



GREAT WATERS GROUP NEWSLETTER

WWW.GREATWATERSGROUP.ORG greatwatersgroupsc@gmail.com

Winter, 2018 NO. 4



Visitors to scenic Kohler-Andrae State Park see a gift from nature. Developers see another golf course.

Terry Andrae golf course a bad deal

*By R.T. Both
Political Chair*

On the shores of Lake Michigan in Sheboygan County, Kohler-Andrae State Park – also known as Terry Andrae or “the Dunes” — is a peaceful and glorious destination for many travelers. Herb Kohler Jr. wants to develop a golf course on land north of the park.

That in itself is a problem, since the Kohler property contains rare “ridge and swale” wetlands that experts call “globally signifi-

cant.” But Kohler also wants a piece of Terry Andrae to locate the entrance to the course and a maintenance facility. Mary Faydash is one of the leading lights of Friends of the Black River Forest, a small but dedicated Sheboygan County group that has filed suit to stop the proposed golf course.

A forested area called the Black River Trails is located inside Terry Andrae Park across from the Kohler land. Some of this forest extends onto the Kohler land and is part of the 160 out of 247 acres that Mary Faydash says is going to be “clear cut.”

For a map of Kohler-Andrae State Park, click here:
<https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/parks/name/kohlerandrae/pdfs/kaparkmap.pdf>

Wisconsin’s Department of Natural Resources has supported Kohler’s plans giving the company everything it asked for, including a “land swap,” in which the state trades ten acres of land in Terry Andrae to Kohler in exchange for a few unwanted acres owned by the company that is inaccessible and not prime because it has been bulldozed.

(Continued on page 5)

Winter Programs

**Comprehensive Plan to Draw Down Green House Gasses
Bruce Wiggins, Community Social Justice Advocate and
Activist**

Nov. 19 6:30 p.m. Wauwatosa Public Library

A discussion of *Drawdown: The Most Comprehensive Plan*
(Continued on page 3)

Notes from the Chair

You may have noticed that the venue for our monthly programs has changed. While we have had a decades-long relationship with Mayfair Mall, using its community room with no charge, the new owners of the mall have changed their policy to making the space an hourly fee-based proposition, including for non-profits like us. If we had stayed and rented the room we would have had to pay \$90 per evening. Your Great Waters Group Executive Committee decided we could not afford that.

So Bill Baurecht, your Program Chair, went on a hunt for a place we could afford and found the Wauwatosa Library, centrally located in our four-county area, with a community room of similar size to Mayfair Mall and an available audio-visual system for a very acceptable public service price (\$0).

On some occasions, like the night before elections, the space will not be available, so Bill found that the West Allis Library would work equally well – thus the February program will be at West Allis while the other programs will be at Wauwatosa’s Library.

We also are changing to a 6:30 p.m. start to most programs in order to make sure we are out and cleaned up well before the 9 p.m. closing of the libraries.

Our one outlier to this is our normal Holiday Party venue at Wil-o-Way in Wauwatosa, Dec. 2, starting at 4 p.m. Note the article in this issue; I hope you will join us for our normal great time.

While this issue of the newsletter marks the end of my term as your Group Chair, I leave it in the very capable hands of Crystal Hoecherl and the nine members of your Executive Committee and the several other chairs with various responsibilities in what we call the Volunteer Leadership Council (which includes the Excom).

Since Crystal has been our secretary, we are looking for someone to fill her shoes as she moves over to group chair. Please let me or a VLC member know if you are interested.

– Bill Moore

Clean Wisconsin sues over smog plan

Clean Wisconsin has sued the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the federal Circuit Court in Washington, D.C. to challenge a Trump Administration decision that fails to reduce unhealthy ozone smog in Wisconsin and other parts of the country.

The Clean Air Act requires the EPA to designate “nonattainment areas” in counties where air quality fails to meet federal health standards for ozone. The states must then take steps to

reduce the amount of ozone smog in the air.

On June 4, the EPA designated a narrow band of “ozone nonattainment areas” in a few Wisconsin counties along the Lake Michigan shoreline. It also announced its decision that other areas in eastern Wisconsin are not violating the ozone air quality standards – a decision directly at odds with EPA’s previous position.

The June designations differ significantly from what EPA proposed less than six months earlier, which was its intention to designate all of Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Waukesha and Washington Counties as ozone nonattainment areas.

EPA also designated eastern portions of Door, Kenosha, Manitowoc and Sheboygan Counties as ozone nonattainment areas. The Walker administration had pushed back on EPA’s earlier proposal, asking that the entire state be declared in compliance.

“This legal challenge builds on our almost 50 years of work to help ensure that everyone in Wisconsin, especially our most vulnerable residents, can breathe clean, healthy air,” said Clean Wisconsin CEO Mark Redsten.

“Smog causes respiratory irritation,” notes Dr. Ann Behrmann, pediatrician and member of the Wisconsin Environmental Health Network. “Ozone also causes swelling of the airways, which especially affects children because their airways are smaller. For adults, there have been numerous studies linking air pollution to an increased risk of heart attacks, even in healthy young adults.”

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Earth's chances of regaining its health are melting away like Arctic ice. A United Nations report outlined what has to be done to reverse that process.

Climate report has mixed messages

Recently the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released a report that contained both hopeful and challenging messages on global warming. The special IPCC report was requested in 2016 to see if it was possible to hold warming to the 1.5 degree Celsius level set as a goal by the Paris Agreement of 2015.

Rev. Peter Sawtell, Executive Director, Eco-Justice Ministries, said the report found that it was possible to meet that goal, and it's easier

to accomplish when people take sustainable development and social justice seriously.

"The Summary for policymakers notes that keeping to the 1.5 degree limit would require rapid and far-reaching transitions in energy, land, urban and infrastructure (including transport and buildings), and industrial systems," he said.

"These systems transitions are unprecedented in terms of scale, but not necessarily in terms of speed, and imply deep emissions reductions in all sectors, a wide portfolio of mitigation options and a significant upscaling of investments in those options."

Rev. Sawtell's statement indicates, there's no way to imagine that the world will meet the challenge of climate change only with solar panels and electric cars. That will require dramatic changes in agriculture and land use, urban design and standards of consumption as well as removing carbon from the atmosphere and increasing political will and international cooperation.

Rev. Sawtell finds an important cautionary detail from the UN report. There are many good strategies for slashing climate impacts, but those can interact with each other.

The IPCC report speaks of synergies and trade-offs among mitigation options, where action on one front might either reinforce or conflict with action of another form. (Planting forests to soak up carbon, for example, runs into efforts to develop sustainable agriculture.)

Drawdown, an initiative based on a recent book by Paul Hawken outlining what a highly qualified group of experts say needs to be done to avoid climate catastrophe will be the topic at an upcoming GWG general meeting.

Winter Programs

(Continued from page 1)

Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming in 2016. Canadian naturalist Brent Tegner wrote, "*Drawdown* is highly recommended for those looking for hope that we will be able to face the challenges of the 21st century." We recommend you read the book of essays, which is available at local libraries and for purchase, but you don't need to read the book to engage in this discussion.

Saving the Dark, a documentary by Sriram Murali, director and producer.

Monday, Jan. 21, 6:30 p.m. Wauwatosa Public Library

Eighty per cent of the world's population live under light polluted skies. What do we lose when we lose sight of the stars? Excessive and improper lighting robs us of our night skies, disrupts our sleep patterns and endangers nocturnal habitats. *Saving the Dark* explores the need to preserve night skies and ways to combat light pollution.

February 18, 6:30 p.m. West Allis Public Library.

Program to be confirmed. Check future listings on the GWG E-letter, website, Facebook, and Twitter.

Water pollution concerns span state

Kewaunee County has become a focus for water quality concerns in Wisconsin as federal, state and local leaders work with researchers to address contamination. Governor Walker's Department of Natural Resources formed a work group to address the problems several years ago, but that was only after environmental groups and residents filed a petition with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in 2014.

That work group provided recommendations to review enforcement for large farms known as concentrated animal feeding operations, or CAFOs, to develop guidance on compliance, create an electronic database and add staff. The DNR also commissioned a two-year study in 2015 to find types and sources of contamination.

The study sampled more than 300 wells in November 2015 and 400 wells the following July for total coliform bacteria, E. coli, and nitrates. The thinner the soil, the more contamination they found. The study also showed that 60 percent of 131 household wells tested had signs of waste from both cows and people.

The research led to new state standards for manure spreading in eastern Wisconsin that were approved by Walker. Farms with less than two feet of soil won't be able to spread manure because it's more likely that contaminants will pass through thin soil into the region's fractured bedrock, ultimately reaching groundwater.

The Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation's executive director of governmental relations Paul Zimmerman, said on Wisconsin Public Radio, "I know from the farm community we do not want groundwater contamination. Farmers don't want wells contaminated because it could be their own well. They live there and their family lives there. Farmers in general do not want groundwater contamination."

And then there's news from the western side of the state. In La Crosse County a task force released a report detailing its recommendations for reducing the level of nitrates in drinking water.



Photo by Danielle Kaedning/WPR

Erika Balza says her well in Kewaunee County has been contaminated with nitrates, bacteria and manure because of farming practices in the region.

The task force was formed in 2017 after it was determined that more than 30 percent of the wells in the county tested above the safe drinking water limit for nitrates. La Crosse County decided to test the wells last year only after Wisconsin's Legislative Audit Bureau found that the DNR was not adequately monitoring pollution data or enforcing environmental laws when violations were discovered.

One of those violations concerned a large La Crosse County hog CAFO. Alarmed citizens and county officials decided to investigate. (Continued on page 7)

Supreme Court rules for young litigants

By Julie Enslow

Twenty-one young activists from throughout the United States who are challenging the federal government's responsibility for climate change achieved a key judicial victory when the US Supreme Court refused a Trump Administration application to halt their suit.

The plaintiffs, aged 11 to 22 supported by the nonprofit group Our Children's Trust, are insisting in *Juliana vs. United States* in Eugene, Ore., federal court that the government provide a livable future that depends on a climate system that will sustain human life.

The Administration had moved for an emergency ruling to block a hearing of the case, but the Supreme Court ruled that the suit could proceed but said the government could present arguments against it before the Ninth U.S. Circuit of Appeals in the future.

Julia Olson, executive director and chief counsel Our Children's Trust, hailed the ruling. "The youth of our nation won an important decision today from the supreme court that shows even the most powerful government in the world must follow the rules and process of litigation in our democracy," she said in a statement.

The best scientists in the world will testify in the case to the grave threats posed by our rapidly changing climate. Leading experts have mapped out what a national climate recovery plan would look like.

The federal government has known about the danger for more than half a century. Alternative forms of energy could have been encouraged, implemented and promoted. The Executive branch of our government could have moved us away from fossil fuels, but instead it made a choice to double down on destruction.

Op-ed makes key climate points

By Mike Arney

Regarding the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Report I love the following points from the New York Times op-ed:

- Stopping Climate Change Is Hopeless. Let's Do It.
- ...to protect civilization by limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius the world would need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions faster than has ever been achieved, and do it everywhere, for 50 years. ... We'd need reductions of 6 to 9 per cent every year, in every country for half a century.
- To have a prayer of 1.5 degrees Celsius, we would need to leave most of the remaining coal, oil and gas underground, compelling the Exxon Mobils and Saudi Aramcos to forgo anticipated revenues of over \$33 trillion over the next 25 years.
- Solving climate change is going to be harder, and more improbable, than winning World War II, achieving civil rights, defeating bacterial infection and sending a man to the moon all together.
- We could order in Chinese and lock ourselves in the closet, but we shouldn't. Because there's good news: We're perfect for the job. If the human species specializes in one thing, it's taking on the impossible.
- As the journalist I.F. Stone was said to have explained: "The only kinds of fights worth fighting are those you are going to lose because somebody has to fight them and lose and lose and lose until someday, somebody who believes as you do wins."
- To save civilization, most of us would need to supplement our standard daily practices — eating, caring for family and community, faith — with a steady push on the big forces that are restraining progress, the most prominent being the fossil fuel industry's co-option of government, education, science and media.

This practice starts with a deep understanding of the problem, so it will mean reading a little about climate science. Our actions must be to scale, so while we undertake individual steps in our lives, like retrofitting light bulbs, we must realize that real progress comes from voting, running for office, marching in protest, writing letters, and uncomfortable but respectful conversations with fathers-in-law.

Nearby Nature hike set

Support the Nearby Nature project and join us for a second annual December hike and cleanup. Dress for hiking and trash pick-up along the Lincoln Creek Greenway. BBQ and s'mores to follow.

Date: Saturday, Dec. 8, 10 a.m. to noon

Location: Meet at 35th and Congress by the Bee Bus sign

Contact: David Thomas at David@thomerwald.net or 414-810-2286

Winter 2018

Milwaukee Council backs Complete Streets program

Complete Streets in Milwaukee, a program initiative designed to improve the safety of streets for bicycles and pedestrians, has been adopted by the Milwaukee City Council.



The measure is aimed at making streets that include protected bike lanes and are safe to cross to parks, public transportation and schools. Not only will improved infrastructure make it easier for people to get out and exercise, it makes our communities more connected, our streets safer and our neighborhoods more attractive.

Urge your council members to support the Complete Streets policy in Milwaukee. Like us on Facebook to get updates. For more information contact Complete Streets Co-leaders Jessica Wineberg and Caressa Givens at Wisconsin Bike Fed, 414-255-0376.

Terry Andrae golf course plan a bad deal for environment

(Continued from page 1)

Faydash contends that the DNR was working with the Kohler Company for four years, with the public largely unaware, before Kohler even applied for a permit to build the golf course. "When we read the DNR's final Environmental Impact Statement," Faydash says, "there were so many problems, we decided we had to file suit to have the permit overturned."

A DNR spokesperson said the agency is unable to comment on the Kohler-Andrae case due to pending litigation.

The Friends' attorney, Christa Westerberg says the litigants are challenging two decisions of DNR: the decision to issue a permit for a golf course on the rare interdunal ridge and swale wetlands on the Kohler property; and the decision to swap a section of the park for land owned by the company.

According to Westerberg, the land swap challenge has been "filed and put on ice" in Sheboygan County circuit court while the Friends await a decision by an administrative law judge on the wetlands permit and the DNR's environmental impact statement. A decision is expected sometime this fall.

The threat to the wetlands on Kohler's land comes at a time when the Wisconsin's wetlands are particularly vulnerable. Last March, the state legislature passed Act 183, which opened the way for formerly protected state wetlands to be developed.

For its part, Kohler insists it is doing everything possible to maintain the integrity of the site.

GWG Holiday Party features food and fun

Join us for our annual GWG Holiday Party and Fundraiser on Sunday, Dec. 2, from 4 to 8 p.m. at the Wil-O-Way Recreation Center in Wauwatosa. This will be another great event and, if you haven't attended before, please join us.

Doors open at 4 p.m. with drinks, snacks, and a silent auction. We'll sit down to a delicious Middle-Eastern dinner at 5:30 pm, with vegetarian, non-vegetarian and gluten-free options available. Afterwards, we'll end the evening with entertainment.

If you have any items you'd like to donate to the auction or any questions, please contact Janet Anderson at janeta16@sbcglobal.net or 414-258-5624. Deadline for auction items is Wednesday, Nov. 28.

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 building - up the hill and into the woods).

The cost of this very enjoyable evening is \$30 per person if reserva-

tions are postmarked by Nov. 26. Any reservations postmarked or received after that will be \$35 per person.

Checks should be made payable to "SC-Great Waters Group" and sent by Nov. 26 to Janet Anderson, 2516 N 86 Street, Wauwatosa, WI 53226

Bring your own settings to 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, to dust and clean instead of using paper towels? Reuse plastic bags that are difficult to avoid because they're forced on us? Recycle them? Shop with re-usable bags? Reduce energy consumption in your home? Coordinate errands to limit your use of gas? I suspect the answer to these questions is "yes."

We try to model conservation in ways we're able to, and all of us have made habits of the aforementioned simple acts. We belong to and act through environment groups to limit waste and resist the flood of policies now eroding environmental-protection laws in Wisconsin.

We invite you to bring place settings, wine-beer-soda-juice glasses (if you wish), coffee cups and cloth napkins to our holiday party on Dec. 2. Bring a reusable shopping bag to carry them and toss in yesterday's Journal Sentinel, New York Times, or last week's Shepherd to wrap your dirty place settings to wash at home. We don't have to waste water at Wil-O-Way and compete with entertainment.

In order to explore and enjoy we know we must protect. Reduce waste. That's what makes us Sierrans.

Spill goes unpunished

Reported by Wisconsin the Democracy Campaign/Urban Milwaukee

A western Wisconsin sand mine owned by Hi-Crush Proppants of Houston, Tex., will not be fined by the state for a 10-million-gallon spill last May. The spill released sludge and wastewater that flowed across farm fields and into the Trempealeau River.

The state Department of Natural Resources said it decided not to issue a fine "because it was done to rescue a trapped worker whose bulldozer slipped into a pond that held the wastewater." The DNR said state law allows wastewater permit holders to bypass normal procedures in emergency situations."

The owner of the mine has contributed to Republican Party campaign coffers.



Boundary Waters Act marks anniversary

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the passage of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness Act expanding environmental protections that included a ban on mining and logging in the area.

We reported a visit from Dave and Amy Freeman, who stopped in Milwaukee on their way to Washington, D.C. to raise awareness about the need to protect the area.

Also from September to December 2017, four young women from Minnesota who go by Katie, Hannah, Alex and Ariana and call themselves "Women On Wheels For Wild Lands" or "wow-full" rode their bicycles coast-to-coast to educate and raise awareness on the importance of American public lands and the threats they face.

They visited as many public lands along their route as possible, talking to individuals, organizations, legislators, and communities.

The current administration in Washington, D. C. is now considering opening neighboring lands to mining. The Nordic Ski Club Milwaukee is interested in working with Sierra Club and Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness to preserve the Boundary Waters: (<http://www.nordicskiclub.org.will>) Follow the Sierra Club GWG Website or Facebook to learn of actions you can take.

Five are nominated for GWG Committee

The Great Waters Group Nominating Committee chaired by Ed Anderson presents nominees for the 2019-'21 term. Please support your Group by participating in the election. The following are biographies submitted by the candidates.

Bill Baurecht

Bill Baurecht has been a member of the Sierra Club for many years and has led and participated in national lodge, service, base camp, family and grandparents/grandkids outings. A certified national outings leader, Bill shares his love of mountain hiking, knowledge of Western culture and history, and support of national and state parks and monuments with participants.

Bill and his wife Helen lead Sierra Club national outings in California and Nevada, Virginia and Maryland. He has also led, and will assist next August, a popular outing on the Superior Hiking Trail in Minnesota.

Rose T. Both (AKA R.T. Both)

Rose currently serves as the volunteer political chair for the Great Waters Group. She is the writer of the blog Wiscoland, which covers political and environmental issues in Wisconsin. Articles from Wiscoland have been reprinted in Urban Milwaukee and shared on Twitter by the Center for Media and Democracy.

Rose has published her essays, articles, and reviews in *Weep*, *Chicago Magazine*, *Colorado Review*, *Fiction Writers Review* and *Rain Taxi*. Her *Milwaukee Magazine* article, "The Banishment of John McAdams," was nominated for a Press Club award in the Profiles category. She earned a Ph.D. from University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee in 2016.

Crystal Hoecherl

Crystal's overseas work has provided her a global perspective on the environment. In the 1990's with UNICEF after the first Gulf War she worked on immunization, providing health education and caring for land mine and burn victims.

Contamination concerns focus on two counties

(Continued from page 4)

gate for themselves in the fall of 2017. The county ultimately tested more than 500 wells and found that private wells in the county are contaminated by nitrates at a rate of more than four times the state average.

The task force's report lays out a series of recommendations for reducing citizen exposure to nitrates, a contaminate that can cause birth defects and life-threatening health problems, particularly in young children. It is estimated that in Wisconsin, 90% of ground-water nitrate contamination comes from agriculture, 9% from septic systems, and 1% from other sources.

Task force recommendations include extending municipal water Winter 2018

Official Ballot: 2018 GWG Executive Committee Election

Mark an X on the line next to your selections. Each member may vote for only/up to 5 candidates.

Voter #1 Rose Both Chrystal Hoecherl
 Veronica Bell Von Roberts
 Bill Baurecht

Voter #2 Rose Both Chrystal Hoecherl
 Veronica Bell Von Roberts
 Bill Baurecht

Mail completed ballot to:

S.C. Great Waters Group Election Committee
PO Box 26798, Wauwatosa, WI 53226, postmarked by Dec, 28 or bring to our GWG Holiday Party December 2nd.

Crystal has been a school nurse for Milwaukee Public Schools since 2005. She has been the Group secretary and will be assuming the role of Group Chair.

Von Roberts

From growing up in a farming valley where my father was a cheese maker, I got to explore and love the woods, streams, rivers and lakes of Wisconsin, and I was fortunate to develop a value that cherishes a healthy environment and have learned the importance to advocate for good stewardship of what we're blessed to enjoy and preserve for our children.

I worked for Citizens for a Better Environment (CBE) and learned what carelessly used and spent chemicals do to our earth, and water – and to our bodies.

Veronica Bell

Veronica Bell is a long time Sierra Club member and environmental advocate who has traveled extensively in America's natural areas, including many Sierra Club Outings. She recently has served on the Action Team and Community Advisory Board for the GWG's Nearby Nature program.

service to more La Crosse County residents, taking land out of agricultural production and revising the rules that govern the siting of CAFOs and the spreading of manure..

La Crosse isn't the only county taking steps to address water contamination. In Grant, Iowa and Lafayette Counties, almost half of all residents get their drinking water from private wells. Citizens there began asking for more information after it became known that almost 25% of tested wells are contaminated with harmful levels bacteria.

The three counties are working together to sample more wells in the hopes of understanding the full extent of bacterial and nitrate contamination.



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

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Nearby Nature overcomes challenges

*By David Thomas
Nearby Nature Chair*

In December of 2017, the Great Waters Group (GWG) launched the local "Nearby Nature" project with a \$20,000 grant from the Sierra Club Foundation as part of a national effort to promote environmental justice and equity in urban areas.

We intended to hire folks from the community to lead the efforts, and we outlined this in the grant proposal. But three months into the project we were informed that Sierra Club "Groups" are not allowed to hire or employ anyone.

We shifted gears at this point and awarded a "sub-grant" to the Urban Ecology Center that funded environmental educators for programs in three Youth Serving Agencies (YSA's) along the Lincoln Creek Greenway and 30th Street Corridor. In addition to these weekly youth programs at these agencies here are some of our other accomplishments:

- We developed partnerships with more than a dozen organizations and agencies.
- We funded two neighborhood cleanup campaigns and participated in eight neighborhood cleanups.
- We participated in five non-cleanup service outings and participated in three "Safe Streets" rallies and gave five presentations about the program.
- We engaged a Mount Mary class in research, to learn reasons for resistance to getting outdoors.
- We funded a season-end campout for a Youth Employment Program.

We also awarded three "Community Engagement Fellowships" to women of color doing environmental work in the community, but were later informed that the stipends could not be paid without taking the women on as Sierra Club employees.

The Nearby Nature program is a one-time grant, and the hurdles to fundraising presented by the national organization are too complex and daunting for our local volunteers to overcome. As much as the John Muir Chapter would like to see the project succeed, it is not part of its strategic plan and is seen as a GWG project.

Still, given all these challenges, there is a lot that the Great Water Group can do to continue its work:

- Commit local resources to continuing justice and equity work and continue to develop relationships and seize opportunities to do this work.
- Continue to build GWG leadership that is diverse and inclusive. This may require us to reach out beyond our current networks and circles.
- Continue to support environmental programs in Youth Serving Agencies when we can find the money to support this work.
- Carry out educational work in our own ranks, understanding our own hidden biases and learning how to be strong allies to communities of color.

What we have discovered is that the Milwaukee's African-American community has a strong and vibrant environmental movement. Let's hope we can find ways to continue supporting this work in the coming years.