



GREAT WATERS GROUP NEWSLETTER

WWW.GREATWATERSGROUP.ORG greatwatersgroupsc@gmail.com

Spring 2019 NO. 1



An Enbridge Energy replacement pipeline would greatly increase the volume of oil flowing through critical rivers and corridors in Wisconsin.

Is Wisconsin Enbridge's guinea pig?

By Danielle Kaeding
Wisconsin Public Radio

Minnesota and Michigan have been at the center of controversial pipeline projects involving Canadian firm Enbridge Energy, and the fate of the company's pipelines is likely to have an impact how much oil will flow through Wisconsin.

Minnesota regulators on Dec. 13 rejected a petition to reconsider issuing a route permit for Enbridge Energy's plans to replace its aging Line 3 pipeline that ends in Superior. Environmental and tribal groups have opposed the project over fears of oil spilling in wild rice beds and other sensitive areas.

The company hopes to have the replacement pipeline in service next year. Enbridge has been sending half as much oil as before through Line 3 because it is cracked and corroded. The company's Line 3 project director, Barry Simonson, said Enbridge hopes to increase capacity from 390,000 to 760,000 barrels per day in the second half of 2019.

Environmentalists like Elizabeth Ward with the John Muir Chapter of the Sierra Club fear more oil will increase the risk to communities along the route. "Wisconsin becomes the guinea pig for finding out if a pipeline can even handle that much oil, which is really concerning given the path of the pipeline goes through so many critical rivers and corridors for Wisconsin," said Ward.

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Winter-Spring Programs

We continue to offer a range of environmental and conservation programs, with insights and recommendations by local experts. This spring we also offer something new, a Saturday morning hike at the Schlitz Audubon Center.

Environmental Justice Matters II

Monday, Feb. 18, at the West Allis Public Library (Note the location change.)

A panel discussion about race and taking action in a multi-cultural environmental movement. What happens when a traditionally white, (Continued on page 3)

Notes from the Chair

Bill Baurecht, Veronica Bell, Crystal Hoecherl Von Roberts and Chris Zapf have been elected to the Great Waters Group Executive Committee, and I would like to thank them for their willingness to serve.

I'd also like to welcome Veronica Bell and Von Roberts to the Executive Committee, along with our new treasurer, Jane Schneider. I'm looking forward to working with both new and returning members of the leadership team as the Great Waters Group moves forward into a new year.

Both the GWG and the state chapter of the Sierra Club are working on several areas of conservation with a special emphasis on the Milwaukee area. None are more important than any others, but some are of a more personal interest.

For me these include Nearby Nature and the transportation group. Both of these have a strong emphasis on equity and on the young people who are our future.

Milwaukee has the highest rate of childhood asthma in our nation, partly because the closer a person lives to a highway, the greater their risk of asthma. If you look at a map of the city, it's easy to see where asthma rates are highest.

The majority of neighborhoods most affected are also neighborhoods whose residents are people of color with lower socioeconomic status. So limiting the use of fossil fuels for transportation, whether by making our city more friendly to non-motorized transit or improving mass transit, helps to decrease greenhouse gas production while protecting our children and promoting equity.

I'm confident that in the coming year we can each find a way on the individual level to improve our contributions to conservation and to reach out in a new way to promote systems that decrease consumption.

Crystal Hoecherl

Supreme Court may get CAFO case

A case involving the authority of the Department of Natural Resources to regulate water pollution from concentrated animal feeding operations may soon be headed to Wisconsin's Supreme Court.

Arrive Together working on transportation issues

A statewide coalition is working to implement the findings of the Arrive Together Report that was published last Fall focusing on public transit solutions.

Transportation access for workers and attention to people with special needs will be emphasized with the new administration in Madison. Arrive Together recommends that there be no new highway expansion enumerations, a \$36 million annual increase in public transit spending, 35% more local road funding, and a ban on moving transit money to the general transportation fund.

Other areas meriting consideration are a revenue sharing formula and Regional Transit Authorities. In addition, programs promoting bike and pedestrian solutions need to be promoted. They include Path to Platinum, Complete Streets, Milwaukee Walks and Wisconsin Bike Federation partnerships.

Our addiction to the automobile is coming into greater focus as a cause of global warming, and unhooking our dependence on fossil fuels means changing both the system and our individual choices.

In a Jan. 16 decision the Wisconsin's District II Court of Appeals declined to issue a final ruling in the case, but instead asked the Supreme Court to take the case directly.

This development marks a new phase for a case that began more than six years ago when neighbors of Kinnard Farms, one of the state's largest concentrated animal feeding operations, filed a petition with the DNR requesting a review of the water pollution permit issued in 2012.

The petitioners, represented by Midwest Environmental Advocates, filed the challenge because Kinnard's water discharge permit did not do enough to protect water resources and public health from the impacts of the large industrial farm.

In 2014, an administrative law judge issued a decision in the water pollution permit challenge. Two of the most important parts of the decision included orders for groundwater monitoring and capping the number of animals as enforceable permit conditions.

Although the DNR originally agreed with the 2014 decision, former DNR Secretary Cathy Stepp reversed course. A Dane County Circuit Court judge later overturned Secretary Stepp's decision, and the DNR took that ruling to the Court of Appeals.

Midwest Environmental Advocates Staff Attorney Sarah Geers said, "The Wisconsin Supreme Court must now decide whether it will accept or deny the Court of Appeals' request. We look forward to arguing the merits of this case and reaching a resolution for Kewaunee County residents who want to protect the water they drink and the value of their land."



The turnout more than doubled from last year when GWG volunteers came to Lincoln Park in Milwaukee to participate in their fourth annual cleanup.

Photo by Eddee Daniels.

Park area profits from Nearby Nature

The GWG Nearby Nature project continues to develop partnerships and seize opportunities to celebrate environmental activities in the Lincoln Creek neighborhoods. It's great to see Sierra Club activities becoming more culturally diverse.

One of our best successes in bringing outdoor exploration to youth after-school programs was featured in a great article by Anna Martinez-Ortiz of the NNS. You can find it by Googling "Nearby Nature Milwaukee."

We held our fourth cleanup of the year in our adopted section of Lincoln Creek and had double the turnout from the previous year. And now we are working to develop a relationship with Milwaukee Environmental Consortium (MEC) in hopes of expanding funding opportunities.

Future activities include a February 18 panel program and two big Earth Day activities. You'll find details in other parts of this newsletter.

Paddling trip planned for Boundary Waters

The JMC Outings program will lead a paddling trip into the International Boundary Waters Wilderness area of Wabakimi Provincial Park, July 14-20. There will also be a women's paddling trip to the Namekagon and St. Croix Rivers, Sept. 20-22.

Find out more and register at sierraclub.org/wisconsin/outings-events. Outings fees cover all group supplies, equipment, food and lodging – including park permits and taxes. Not included are travel and associated costs to and from the official gathering point, personal fishing licenses and permits, and passports if required. You supply your personal camping gear and clothing.

Contact outings leaders for additional information about registration, including where to send your deposit to reserve your spot.

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Volunteers welcome

Do you have a little extra time to volunteer with us in our Great Waters Group? We are all volunteers and, with our increasing membership, we could use your help to get our messages and activities out in the public eye.

We are looking for YOU to join our Communications team to help get information out to our Great Waters Group members via our multiple media sources. We are also looking for someone who can help us with computer technology changes.

Please contact Janet Anderson at janeta16@sbcglobal.net.

Coal plant discharge permit raises issues

We Energies' Oak Creek coal plant's surface water permit is up for renewal by the Department of Natural Resources, and the Clean Power Coalition is concerned by some of the allowances in the permit regarding water discharges.

We Energies is asking for a mercury variance that would allow the utility to exceed state wildlife standards for mercury pollution in water discharged into Lake Michigan. The Coalition strongly opposes the variance because Mercury is a potent neurotoxin, and its levels in Lake Michigan are already too high.

There is an additional concern that the permit gives We Energies too much leeway in implementing best practices around coal ash handling. Coal ash is a toxic byproduct of coal burning that might also have an impact on Lake Michigan and nearby surface water.

The Coalition views the permit as a serious environmental justice and equity issue, and it seeks to hold We Energies accountable and encourage the DNR to require stricter measures that will better protect people's health.

Volunteers, donors help make party a success

Award winning folk singer, historian, multi-instrumentalist and storyteller David HB Drake provided the entertainment as GWG members enjoyed drinks, snacks, a silent auction and a delicious meal at our annual Holiday Party and Fundraiser on Dec. 2 at the Wil O Way Recreation Center in Wauwatosa.

A big thank you goes to those who helped with the varied tasks involved in making this event a success and to the many attendees who heeded our call to be more conservation aware and less wasteful by bringing their own table settings.

We are grateful to all of the people who made generous dona-

tions for our silent auction and to the businesses that supported our fundraiser. We ask you to patronize the following businesses:

Cold Spoons Gelato, Collectivo Coffee, Comedy Sportz, Delafield Brewhaus, Florentine Opera, Highlands Café, Janus Massage and Yoga Studio, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, North Country Trail Association, Oro di Oliva, Ray's Growler Gallery, Riveredge Environmental Center, Schlitz Audubon Nature Center, The Spice House, Stella's Salon & Spa, Sunset Playhouse, Trader Joe's, United Nations Association, Urban Ecology Center, Usinger's Famous Sausage, Vintage Glass Garden, and Yellow Wood Outfitters.



Eric Hansen received the 2018 Environmental Hero award from his good friend and fellow GWG member Steve Schutz at the annual party and fund raiser.

Hansen is GWG Environmental hero

Our coveted Environmental Hero of the Year 2018 Award was presented to GWG member Eric Hansen by fellow GWG member and friend Steve Schutz at the Holiday Party.

A well-known traveler, author and speaker, Eric works diligently to help protect the natural areas that he and others enjoy from climate change and attempts by the oil industry to turn our region into a crude oil corridor. This

is reflected in the Milwaukee area by his efforts on behalf of CARS (Citizens Acting for Rail Safety). He has written numerous articles and editorials, in addition to two hiking guidebooks.

Eric's volunteerism and environmental activism is an excellent example of living our Sierra Club mission of exploring, enjoying, and protecting the environment.

Climate policy a hot topic in Washington

By Mike Arney

Happy 2019! It's been an eventful few months for climate policy in Washington.

With Democrats controlling the House of Representatives, young climate hawks like Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez are talking up a "Green New Deal" that would combine aggressive climate action with programs for jobs and racial and economic equity. The Sierra Club website calls it "a big, bold transformation of the economy to tackle the twin crises of inequality and climate change."

That's exciting, especially if you're a Democrat or a feisty Republican like our own Jim Sensenbrenner, who is vying for a seat on the new "climate crisis" committee. But so far, the Green

New Deal is not a bill or even a concrete policy at the national level.

What is on the table is HR 763, the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act of 2019. This bill is the product of years of hard work by thousands of volunteers. It would cut US carbon emissions 40% in 15 years and 90% by 2050.

It would also create jobs and improve health while putting money in peoples' pockets. Plus, it has Republican co-sponsorship, no mean feat for a climate bill this ambitious.

The only way big climate policy will move forward is if people ask for it loudly. A good sign on that front is increasing public concern, in part because of the multiple climate disasters that are already happening.

milwaukeeest@citizensclimatelobby.org, 414-350-2728

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Minnesota group appeals mine ruling

The Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy has petitioned the Court of Appeals to review a Minnesota Department of Natural Resources decision involving PolyMet mining and dam safety permits for a copper-nickel mine near Hoyt Lakes.

The MN-DNR had denied MCEA's request for a contested case hearing. MCEA and its allies also asked the Court of Appeals to throw out the rules that the MN-DNR relied on in issuing the permit to mine, on the grounds that they are so vague that they allow the MN-DNR to do whatever it wants.

The appeals assert that the MN-DNR illegally allowed PolyMet to proceed with its mine, even though it didn't know how the reactive mine waste that it would generate would be prevented from causing pollution when the mine closes.

They also argue that the MN-DNR failed to require PolyMet to use feasible and prudent alternative methods for managing its waste that would avoid the hazards associated with a poorly constructed earthen dam that is supposed to hold back a 900-acre lake of contaminated water and tailings forever.

In addition, in late December, the state level Minnesota Pollution Control Agency issued water and air permits to PolyMet.

Joining MCEA in these appeals are Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness, Duluth for Clean Water, Save Lake Superior Association, Center for Biological Diversity, Friends of the Cloquet Valley State Forest, and Save Our Sky Blue Waters.

The MCEA has requested that the MN-DNR stay the permits and prevent PolyMet from beginning to mine until the cases come to court.

Climate affecting snowy owl patterns

Excerpted from the Nature Conservancy

More than a century of scientific study has shown that large flights of snowy owls into Wisconsin, called "irruptions," occur every four or five years. But in three of the last four winters, an unprecedented number of the birds have irrupted here in remarkably large numbers, confounding researchers.

These irruptions have occurred across the eastern two-thirds of the continent. So, what's going on? One possibility, linked to climate change, is that a warmer Arctic may be increasing the birds' habitat, allowing them to produce more offspring more often.

Few birds are as revered and as keenly awaited every winter as snowy owls. They breed in the treeless Arctic tundra, so when they come down into Wisconsin, they seek out the same open expansive habitat. Look for them in farm fields, near airports, over large wetlands and along coastal areas.

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In another case in late December, the Trump Administration's Department of Interior announced its intention to renew the expired mineral leases held by the Chilean-owned company, Twin Metals, bringing that mining giant one step closer to the edge of the Boundary Waters. The renewal comes despite overwhelming public opposition, scientific studies and the recommendation of the U.S. Forest Service.

An example of the harm that could be done by this renewal can be found in a 2014 case when the tailings dam broke at the Mount Polley mine, an open-pit copper and gold mine, in western Canada. A reservoir containing a slurry of toxic mining waste spilled into the nearby lake, and millions of gallons of pollution flowed into connecting rivers. Subsequently, the company responsible for the disaster announced that it would suspend operations, putting hundreds of people out of work.

Mount Polley is a red flag signaling exactly why this toxic, economically destructive industry has no place in Minnesota.

Volunteer Leadership Council (VLC) Contact List

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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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Barbara Richards, Conservation & Newsletter Chair 414-259-0731
Dave Wehnes, Website Super Administrator 414-453-1689
Dale Hofmann, Newsletter Editor 414-476-8636
David Hetzel, Newsletter Reimbursement 414-228-9512

City will discuss lead crisis

Freshwater Life Action Coalition and The Get the Lead Out Coalition will present their geographic mapping to the City of Milwaukee Public Safety and Health Committee at 9 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 14, at Milwaukee City Hall Room 301B.

All Milwaukee citizens are invited to hear more about the city's lead crisis at the session where the city will be encouraged to help develop a comprehensive, strategic plan for dealing with the problem. For More information email leadfreemke@gmail.com or check the Website: leadfreemke.com.

Pipeline would affect our state

(Continued from page 1)

Ward noted the state may also witness more oil from Michigan, depending on the state's new Democratic governor. Outgoing Republican Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder signed a bill passed by the Republican-controlled Legislature to create an authority to oversee construction of a tunnel to hold Enbridge's Line 5 under the Straits of Mackinac.

However, the state's incoming governor Gretchen Whitmer has campaigned to shut down Line 5. And while she has criticized the tunnel deal, it's unclear whether she'll challenge it.

Peter Anderson with the climate action group 350 Madison, said shutting down Line 5 would be good for the Great Lakes, "but we have to recognize in pursuing that greater good that if the company persists in seeking to keep the same amount of oil flowing to the refineries in places like Ontario, that will probably go through Wisconsin."

A report last fall identified a new pipeline through Wisconsin as one alternative to Line 5. A so-called "southern route" would follow existing pipelines through Wisconsin and continue south to Chicago and east to Sarnia, Ontario. The 30-inch diameter pipeline would pass through 29 rivers, 56 stream crossings and 130 miles of wetlands in Wisconsin, according to the report.

Line 3 would cross Indigenous treaty territory, threatening cultural resources like wild rice.

Meanwhile a recent Binational science advisory board report shows potential for damage from crude oil spills at 15 sites on the Great Lakes that are the most vulnerable to crude oil spills. The St. Louis River Estuary in Duluth-Superior, the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, northern Green Bay and the Straits of Mackinac between Lakes Michigan and Huron are among the most vulnerable areas.

Report co-author Michael Murray said much of the research known about impacts to ecosystems stems from events in saltwater systems, such as the Deepwater Horizon spill in the Gulf of Mexico and the Exxon Valdez spill in Prince William Sound in Alaska. The report also recommends developing oil spill models and studying the downstream impacts of spills to Great Lakes habitats and rivers.

In a statement, Enbridge spokeswoman Jennifer Smith said Enbridge invests millions of dollars annually to upgrade and maintain its pipeline system to keep it safe. "Additionally, in the unlikely event of a release, we're prepared to respond quickly and in coordination with federal and state agencies," she said.

Yet Greenpeace reports Enbridge and its joint ventures and subsidiaries reported 307 incidents to federal regulators from 2002 to present – one every 20 days on average. Enbridge pipelines have also seen some of the largest pipeline spills in American history, including a spill in Grand Rapids, MN, in 1991, and a spill into the Kalamazoo River in Michigan in 2010.

Tar sands are one of the dirtiest sources of oil on the planet, and when they spill into water they are nearly impossible to clean up. Enbridge's Line 3 tar sands pipeline would cross Minnesota's freshwater lakes region and the Mississippi River, and the company's track record shows that even newer pipelines spill.

Winter-Spring Programs

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suburban organization engages in environmental issues in Milwaukee's central city? Panelists include Martha Barry, racial justice director of the YWCA of Southeast Wisconsin; August M. Ball, YWCA 2018 award winner from Cream City Conservation; Yamile Salgado, student at Esquela Verde and National Outdoor Leadership School; and David Thomas, Sierra Club Great Waters Group, Nearby Nature chair.

Spring potluck

March 18, 6:15 p.m. Wauwatosa Public Library

Kate Morgan, Outreach Program Coordinator with the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District will present "Protecting Our Rivers and Lake Michigan with Green Infrastructure." Ms. Morgan will explain actions focused on green infrastructure that we can take to help protect our rivers and Lake Michigan. Attendees will learn how they can manage storm water where it falls on their property and in their communities.

Guided hike at the Schlitz Audubon Center

Saturday, April 6, 9:30 a.m.

Marc White, Executive Director of the Schlitz Audubon Center, will lead the spring hike, which is open to the public. The hike is in conjunction with our May 20 public program at the Schlitz Audubon Center. Encourage your family and friends to join us. Members of the public who attend and are not Sierra Club members will learn about us and perhaps join the Sierra Club.

"Schlitz Audubon's Conservation Plan – Progress toward Goals."
Monday, May 20, Schlitz Audubon Center, from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Marc White will be our presenter.

Earth Day celebration set for two locations

The Sierra Club will be celebrating Earth Day on Saturday April 27 on two fronts, with observances being held at Lincoln Park and the Washington Park Urban Ecology Center. Both events will be part of the Milwaukee Riverkeeper 24th Annual River Cleanup.

Volunteers will clean up trash along a wild stretch of Lincoln Creek that runs from 35th and Congress to 34th and Hampton in Milwaukee. Go to www.milwaukeekeeper.org to sign up.

Service work will be performed from 9 a.m. to noon at the Earth Day Nearby Nature Community Celebration at Washington Park. Sign-up also at www.milwaukeekeeper.org. There will be a noon lunch for service volunteers and community presenters, and community resource information tables will be available from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. August Ball, founder and CEO of Cream City Conservation Corps will give a keynote speech at 1 p.m.

Dan Buckler will coordinate the Lincoln Park event, and David Thomas will be in charge at the UEC.

For more information on the Lincoln Creek River Cleanup, please contact Dan Buckler at daniel.c.buckler@gmail.com or 330-261-2088.

For information on the Earth Day Nearby Nature Community Celebration at UEC Washington Park contact David Thomas at david@thomerwald.net or 414-810-2286

Food choice can reduce carbon footprint

When it comes to food, consumer choices can have a significant impact on our environment. By choosing to spend your food dollars with local sustainable farmers, you are casting a vote for clean water, healthy soil and reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

Here are some important facts you should know about food:

- Food production systems are responsible for one-quarter of all greenhouse gas emissions.
- More than half of food emissions come from animal production.
- Almost half of all food in the world is wasted after production.

Dinner and a movie

Join us for dinner and a movie at the Backcountry Film Festival. Inspiring short films produced annually by the Winter Wildlands Alliance will be featured at the Oriental Theatre in Milwaukee Wednesday, March 6, at 7 p.m. Call or email Chris Zapf at 414-429-8069 or zapfchristine@sbcglobal.net to add your name to the reservation list.

Havenwoods will be site for stewardship

A new monthly work day of stewardship activities is starting at Havenwoods State Forest. Join the Great Waters Group and the Friends of Havenwoods State Forest every third Saturday to cut invasive species, plant trees and other vegetation and enjoy one of the best places in Milwaukee.

Havenwoods State Forest is a 237-acre property full of forests, prairies, wetlands and interesting history. While working on the site, we will also learn about the impact of invasives on local ecosystems. No experience or equipment is needed, just appropriate clothing.

Date: Saturdays – Feb. 16, March 16, April 20 and May 18 at 10 am until noon.

Location: Havenwoods State Forest, 6141 N. Hopkins St. Milwaukee.

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

NCA report is a warning

The National Climate Assessment recently released by the White House confirms that climate change is already affecting the United States, and its impacts are only expected to worsen if bold action isn't taken to reduce global warming emissions.

The findings coming in the wake of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report elevate the issue and call for science-based solutions. At the same time, they show that we must invest in making our economy and communities more prepared to withstand unavoidable climate impacts. Both adaptation and mitigation actions and policies are required.

In addition to federal action, communities must make individual, local, regional and statewide changes in standard living choices.

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- Industrial agriculture with its intensive use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides and its concentration of animals in factory farms is polluting our land and water.
- Organic agriculture can sequester carbon in the soil.

Things you can do to significantly reduce your carbon footprint include choosing a plant-based diet with less consumption of animal products, buying local and organic products to limit the use of fossil fuel-based chemicals and paying attention to food waste while promoting composting.

Riverside UEC plans local farmer open house

A chance to meet local farmers, defend clean water and sustainable farming practices, and arrange to buy tasty, healthy farm-fresh food all come together Saturday, March 9 at the annual Local Farmer Open House scheduled for the Urban Ecology Center at Riverside Park in Milwaukee from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.



You can learn how you can conveniently purchase boxes of farm-fresh produce this growing season by talking with local farmers about their farms, their methods, and their Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) subscription options.

Your dollars will go directly to the farmer while encouraging sustainable growing practices that protect our soils, water and health and reduce our carbon footprint.

More info about the event and CSAs can be found at: urbanecologycenter.org/csa.

Monarch fund raiser set

A silent auction, a Monarch update and great food and drink will be featured at the Friends of the Monarch Trail's annual Fundraiser Soiree at the Eschweiller Apartments Echelon Hall at 9810 Echelon Lane in Wauwatosa from 5:30 to 8 p.m. on Wednesday, April 17.

Other Monarch events this year include:

Sunday, June 2 – Milkweed and Pollinator Plant Sale.

Sunday, June 23 – Planting Party.

Saturday, July 20 – Second Annual Monarch Trail Seminar.

Sunday, August 25 – Annual Monarch Migration Celebration.

September and October – Milkweed Pod Collection;

TBA – Milkweed Pod Pooza De-Fluffing Party

If you would like to provide much needed volunteer help for any of these events please call LuAnne Washburn at 414-324-6586 or email LuLuwashbu@hotmail.com.



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Local organization fights plastic glut

A local group calling itself Plastic Free MKE is working to combat an epidemic of soft plastic pollution in Milwaukee and reduce its damage. More and more, people are becoming concerned with the infiltration of plastic into all areas of our lives, the toxic effects of it on the environment and the largely unknown effects on our health.

The group's projects include Plastic Free Zones aimed at helping food and beverage businesses reduce their plastic use by switching to reusable or marine degradable food-ware and taking opportunities such as Compost Crusader to compost.

Plastic Free Events is an initiative based not only on small local venues, street festivals and clean-ups but also the larger events like Summer Fest and the State Fair. Plastic Free MKE would like to work on making them plastic free as a way of educating the public.

Another focus is on consumers where the aim is to create a pledge to avoid plastic and to encourage businesses to give discounts when customers bring in their own containers.

Finally, we will encourage local and state governments to enact laws against plastic, to remove the Ban on Bans and to expand our local pilot program for residential composting.



Plastic Free MKE meets on the first Monday of every month at the Urban Ecology Center (Riverside branch) from 6 p.m. to 7p.m.

The group's effort parallel those of the Wisconsin International Public Research Interest Group. The WISPRIG national network has a number of projects that include:

- Working in cities in Wisconsin and other states across the country to enact bans on polystyrene plastic foam.
- Lobbying legislators to support and pass bills to ban not only polystyrene but also single-use plastic bags and straws in states such as New Jersey.
- Persuading corporations to follow Kroger's lead and remove disposable plastic bags from its stores, and companies such as Coca-Cola to reduce their use of plastic.
- Working with Wisconsin cities to improve access to curbside recycling.
- Expanding SMART (Save Money And Reduce Trash) programs starting in Denver and Chicago.