



## GREAT WATERS GROUP NEWSLETTER

WWW.GREATWATERSGROUP.ORG greatwatersgroupsc@gmail.com

Spring, 2018 NO. 1

# Coalition fights toxic coal dust

By Miranda Ehrlich  
Sierra Club Beyond Coal Associate Organizer

A smokestack looming ominously behind a squat brick house. Toxic dust wafting off mountains of coal ash. A girl with an inhaler and bags under her eyes, struggling to breathe. A family visiting its home one last time before it's bulldozed. A vast empty field where a village once stood.

These are just a few of the unsettling images in the newly released documentary *Cheshire, Ohio: An American Coal Story in Three Acts*, which was screened in Racine this past fall by the Clean Power Coalition-Southeast Wisconsin.

The Village of Cheshire, Ohio, was founded in the late 1800s, nestled along the banks of the Ohio River. For more than one hundred years people lived, worked, played and worshiped in this town. This peaceful rhythm of life was disrupted forever after the Gavin Power Plant moved in next door.

At first, the coal plant seemed to be a benevolent or even beneficial neighbor. It provided new jobs. But in 2000, a botched attempt to add pollution controls to the plant resulted in a recur-

(Continued on page 8)



*The Milwaukee harbor provides the backdrop as Joe Dubaniewicz, a longtime volunteer for the Sierra Club's "Beyond Coal" campaign, expresses the message contained in a documentary screened by the Clean Power Coalition-Southeast Wisconsin.*

## Spring Programs

*Free and open to the public*

### **A Watershed-wide Approach to Aquatic Connectivity and Ecological Restoration in Ozaukee County**

Feb. 19, 6:30 p.m. Mayfair Mall Garden Room G-110. Enter east side of mall at AMC Theatre

Andrew Struck, Director of the Ozaukee County Planning and Parks Department, will discuss the implementation of a compre-

hensive effort to restore aquatic habitat connectivity and improve the ecological function of existing riparian habitats throughout the county portion of the Milwaukee River Watershed and Lake Michigan Basin.

### **"Isolated" Wetlands**

Mar. 19 potluck at 6 p.m., program at 6:30 p.m. Wauwatosa Public Library

Tracy Hames, Executive Director of Wisconsin Wetland Association, will discuss "isolated" wetlands. Isolated wetlands, (Continued on page 7)



*A federal government rollback of auto pollution standards drew this negative reaction at a December press conference at Milwaukee's City Hall.*

## GWG joins partnership for clean cars

By Barbara Richards  
Conservation Chair

A number of prominent defenders of the environment spoke at a Dec 18 news conference held at Milwaukee City Hall to counter the rollback of Clean Car requirements by the Trump Administration.

Rolling back these commonsense and effective standards would

## Forest fires focus of Hansen article

By Janet Anderson and Mike Arney

Internationally published climate author Terry Hansen had a recent opinion piece focusing on forest fires published in the Vail Daily newspaper in Colorado.

“It’s crucial for Congress to hear the plea from our nation’s forests and wild lands and take a leadership role regarding climate action,” Hansen wrote.



*Terry Hansen*

Terry Hansen has shown continued dedication to the climate change cause by meeting face-to-face with legislators as well as by writing letters to newspapers inside and outside the US through Citizen Climate Lobby (CCL). Way to go Terry!

negatively impact Wisconsin’s drivers, economy, and environment. America’s clean car standards, which were finalized in 2012, help ensure that cars, pickup trucks, and SUVs are more fuel-efficient, saving drivers money every trip to the gas station.

Mandela Barnes, a former Wisconsin State Assemblyman, called for respect for clean air as a human right and spoke of his experience with asthma as a child and the need for continued efforts for clean air in our inner cities.

Erick Shambarger, Director of the Milwaukee City Environmental Collaboration Office, said, “These common sense standards protect our climate from dangerous pollution, save billions of gallons of fuel and save us money at the pump.

“We believe that Wisconsinites have a right to clean air and water, and rolling back EPA and DOT’s federal clean car standards will make it harder for us to reduce air pollution. I’m here today to stand up for the environment and for our public health.”

Barbara Richards Conservation Chair of the Great Waters Group noted that clean car standards help reduce tailpipe carbon pollution that contributes to climate change.

“The transportation sector is now the largest source of the carbon pollution in this country that causes climate change,” she said. “Cars, SUVs, and pickup trucks are the largest source of pollution within this sector. Car manufacturers are backing the administration on the roll back even with clean air technology already in operation and more being possible. Our individual choices make a difference. And of course think when you buy and think when you walk out the door.”



# Community wins, and a pool is saved

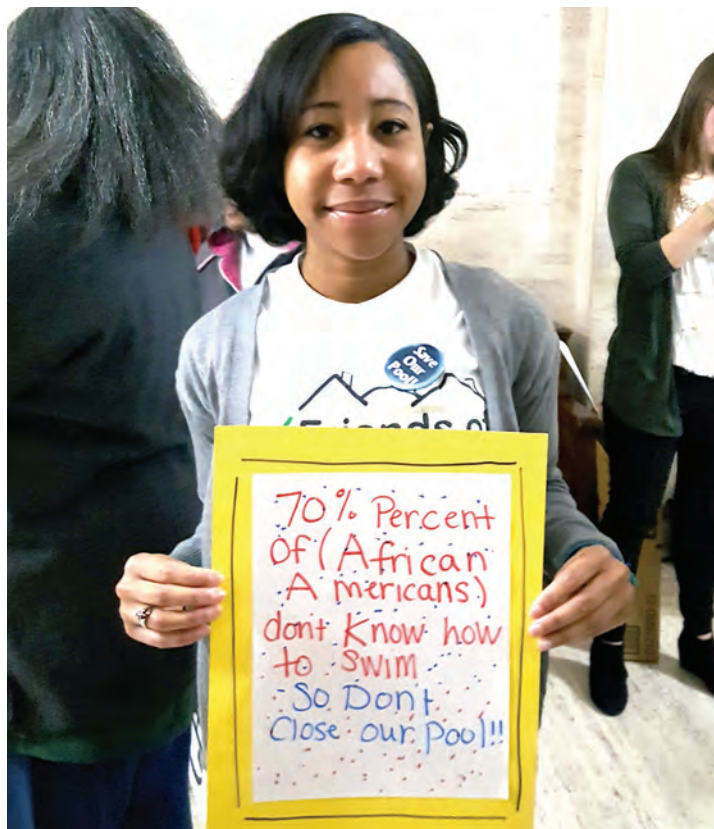
By David Thomas  
Nearby Nature Chair

In a city that prides itself on its connection to water, it was a travesty that the County Executive decided to close one of the last places children of color could learn to swim. We can learn from this battle that communities coming together are a force to be reckoned with.

After five pools on Milwaukee's north side were closed over a 20-year period, neighbors came together and said "Enough!" After a rally led by the Northwest Side Community Development Corp, Friends of Lincoln Park and others, the County Finance Committee voted, 6-0, to support a plan to save the Lincoln Park pool, formally known as the David Schulz Aquatic Center.

The plan was proposed by County Board Chairman Theo Liscomb, and the measure was approved by the full County Board on Feb. 1.

An equitable, just and inclusive environmental movement fights for everyone's right to enjoy the outdoors.



Sierra Taliafero had a message to send Milwaukee County supervisors as they considered the closure of a central city pool at Lincoln Park.

# Keep bias out of environmentalism

By David Thomas  
Nearby Nature Chair

"It gets to me when I hear some of the ways environmental groups describe our community and its relationship to nature," said Mabari Byrd.

Byrd is a Sierra Club community organizer in the Philadelphia area. He was my "breakout room" discussion partner for my first on-line training on the "Jemez Principles," and he really forced me to rethink how we create our message and how it might ring differently for people of different cultural backgrounds.

The "Jemez Principles," which were adopted by the Sierra Club in 2014, are a framework for transforming the environmental movement into one that embraces justice, inclusion and equity. The dialog was important for us, in coming to grips with our own cultural biases and how they affect our work in different communities.

Some important lessons I learned from the training were to be inclusive and reach outside my cultural comfort zone, and to let people speak for themselves. We may think we know the answers, but our cultural biases can cloud our vision. I was also taught to commit to self-transformation. It's not easy or quick task to shed a lifetime of biases that have quietly entered every corner of our education and upbringing.

The environmental movement, and even the Sierra Club, has a history of racial bias and failure to work respectfully around issues of environmental equity. Heather Hansen is planning "Equity Training" for the Executive Committee of Great Waters Group members and for those who will be working in communities of color. Stay tuned.

## Volunteer Leadership Council (VLC) Contact List

Chair and Vice-Chair (vacant)  
John Bahr, Energy Chair 414-256-0932  
Roy Krueger, Treasurer 262-544-6893  
Crystal Hoecherl, Secretary 414-614-3034  
Heather Hansen, JMC Delegate 812-360-0652  
Barbara Richards, Conservation Chair, Newsletter Chair 414-259-0731  
William Baurecht, Program Chair 414-882-7218  
Chris Zapf, Volunteer Chair 262-786-9584  
Ed Anderson, Membership Chair 414-520-2751  
Rashi Grewal, Fundraising Chair 908-240-7043  
Rose Both, Political Chair 262-751-4802  
Karen Samelson, Publicity Chair 414-481-1596  
David Thomas, Nearby Nature Chair 414-810-2286  
Dan Buckler, Outings Chair 330-261-2088  
Janet Anderson, Communications Chair 414-258-5624  
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Dave Wehnes, Website Super Administrator 414-453-1689  
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David Hetzel, Newsletter Reimbursement 414-228-9512



*Volunteers gathered after completing their service projects at the 2016 Earth Day Celebration at Washington Park.*

# Earth Day observances set for two sites

This year the Sierra Club will be celebrating Earth Day on two fronts, showcasing our emphasis on service to our natural world and to all people who call Earth their home.

On April 21, volunteers will be attacking the build-up of trash and other debris on an otherwise beautiful stretch of Lincoln Creek on Milwaukee's northwest side. The cleanup from 9 a.m. to noon will be

part of the 23rd Annual Spring River Cleanup organized by Milwaukee Riverkeeper.

At Washington Park Urban Ecology Center we will participate in a number of stewardship activities, from seed cleaning to infrastructure maintenance to trash cleanup. A community lunch will be held following the service activities. Volunteers will also perform inside tasks.

For more information on either event, please contact Outings Chair Dan Buckler at [daniel.c.buckler@gmail.com](mailto:daniel.c.buckler@gmail.com) or 330-261-2088.

## Keeping busy on the climate action front

*By Mike Arney*

Here are some ways that climate action has been in my life these past months:



Mike Arney

At the Milwaukee West Citizens' Climate Lobby (CCL) meeting in January, we had a special visit from Wisconsin State Senate candidate Julie Henszey. It was a really good experience. I hope we can do the same soon with her opponent, Dale Kooyenga. Good climate action is something any politician should be able to understand and get behind.

CCL colleague Mike Jury and I spoke about climate to a "Lunch and Learn" gathering facilitated by the Climate Reality Project at the Kohler Corporation. Kohler is working hard on waste reduction and sustainability, and it has an ambitious "Net Zero 2035" goal.

I talked about the climate issue as a waste management problem, similar to the challenges of creating municipal sewage treatment systems in the nineteenth century. Mike described Carbon Fee and Dividend, a climate policy that has bipartisan support and could cut US emissions dramatically.

Do you want to do more for the climate? Are you doing something already and want credit for it? Drop me a line at [milwaukeeeast@citizensclimatelobby.org](mailto:milwaukeeeast@citizensclimatelobby.org).

## Monthly outings planned for GWG

*By Dan Buckler  
Outings Chair*

As we dive into 2018, I want to remind you all of the focus of GWG outings this year. It is the intention to have at least one service outing each month and to cultivate partnerships with organizations already doing great stewardship work in the GWG area.

Our next service outing will be Feb. 10 at Cedarburg Bog. We will be having a great time cutting buckthorn and other invasive species in the frozen wetland. Please contact me if you're interested in attending any of the following:

- Mar. 24 – Havenwoods.
- Apr. 21 – Earth Day of Service at UEC Washington Park on Earth Day.
- May 19 – Invasive control with Schlitz Audubon, 9:30 – 12
- June – Kettle Moraine SNA crew
- June 2 – IAT hike with Fox Valley Group – Pike Lake /Holy Hill segments – National Trails Day.

For more information please contact Dan Buckler at [daniel.c.buckler@gmail.com](mailto:daniel.c.buckler@gmail.com) or 330-261-2088.



# Kids learn from Nearby Nature

By David Thomas  
Nearby Nature Chair

In our last newsletter we introduced the Nearby Nature program, which intends to create outdoor experiences for kids and families in economically distressed areas of the city. The first stage of the project is exploration and discovery, and we have been exploring primarily along Lincoln Creek, a six-mile waterway that meanders from Havenwoods State Forest to Lincoln Park.

One of the beautiful natural spots we discovered is a 20-acre space elegantly featured in a photo essay by environmental writer/photographer Eddee Daniel in Milwaukee Magazine (at MilwaukeeMag.com, search for Sierra Club).

There are about a dozen schools within easy walking distance and numerous after-school programs in this six-mile stretch of green space. The Daniels-Mardak Boys & Girls club is one good example. It is

## Bill misses the point; wetlands not all equal

By Barbara Richards  
Conservation Chair

“All wetlands are not created equal,” pointed out retired Department of Natural Resources biologist Ron Eckstein. “Developing new wetlands in the wrong place would support few game species. They have shorter food chains and are not attractive to wildlife.”

Eckstein was speaking at a December public hearing on the Wetlands Destruction Bill (AB 547/SB 600), a top priority of the John Muir Chapter. The bill focuses on non-federally protected wetlands in Wisconsin, and its sponsors are making its passage a top priority.

In an effort to reduce the negative impacts of the proposed legislation Ducks Unlimited has organized a coalition of conservation groups to offer a detailed proposal to amend the bills.

This is one issue the FoxConn presence in Wisconsin has brought to the forefront of debate. You can learn more at our March 19, 2018 meeting.

## First aid training available

The Great Waters Group will host a training opportunity in the Milwaukee area on April 14-15 where participants can learn the skills of an effective leader and receive certification to lead Sierra Club outings, as well as Basic First Aid certification.

Those interested in leading overnight trips away from vehicles are required to also take OLT 201, which is available on April 15. Please contact Outings Chair Dan Buckler for more details: [daniel.c.buckler@gmail.com](mailto:daniel.c.buckler@gmail.com) or 330-261-2088.

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the largest of the city's Boys & Girls Clubs and at 35th and Hampton is just across the street from the natural space described in Eddee's article. We have started preliminary discussions toward collaboration.

Over the past months, we have reached out to dozens of organizations. Some, like Riverkeeper, Clean Wisconsin and Milwaukee Water Commons have a specific environmental focus.

Others have a community development focus. Northwest Side Community Development Corp is one of the best examples of those. We are building a strong partnership with that organization that allows us to access its community network. The most important partnership of all is our developing relationship with Urban Ecology Center.

On December 10 we hosted our first hike and clean-up activity along Lincoln Creek. About a dozen Great Waters Group members hiked and collected trash near 35th and Congress.



David Thomas gives a trailhead talk to volunteers during a nature walk and cleanup session along Milwaukee's Lincoln Creek.

## Schlitz Center outing set

Join the Great Waters Group on May 19 for a morning of land stewardship activities at the Schlitz Audubon Nature Center and learn about the role of protected lands within a mostly urban landscape.

The specific stewardship activities will be based on what is needed by the Center in May, but it will most likely be invasive species removal. No experience or equipment is needed, just appropriate clothing

**Date:** Saturday, May 19, 9:30 am-noon.

**Location:** Schlitz Audubon Nature Center (1111 East Brown Deer Rd. Milwaukee.)

**Leader:** Dan Buckler. Please RSVP by Jan. 11 to [daniel.c.buckler@gmail.com](mailto:daniel.c.buckler@gmail.com) or 330-261-2088



Lincoln Creek where it meets the Milwaukee River is a pleasant site for urban paddlers.

## Cleanup planned for Lincoln Park

The Sierra Club has adopted a section of Lincoln Creek in the city-wide river cleanups organized by Milwaukee Riverkeeper on Earth Day.

Participants will learn about the Great Waters Group's Nearby Nature program and the role they can play in making Milwaukee more green and friendly to all its citizens. No experience or equipment is needed, just appropriate clothing.

**Date:** Saturday, Apr. 21, 9 am to noon.

**Location:** The intersection of 35th St. and Congress St. in Milwaukee, WI. Please RSVP for final parking details.

**Leader:** David Thomas. Please RSVP by Apr. 18 to [david@thomerwald.net](mailto:david@thomerwald.net) or 414-344-1044

## Paddlers explore scenic Quetico Park

By Janet Clear

Spanning the international border between northeast Minnesota and Canada, Quetico Provincial Park offers more than 2,000 lakes and one million acres for a variety of summer canoe 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 place. Contact outings leaders or visit [greatwatersgroup.org](http://greatwatersgroup.org) for more details.

### Women's Quetico Outing 1

**July 27 – Aug. 5 (8 days, 7 nights; paddle/portage/camp)**

Leader: Janet Clear - 608-833-1339, [janetclear@gmail.com](mailto:janetclear@gmail.com)

Departure Point: Moose Lake - Ely, MN area.

Cost: \$700 including \$300 deposit.

Two layover days are planned, so while you will be challenged, there will be time to relax.

## Mother's Day paddle set at Lincoln Park

Meet us in Lincoln Park at the Milwaukee River Trail landing for a Mother's Day Paddle and Picnic. Please bring your own boat if you have one. If you do not have a boat but want to rent one, please RSVP by May 8, and we can arrange a rental kayak or canoe for \$25 or less.

**Date:** Sunday, May 13. BYO lunch at noon, paddle at 1 p.m.

**Level:** Medium. Swimming and previous paddling experience helpful.

**Location:** Lincoln Park boat landing, 4950 N Milwaukee River Parkway (Just north of Hampton Ave.)

**Leader:** David Thomas. Please RSVP by May 8 to [david@thomerwald.net](mailto:david@thomerwald.net) or call 414-344-1044.

### Angler's Quetico Outing 2

**Aug. 3-12 (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)

Departure Point: Either Moose Lake - Ely, MN area or Gunflint Trail, MN

Outing Cost: \$700 including \$300 deposit

Fishing enthusiasts will enjoy one or two base camps sandwiched between canoe travel days.

### 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. Limited to nine participants. Contact Nancy McDermott 608-238-1421 [njmcderm@gmail.com](mailto:njmcderm@gmail.com) with your preferred dates in late August – September

### Women's Namegagon River Trip (Waiting List)

**July 12-15, 2018 (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)

Departure Point: Trego, WI

Outing Cost: \$175 including \$75 deposit

A leisurely paddle covering 35 miles on the Namegagon and St. Croix Rivers in northern Wisconsin. Some paddling experience recommended.



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



# GWG holiday party

## A fun time for all

By Janet Anderson  
Communications Chair

Members of the Great Waters Group and guests enjoyed another fun gathering at our annual Holiday Party and Fundraiser event on Dec. 3 at the Wil O Way Recreation Center in Wauwatosa.

Attendees shared a delicious Middle-Eastern meal from Aladdin Deli, and many left that evening with their winning items from a varied selection of silent auction donations. Afterwards, we listened and danced to the fantastic music of Hearthfire. Find out more about them at [Hearthfireband.com](http://Hearthfireband.com).

Thanks go to the many volunteers who made this special event possible, especially Dave Hetzel, Joan Janus, Chris Zapf, Trish Miller, Karen Samelson, and Jane Schneider.

Thanks also to so many people who helped with a variety of jobs and to the following friends and members who donated auction items: Janet Anderson, Allen Becker, Lisa Conley, Tom and Katie Heinen, Dave Hetzel, Bill and Dianne Moore, Susie Stewart, Jane Stoltz and Chris Zapf.

And to these businesses that donated items: Clearwater Outdoor Store, Cold Spoons Gelato, Colectivo Coffee, ComedySportz, Erehwon Outdoor, Florentine Opera, Highlands Café, Janus Massage and Yoga, The Little Read Book, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Museum of Wisconsin Art, Oro di Oliva, Outpost Coop, Rainbow Children's Books, Ray's Growler Gallery, River-edge Environmental Center, Schlitz Audubon Nature Center, Sherpers, The Spice House, Sunnyslope Gardens, Sunset Playhouse, Trader Joe's, Urban Ecology Center, Usinger's Famous Sausage, Vintage Glass Garden, Wastecap Resource Solutions, Wilson Center for the Arts. We encourage our GWG members to patronize these generous donors.

## Five merit mention For GWG contributions

GWG's success depends on the efforts of many people, and five in particular have deserved special mention for their contributions.

John Bahr, Ron Horn, and Dianne Dagelen have dedicated themselves to the group's goal of educating and motivating the people of southeastern Wisconsin as they explore, enjoy and protect our land, water and air.

Terry Hansen has shown continued dedication to climate change issues by meeting face-to-face with legislators as well as writing letters to many newspapers through Citizen Climate Lobby (CCL). And our community is blessed to have the multiple contributions of Janet Anderson, who has worked tirelessly for the environment.

## Conservation video available

The Nature Conservancy, the agricultural community and other partners are working together to find innovative solutions that can protect our streams, rivers and lakes for people and for nature. A short video of those efforts can be found at <https://www.nature.org/photos-and-video/video/fresh-water-and-farming-in-the-great-lakes?src=e.gp.local.Jan2018>. Wisconsin Google: fresh water and farming video.

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## Introducing your new VLC members



**Barbara Richards**

**Conservation and Newsletter Chair Barbara A Richards** is a retired Milwaukee Public Schools Montessori teacher, who has three adult children and three grandchildren. She has certification in The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd and guides four- and five-year-olds in "Sunday School" at St Michael's Church. She holds two Permaculture Design Certificates.



**David Thomas**

**Nearby Nature Chair David Thomas** is a retired visual communications professor and outdoorsperson who cut his teeth working on the first Earth Day in 1970. Since joining a Sierra Club Quetico trip in 2006, David went on to lead several outings in Quetico and around Wisconsin. He helped found the Friends of Lincoln Park in 2014 and has become engaged as an advocate of Lincoln Creek.

**Fundraising Chair Rashi Grewal** enjoys combining her multiple interests to support good causes. She plans to help out with the Nearby Nature project, and already has ideas on how to better the lives of inner-city kids.

## Spring Programs

*(Continued from page 1)*

also known as "non-federal" wetlands, make up 20% of the remaining wetlands in Wisconsin. Attend and learn what they are, where they are, why they're important, and how we can protect and care for them.

### Celebrate Earth Day

Apr. 21 Celebrate Earth Day at service days at Lincoln Creek and at UEC Washington Park. *See Earth Day Article for details.*

### Nearby Nature

May 21, 6:30 p.m. City of Milwaukee Public Library.

David Thomas, Nearby Nature co-project coordinator will give an update of this new program funded by the Sierra Club Foundation promoting equity and justice. Attend to learn about this exciting new outreach to the youth of our communities.



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for Our Families, For Our Future*

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## Disturbing film shows what can happen here

*(Continued from page 1)*

ring “blue plume” of poisonous sulfuric acid mist rolling over the town. The plant was found by the EPA to be in violation of the Clean Air Act.

In Caledonia and Oak Creek, the two towns bordering the massive Oak Creek Power Plant complex, the details differ, but the similarities are clear. Residents have raised concerns for years about toxic coal dust in their yards and homes, contaminated water from coal ash, chronic respiratory illnesses and even cancer.

While We Energies denies that these claims have merit, they

### Havenwoods outing scheduled

The Great Waters Group invites you to lend a hand with invasive species control at one of the most beautiful places in Milwaukee, Havenwoods State Forest. No experience or equipment is needed, just appropriate clothing.

**Date:** Saturday, Mar. 24, 10 a.m.-noon.

**Location:** Havenwoods State Forest (6141 N. Hopkins St. Milwaukee.)

**Leader:** Dan Buckler. Please RSVP by Mar. 23 to [daniel.c.buckler@gmail.com](mailto:daniel.c.buckler@gmail.com) or 330-261-2088.

have been quietly buying up property around the plant for three times their value to create a “buffer zone,” offering residents additional money at closing in exchange for signing an agreement to never sue for health problems. Those outside the “buffer zone” have no recourse as the pollution continues.

It doesn't have to be this way. But in order to challenge this corporate stranglehold on our communities, we have to start speaking out. We need to demand that utilities like We Energies, Madison Gas & Electric, and WPPI transition coal out of their portfolios in favor of clean, renewable forms of energy like wind and solar.

Recently, We Energies announced the retirement of the Pleasant Prairie Coal Plant near Kenosha and committed to building a new solar farm. This is a major step forward, but it isn't enough. The concerns at the Oak Creek Power Plant must also be addressed.

All families in Southeast Wisconsin deserve to remain in their homes and live in communities free of harmful coal plant pollution.

If you're interested in getting involved with the Clean Power Coalition-Southeast Wisconsin, Email Miranda Ehrlich at [miranda.ehrlich@sierraclub.org](mailto:miranda.ehrlich@sierraclub.org).