



## GREAT WATERS GROUP NEWSLETTER

WWW.GREATWATERSGROUP.ORG greatwatersgroupsc@gmail.com

Winter, 2017 NO. 4



*Nature is for city kids, too, as this group demonstrated during a romp at Milwaukee's Lincoln Park. Protecting and exploring natural places in urban areas is the focus of the Nearby Nature program that GWG members are helping to develop.*

*Photo by David Thomas.*

# Nearby Nature program begun

By David Thomas

The Great Waters Group has begun mobilizing resources to establish a Nearby Nature program in Milwaukee. Recognizing a history of systemic neglect in neighborhoods stressed by high poverty and injustice, the group will focus its efforts on the 30th Street Corridor and Lincoln Creek Greenways.

Local campaigns are also underway in Albuquerque, Detroit, Los Angeles, Phoenix and Puerto Rico as the Sierra Club expands its ef-

orts to protect and explore natural places by building a more just and inclusive movement. This helps build healthier and more resilient communities everywhere.

The project will depend on developing partnerships with organizations that are already working in the neighborhood, and listening carefully to the needs and desires of the community. Already partnerships have been established with the Urban Ecology Center and the Northwest Side Community Development Corp.

(Continued on page 4)

## Annual GWG holiday party offers music, food and fun

The fun and camaraderie begin at 4 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 3 when the doors open for the Annual GWG Holiday Party and Fundraiser.

Members and non-members are welcome to enjoy the musical stylings of **Hearthfire**, our headline entertainment this year, and to partake in drinks, snacks and a silent auction. See a preview of the band at <http://hearthfireband.com>. Auction items will include gift certificates, artisan works and more. Think 'possible holiday gifts.' Bid high. Bid often!

Winter 2017

### Winter Programs

Winter Programs have a location change for January and February. See page three for details

Enjoy a delicious, healthy dinner at 5:30 p.m. catered by Aladdin, noted for its flavorful Mid-Eastern menu. After dinner, enjoy the music until the event's end at 8 p.m.

If you can't make the gathering, please consider sending a donation to help us continue our efforts in our four-county area. The cost is \$30 (Continued on page 6)

## Notes from the Chair

The Sierra Club's John Muir Chapter, of which we in the Great Waters Group are a part, has been going through strategic planning. And we have, too. On Oct. 21, 12 members of the Volunteer Leadership Council met at the UWM Field Station for an all-day session to plan what we would like to emphasize for the following year, with an eye toward years beyond.

We know that elections will be a big issue in 2018. We know that outings are very important to our motto to Explore, Enjoy and Preserve. We know that the "preserve" part of our motto means that conservation is an important part of what we do. We know we must keep our programs interesting. But we chose membership – volunteering – as the most immediate goal needed to fulfill our mission.

So our Oct. 26 Volunteer Pizza Party at the home of Membership Chair Ed Anderson was critical in our search for those volunteers. Turnout was great, and the offerings of the members were wonderful. We look forward to meeting our goals with the help of our new volunteers, with new help, especially in the political, publicity and fund raising areas.

But that's not to say the group couldn't use more volunteers. Please look at the list of volunteer chairs and see where your interests lie. And then call or email to help.

The group has just been awarded a grant to expand our program, especially through outings, into the inner city with a program called Nearby Nature. A core committee under the direction of Co-Chair David Thomas has begun meeting to create plans to find ways to encourage children and less-advantaged people to learn about and experience our natural world. Please contact David if you would like to help.

In closing, note that our big, fun, yearly Holiday Party is coming up on Sunday, Dec. 3 at The Wil-O-Way Center at 10602 Underwood Parkway in Wauwatosa. See you there for food, musical entertainment, the silent auction and getting together with others who care about the environment. Reservation instructions are in this newsletter.

*Bill Moore*

*Volunteers will be fanning the flames of an invasive buckthorn fire at our January outing.*



## Conquering blackthorn in Kettle Moraine Forest

Enter the fray against invasive buckthorn as the Great Waters Group joins the Southern Kettle Moraine State Natural Areas Volunteers on a wintry workday on Saturday, Jan. 12.

Enjoy the beautiful landscape and contribute to its protection by cutting and burning buckthorn. No experience is needed. You will learn the skills needed to defend the land. Bring a bag lunch to eat together afterward.

**Date:** Saturday, January 13. Time: 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.

**Location:** Whitewater Oak Opening. Contact Dan Buckler for exact meeting location.

**Leader:** Dan Buckler. Please RSVP by Jan. 11 to [Daniel.c.buckler@gmail.com](mailto:Daniel.c.buckler@gmail.com)

## Restoring splendor, building community

*By Dan Buckler  
Outings Chair*

The new year will bring new opportunities for the Sierra Club to build a better world. The Outings program of the Great Waters Group will be focusing on service activities, bringing our members and allies out for a diverse assortment of projects from restoration of beautiful wildlands to cleanups to trail building.

Each outing will be a chance to explore an important place in our region, enjoy each other's company and protect the planet at this critical juncture in our history. Please pay attention to this newsletter, the GWG e-letter and Facebook for more information on the events through the year.

Please contact Outings Chair Dan Buckler ([daniel.c.buckler@gmail.com](mailto:daniel.c.buckler@gmail.com)) for more information. We hope you will roll up your sleeves and join us outside!



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

# CMRT celebrates freeway triumph

By Dianne Dagen  
Conservation Chair

Our Coalition for More Responsible Transportation (CMRT) realized a huge victory this October when the US Department of Transportation announced it would not fund the \$1 billion expansion of Wisconsin's I-94 East/West Corridor.

A gathering of environmental, health, transit, inter-faith, civil rights and neighborhood organizations, the Coalition first met in early 2014 to oppose the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's plan to expand the I-94 corridor between 16th and 76th Streets from six to eight lanes.

Our goal was for the four-plus mile stretch to be re-built in its same footprint to reduce pollution, and secondly to implement an additional transit resource to serve non-car owners so that they could get to suburban jobs. It was a social justice issue as well as an environmental and economic issue.

After three years of educational neighborhood meetings, demonstrations, written comments and public testimony, transit topics at Earth Day events, resolutions passed by the City and County of Milwaukee and Wauwatosa in support of CMRT's alternative proposal, and a Transit Summit, public opinion was on our side. More than 80 per cent of public comments to the Wisconsin DOT favored our position. However, the State Legislature still approved the expressway expansion plan as did the United States DOT.

Then following the filing of a civil rights lawsuit on behalf of the John Muir Chapter of the Sierra Club, the NAACP (National Association for Advancement of Colored People) and MICAH (Milwaukee Inner-city Congregations Allied for Hope), the federal DOT withdrew



*The Coalition for More Responsible Transportation marked a major victory at an October press conference. Speakers included (from left to right) Bill Sell, Dianne Dagen, Emma Fisher, Elizabeth Ward, Dennis Grzezinski, Fred Royal, Rev. Marilyn Miller and Rev. Joseph Ellwanger.*

its approval of the state's expansion plan, along with its matching funds. This took the I-94 corridor proposal off of the state budget ledger.

A celebratory press conference was held by CMRT on Oct. 10. at N. Story Parkway and I-94. This was a clear victory for clean air, climate change action and civil rights.

## Winter Programs\*

Free and open to the public.

\*Note some location and time changes.

### Changing Climate Policy from the Inside Out

Monday, Nov. 20, 7 p.m.

Mayfair Mall, Community Room G110

Garden Suites East, enter east side of mall at AMC

Mike Arney and Terry Hansen of Citizens' Climate Lobby will discuss the urgent need for federal climate legislation, what that might look like, and how we as citizens can act in a variety of ways to reach that goal.

### "Before the Flood"

Monday, Jan. 15, 6:30 p.m.

Wauwatosa Library, Firefly Room, first floor  
7600 W. North Ave.

Leonardo DiCaprio, actor, environmental activist and U.N. Messenger of Peace travels the world exploring complex issues of climate change and how communities, states, Congress and individuals can address future challenges. Community activist Pat Parcell will lead a discussion following the movie.

### Fish Passage Program

Monday, Feb. 19, 6:30 p.m.

Wauwatosa Public Library Firefly Room, first floor  
7600 W. North Ave.

Andrew Struck will illustrate how the Ozaukee Co. Planning and Parks Dept. has implemented natural stream and habitat restoration for native fish, birds and wildlife in the Lake Michigan Basin and Milwaukee River Watershed.

# All kids deserve their greenfields

*“Once there were greenfields, kissed by the sun. Once there were valleys where rivers used to run. . . Where are the greenfields where we used to roam?” . . .*

(“Greenfields”, 1960)

*By Dianne Dagelen  
Conservation Chair*

Growing up in the 30th St. Corridor neighborhood in the 50’s and 60’s, with neighboring kids we’d roam acres of prairie and wetlands and woods all summer long. It was free-range playing in nature from morning to dark, only three blocks from my house west of 27th Street.

See the accompanying photo from about 1951 with my father and I in an open field, where feathers on an arrow are being seriously explored. The row of houses behind us is 30th St., which abutted the open acreage. Today those grasslands are a paved-over parking lot causing repeated flooding that resulted in some houses being removed.

The wetlands beyond the field used to feed thousands of cattails that were stomped down in the late dry summer to make trails and “forts”. In winter we blazed our ice skates over the frozen pond in the thick woods north of the prairie. The lagoon where Cutler Hammer’s office tower now stands on 27th and Hope Streets was once crossed with a raft made of fallen branches lashed together by us children while dodging giant dragon flies.

Low income working class children were surrounded with a lush, rich environment that we breathed in and touched every day. But today the land is mostly made up of concrete and asphalt, supporting isolation, crime and flooding. The prairie and wetlands are gone. And



*Milwaukee’s 30th Street Corridor is a very different place now than it was when GWG Conservation Chair Dianne Dagelen shared the wonders of nature with her dad Joseph as a little girl.*

so are the jobs. The parking lots are empty.

We’d like to change that. Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewage District (MMSD) has initiated a re-greening of the area in partnership with local residents and organizations including Sierra Club to combat flooding. Currently, MMSD’s two carved-out retention ponds look more akin to scorched turf with some stick trees and culverts. But there is hope.

Hope will grow as we nourish the land and in turn the surrounding neighborhood. Support Nearby Nature to help revitalize a community with a place where families play together, feeling safe and developing a love of the land.

## Program coming to Milwaukee

*(Continued from page 1)*

A recent accessibility study by Rails to Trails ([railstotrails.org/Milwaukee](http://railstotrails.org/Milwaukee)) outlined very succinctly why this community needs more access to trails. This community experiences extreme inequality, with high poverty, high unemployment and lack of access to transportation.

A late 20th century industrial boom drained wetlands and paved watersheds. Later, the collapsing inner-city industrial areas were left to decay. Many of those areas need renewal and remediation, and the Sierra Club wants to be part of the solution.

Natural areas exist in these neighborhoods, but they are neglected, hard to access or disconnected from existing trails. Active Sierrans know the healing power of connecting to nature. We believe that creating nature outings and activities for youth and their families could make a difference.

The grant for this project is small, but it will help us get started. Then with your help it can go further. For more information or to get involved, you can email [nearby.nature.mke@sierraclub.org](mailto:nearby.nature.mke@sierraclub.org) or call David Thomas, Milwaukee co-chair at 414-810-2286.

### Volunteer Leadership Council (VLC) Contact List

Bill Moore, GWG Interim Chair 262-785-9022  
John Bahr, Vice Chair and Energy Chair 414-256-0932  
Roy Krueger, Treasurer 262-544-6893  
Crystal Hoecherl, Secretary 414-614-3034  
Heather Hansen, JMC Delegate 812-360-0652  
Dianne Dagelen, Conservation Chair 414-771-1505  
William Baurecht, Program Chair 414-882-7218  
Chris Zapf, Volunteer Chair 262-786-9584  
Ed Anderson, Membership and Political Chair 414-520-2751  
Dan Buckler, Outings Chair 330-261-2088  
Communications: E-letter, Face Book, Website, Newsletter  
Janet Anderson, Communication Chair 414-258-5624  
Dianne Dagelen, Newsletter Chair 414-771-1505  
Dave Wehnes, Website Super Administrator 414-453-1689  
Sandy and Dale Hofmann, Newsletter Editors 414-476-8636  
David Hetzel, Newsletter reimbursement facilitator 414-228-9512

# Disappearing ash will be remembered

Dan Buckler  
Outings Chair

The front moves, and defenses are built, but there's no doubt which way the war is going, and little doubt which side is winning. It's a little green bug.

*Agrilus planipennis*, the emerald ash borer, has harangued and harassed North American forests since the late 1990s as its journey continues across Wisconsin continues, county by county, city by city, tree by tree. But this is not its story.

Born from the bottomlands and disturbed areas of eastern America, green ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*) is one of the most widespread and common trees on the continent. Though without oaken grandeur or the sweet gifts of the maple, green ash is a pioneer species that embodies resolution in the face of difficulty.

Along soaked streambanks or abandoned fields, green ash has found a way to survive and thrive. Its fortitude is what drafted it out of the riverine woodlands and into our boulevards and urban parks. With miraculous resilience, it could survive the pollution, the soil compaction and the small spaces between concrete. It was deemed one of the worthy successors to the American elm, a humbled species that still haunts the memories of urban dwellers. Green ash moored itself along the streets, standing silent guard over our communities.

But what happens when the immovable object meets the irresistible force?

Though not as common in town, many would say white ash (*Fraxinus americana*) has a higher pedigree, accompanying sugar maple and basswood in upland habitat. One of the most useful woods in American history, white ash is the tree of play, being the origin of thousands of baseball bats, tennis rackets, hockey sticks and guitars.



*Signs of the losing battle against the emerald ash borer are everywhere. Vanishing ash species will be remembered, though, for the contributions they made to our culture.*

Both ashes, and another in Wisconsin, seem doomed. But is it really the bug's fault? After all, it was just an unwitting passenger on one heck of a ride from China to the New World. It might just be the messenger in a conflict of our species against others, a conflict which makes victims of our sylvan stewards.

The genus will long be remembered, even if lost from our streets and our forests. For with every crack of the bat on a hot summer day, or pluck of a guitar string during a coffee shop concert, we hear notes from a tree that grew into our culture, and thus, our souls.

## 'Waterdrop Alerts' help control overflows

By Jerry Fredrickson

We are fortunate to live in a region that has a forward-looking wastewater treatment utility, but unfortunately when our heaviest rains occur, we still have sewer overflows. We can help to reduce the environmental damage of those by using less water during big storm events. But is there a way to know when a storm is a big event?

That's the purpose of the Water Drop Alerts warning system. You might have already seen Water Drop Alerts on local TV weather reports. You can also sign up for a Water Drop Alert on Winter 2017

your phone. Then you'll receive a text message when a storm is approaching, reminding you to cut back on your water use temporarily.

Signing up couldn't be easier. You just text WATERDROP (one word) to 797979.

Water Drop Alerts don't necessarily mean there will be an overflow. Predicting big storms isn't an exact science, and if you wait until there is an overflow, it's too late to reduce your water use. But conserving water during storms can become a habit. It doesn't cost anything, and it contributes to a cleaner Lake Michigan.



*Hans Anderson Brendekilde's "Cutting Christmas Trees in the Forest" offers an artistic view of the holiday traditions we'll explore at Greenfield Park.*

# Holiday traditions grounded in plants

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 at our Saturday, Dec. 16 outing.

We will hike around the park 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. 16. Time: 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. Level: Easy.

**Location:** Greenfield Park. Contact Dan Buckler for exact meeting location.

**Leader:** Dan Buckler. Please RSVP at [Daniel.c.buckler@gmail.com](mailto:Daniel.c.buckler@gmail.com) or 330-261-2088.

## Model conservation at GWG holiday party

*By Bill Baurecht  
Program Chair*

Do you avoid Styrofoam? Refuse straws? Use worn-out cloths (My mother called them rags) to wipe up spills instead of paper towels? Do you pack your lunch sandwich in a reusable container in your daypack? Reuse plastic bags that are difficult to avoid because they're forced on us? Recycle them? Shop with re-usable bags?

We try to model conservation in many ways. All of us have made habits of these simple acts, and each of us belongs to or acts through various groups like the Sierra Club to limit waste and resist erosion of environmental protection laws. We do what we can, because conservation starts at home.

In this spirit, we invite you to bring your picnic basket or place settings, wine-beer-soda-juice glasses and coffee cups to our festive holiday party on Dec. 3. Bring your picnic basket or improvised place settings and carry them in a reusable shopping bag. Throw in yesterday's *Journal Sentinel* or last week's *Shepherd Express* to wrap plates to wash at home. Before we listen to music together we'll take a few minutes to pack up our stuff. ,

Every hike begins with a first step. In order to explore and enjoy, we know we have to protect. Reduce waste. That's what makes us Sierrans.



*The band Hearthfire will provide the musical entertainment at GWG's annual Holiday Party and Fundraiser.*

## Party features silent auction

*(Continued from page 1)*

per person if received or postmarked by Nov. 20, or \$35 if received later. Checks should be made payable to "Great Waters Group-SC" and sent to Janet Anderson at 2130 N 85 Street, Wauwatosa, WI 53226

If you have auction items to donate by the Nov. 30 deadline, or if you want to help with event tasks, or if you have any questions, contact Janet Anderson at [janeta16@sbcglobal.net](mailto:janeta16@sbcglobal.net) or at 414-258-5624. We need your help to make this a success!

**Date:** Sunday, Dec. 3.

**Time:** Doors open at 4 p.m.; dinner at 5:30 p.m.; silent auction and entertainment; ends at 8 p.m.

**Location:** Underwood Wil O Way Recreation Center, 10602 W. Underwood Creek Parkway, Wauwatosa (located across from Hansen Golf Course, up the hill into the woods).

# Four are nominated for GWG Committee

The Great Waters Group Nomination/Election Committee, chaired by Bill Moore, presents nominees for the GWG Executive Committee for the 2018-'20 term. Please support your Group by participating in the election. The following are biographies submitted by the candidates:

## Chris Zapf

As a Life Member of the Sierra Club I am willing to serve as Volunteer Coordinator for the Great Waters Group and the Executive Committee. As a true "tree hugger," my recreational time is spent biking, kayaking, hiking, camping, skiing — anything that will allow me time in the great outdoors. I feel the need to protect the natural resources that allow us these pleasures.

## Barbara Richards

I am a life-long home gardener with three children and three grandchildren. The Ethical Principles of perma-culture – Care for Earth, Care for People, Fair Share for all – give purpose to the daily choices I make affecting Earth and others. These echo the faith journey of my spiritual life from Micah: "Act Justly, Love Tenderly, Walk Humbly with God."

## Rashi Grewal

I am a recent member of the chapter with an avid love of penguins. My plan as an Ex Com member is to organize fundraising

# Winterfest scheduled for Washington Park

With the lagoon frozen over and the hills covered in snow, Washington Park is the perfect place for an afternoon of adventure. Join us for some family winter fun at our Jan. 27 Winterfest celebration.

Enjoy a sled dog demonstration, ice skating, sledding, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, arts and crafts and more. Skis and snow shoes will be provided for free. Warm up with free beverages and food, including local fruit pies made by our Young Scientists, and enjoy the company of your neighbors.

**Date:** Saturday, Jan. 27. **Time:** Noon- 4 p.m. **Location:** 1859 N. 40th St., Milwaukee.

Also featured will be "Winterfest for Afternoon Nappers," a free festival for children ages five and under accompanied by an adult. Kids can enjoy a morning of crafts, a hike and a puppet show and still get home in time for their afternoon naps. Space is limited.

**Date:** Saturday, Jan. 27. **Time:** 10:30 a.m. – noon  
Winter 2017

## Official Ballot: 2017 GWG Executive Committee Election

Mark an X on the line next to your selections. Each member may vote for only/up to 4 candidates.

**Voter #1**    \_\_\_ Chris Zapf                    \_\_\_ David Thomas  
                  \_\_\_ Barbara Richards       \_\_\_ Rashi Grewal

**Voter #2**    \_\_\_ Chris Zapf                    \_\_\_ David Thomas  
                  \_\_\_ Barbara Richards       \_\_\_ Rashi Grewal

Mail ballot postmarked by Dec. 28 to: SC Great Waters Group Election Committee, PO Box 26798, Wauwatosa, WI 53226 or bring to our GWG Holiday Party Dec. 3.

events, as I've done previously for other causes. My vision is to help spread solar and windmill technology throughout Wisconsin and the Midwest, as well as to adopt a penguin or two...or more.

## David Thomas

I became a JMC outings leader in 2010 and have led trips to Quetico and the Apostle Islands and Service outings on the North Country Trail. I believe that Sierra Club's initiatives to tackle social inequity and racism have the potential to transform the environmental movement into something stronger and more vibrant. For this reason, I agreed to accept the co-chair of our Nearby Nature project, and I look forward to serving on the Executive Committee.



*A sled dog demonstration will be part of the fun at the GWG Winterfest celebration at Washington Park in January.*

**Contact:** Erick Anderson: 414-344-5460 for either event.

If you'd like to be a part of working with the Young Scientists at Washington Park UEC in teaching them how to bake local fruit pies contact David Glenn: [majsweetie@gmail.com](mailto:majsweetie@gmail.com) of Community Pies.



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

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Great Waters Group of the John Muir Chapter  
P.O. Box 26798  
Wauwatosa, WI 53226-0798

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Milwaukee, WI

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*Recycled Paper*

## Quetico park features paddling adventures

Spanning the international border between northeast Minnesota and Canada, Quetico Provincial Park offers more than 2,000 lakes and one million acres of remote wilderness that can be explored by canoe at a variety of summer outings.

Our experienced outings leaders have Wilderness First Aid training and Sierra Club's Outings Leadership Training. There are no fees, but Quetico outings have direct shared costs of about \$700, which cover group supplies, equipment, food, lodging, park permits and taxes.

A refundable \$300 deposit reserves your spot. Not included are personal travel costs, permits and fishing licenses. Contact outings leaders or visit [greatwatersgroup.org](http://greatwatersgroup.org) for more details.

### **Women's Quetico Outing 1 – July 27 – Aug. 3 (8 days, 7 nights; paddle/portage/camp)**

·Leader: Janet Clear - 608-833-1339, [janetclear@gmail.com](mailto:janetclear@gmail.com)  
·Outing Departure Point: Moose Lake - Ely, MN area. Outing Cost: \$700; \$300 deposit  
Two layover days are planned.

### **Angler's Quetico Outing 2 Aug. 3-12, 2018 (8 days, 7 nights; paddle/portage/camp)**

·Co-Leaders: Nancy McDermott 608-238-1421 [njmcderm@gmail.com](mailto:njmcderm@gmail.com) and Will Stahl 920-725-9185 [wrsy55@sbcglobal.net](mailto:wrsy55@sbcglobal.net)  
·Outing Departure Point: Either Moose Lake – Ely or Gunflint Trail,

MN Outing Cost: \$700; \$300 deposit. Fishing enthusiasts will enjoy one or two base camps sandwiched between canoe travel days in and out of the park.

### **Paddler's Quetico Outing 3. Late Summer (8 days, 7 nights; paddle/portage/camp)**

·Outing type: paddle/portage/camp  
·Leader: TBD; Outing cost: \$700 including \$300 deposit. Dates and a leader will be arranged if there is enough interest in a co-ed trip. Contact Nancy McDermott 608-238-1421 [njmcderm@gmail.com](mailto:njmcderm@gmail.com) with your preferred dates in late August – September.

Also available is a Wisconsin Paddle outing.

### **Women's Namegagon River Trip. July 12-15 (4 days, 3 nights; paddle/camp)**

·Co-Leaders: Vicki Christianson 715-827-0379 [vicki.christianson@yahoo.com](mailto:vicki.christianson@yahoo.com) and Nancy McDermott 608-238-1421 [njmcderm@gmail.com](mailto:njmcderm@gmail.com)  
· Outing Departure Point: Trego, WI; Outing Cost: \$175 including \$75 deposit

Enjoy the Saint Croix National Scenic Riverway in northern Wisconsin. A combination of gentle rapids and smooth flowing current on the Namegagon, followed on the last day with several small rapids near the confluence of the St. Croix. Some paddling experience recommended.