information and future meeting postings, go to: www.eastwestbrt.com.

Backpackers help to construct trail

Backpackers will enjoy discovering as well as helping to create the Heritage section of the Ice Age Trail at a five-day outing beginning June 24.

This trip has two components. Friday and Saturday night we camp at Copper Falls State Park, building trail during the day. Sunday at noon until Tuesday we backpack through the Penokees area, hiking less than 10 miles per day until we reach our shuttled cars.

The North Country Trail is currently under construction, stretching from upstate New York to North Dakota. Hundreds of volunteers are involved in building the trail by hand. There is a limit of six participants for this outing, and beginner backpackers are welcome.

Cost: Approximately \$30 for food. Costs are shared. Unused money can be refunded or donated.

Location: North Country Trail near Mellen, WI, and Copper Falls State Park

Leader: David Thomas 414-344-1044; david@thomerwald.net

Co-Leader: Mike Stafford 414-403-4575; gbpackr@aol.com



Volunteers will help blaze a trail at our North Country Backpack Outing.

CARS event will focus on safety

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nickinick Rivers and Lake Michigan. After decades of clean water work, we are alarmed to see an oil pipeline on rails emerge in our metro area. Clean water work has also been an essential part of the revitalization of the Third Ward, Menomonee Valley and more recently, the Inner Harbor. An oil spill would have serious environmental and economic consequences.

Highly volatile oil plus unsafe tank cars plus lack of transparency plus inadequate government regulations equal danger for our communities.

Citizens Acting for Rail Safety- Milwaukee Area is a grassroots

Volunteer Leadership Council (VLC) Contact List

Dianne Dagelen, GWG Chair & Conservation Chair 414-771-1505
Bill Moore, Vice Chair & Membership Chair 262-785-9022
Ed Anderson, Political Chair & Volunteer Coordinator 414-520-2751
Dan Buckler, Outings Chair 330-261-2088
John Bahr, Energy Chair 414-256-0932
Chris Zapf, Member-at-Large 414-429-8069
Crystal Hoecherl, Secretary 414-614-3034
Roy Krueger, Treasurer 262-544-6893
Heather Hansen, JMC Delegate 812-360-0652
Dianne Dagelen, Newsletter Chair 414-771-1505
Janet Anderson, Communication Chair
(E-letter, Website, Facebook) 414-258-5624
Dave Wehnes, Website Administrator 414-453-1689
Sandy and Dale Hofmann, Newsletter Editors 414-476-8636

Registration:

Free Registration and more information is available at 2016convergence.eventbrite.com.

Parade and Paddle at the Convergence at the Confluence
Sunday, July 17, 3 to 5 p.m.

3 p.m. Parade and Paddle

Paraders - Meet on the Milwaukee River Walk at E. Chicago St. in the Third Ward to parade with banners and puppets.

Guided river paddle with the Milwaukee Riverkeeper

Rent from Milwaukee Kayak Co. or bring your own boat (launch site TBA). Plan to arrive at 2 p.m. for boat fitting or launching and boat decoration.

4 p.m. Convergence Gathering of clean water supporters on the river and on the river walk at the Confluence of the Milwaukee & Menomonee Rivers, by the railroad swing bridge in the Third Ward.

5 p.m. Socializing, snacks and updates

citizens' organization working for the health, safety, and quality of life of communities threatened by rail transportation. Milwaukee Riverkeeper is a science-based advocacy organization working for swimmable, fishable rivers.

Celebration urges protection, respect

(Continued from page 1)

Park and toured the UEC building to meet and learn from various environmental and service organizations from the Milwaukee area. We would like to thank Treasures of Oz, the Boys and Girls Club, the US Forest Service, the Urban Ecology Center, Milwaukee County Parks, Victory Garden Initiative, Girl Scouts, Bag-It, and the Washington Heights Neighborhood Association Green Committee for their participation.

Many volunteers returned to or remained at the auditorium to enjoy our entertaining educational program that was provided along with a free lunch. The audience was captivated by UEC Washington Park's Young Scientists Club, which performed a song led by musician Connie Grauer. Then Venice Williams shared her magic with Planet Earth.

A total of 396 people formally registered for the Earth Day event. We would like to thank every single one of them for helping Washington Park remain one of the treasures of Milwaukee County, and for helping the Earth feel a little bit more respected.



Keynote speaker Venice Williams knew how to connect with the youngsters in her audience at Washington Park.

An ode to reverence for our planet

(Continued from page 1)

park. The group gathered close to the stage, responding to Venice Williams' invitation to come to the front of the room.

Planet Earth, you know what happened next: Venice reached for a large silver-grey balance ball, and with the assistance of a young volunteer, tossed the ball into the crowd. Keep it going, keep it moving, came the call from the stage. And so it was that the silver-grey ball was thrown and tossed and dropped many times as it was passed from person to person. After being tossed and dropped again and again, Venice asked for it to be returned to the stage.



A silver-gray bouncing ball delivered a green message at the annual Earth Day celebration.

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Planet Earth, it will come as no surprise to you that Venice told the audience that the ball represented you, our Mother Earth. A hush came over the group. That's how we treat you, isn't it? We're careless with you. We treat you with so little respect. For heaven's sake, we let go of you and even drop you!

Venice and her young helper reached into a large brown shopping bag of possibilities: of simple things everyone can do to treat you with a bit more care and respect. Simple things like not using plastic water bottles or plastic bags. Like using cloth napkins instead of paper napkins. Simple things.

Venice, a minister as well as a gardener/farmer/mother/community builder, spoke words of an invocation to you, Mother Earth, Planet Earth. The crowd was very quiet as she reached once again for the silver-grey ball. This is the earth, she said. This is our Mother Earth. Treat her well, treat her gently. She passed the ball to someone in the first row. That person held the ball softly, and passed the ball quietly, softly, gently to the next person, who cradled the ball before gently passing it to the next person, and so it went, from one set of careful, caring arms to the next, from person to person, in a room united in quiet reverence for you, our beautiful Mother Earth, on this year's celebration of Earth Day.



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

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Great Waters Group welcomes new secretary

*By Dianne Dagele
Chair*

Great Waters Group welcomes Crystal Hoecherl as our new Secretary and member of our Executive Committee. Although a Sierra Club member for several years, Crystal has decided to become a more active member by attending our programs and outings.



Crystal Hoecherl

She's always been concerned with the environment, and most recently she's been writing to her representatives on environmental issues such as supporting EPA authority to regulate our air and water and to combat climate change.

In the 1990's Crystal was a registered nurse for Horizons International. In partnership with UNICEF after the first Gulf War she worked with non-governmental agencies on immunization, providing health education and caring for burn victims. She saw first-hand the effects of land mines and malnutrition.

Formerly a nurse at St. Mary's and later at St. Michael's Hospital, she has been a Milwaukee Public Schools nurse since 2005. She enjoys cross country skiing, hiking, biking, camping and kayaking.

Summer Programs

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

What's the Buzz? Bees and Beekeeping Revealed *Monday, May16, 7 p.m.*

What's happening to the bees, and why does it matter? Bees play an important role in our food systems. Discover who's inside the hive and how bees are managed for pollination and honey. Learn about the dance they do to find nectar. This sweet program by Charlie Koenen of Community Supported Pollination will keep you buzzing.

Find us

The GWG holds its monthly programs at Mayfair Mall on 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 direct from the covered parking area on the east side of the mall.



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