



GREAT WATERS GROUP NEWSLETTER

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Fall 2021 NO. 3

Lands Team carries fight to Kohler

By RT Both

GWG Political Chair and Lands Team member

The Wisconsin Chapter Lands Team held a number of events this summer aimed at persuading the Kohler Company to drop its destructive plan to develop one of Wisconsin's rarest habitats, the Kohler-Andrae Lakeshore. Great Waters Group is a co-sponsor of the chapter's Kohler-Andrae campaign.

Kohler-Andrae Lakeshore is a single ecosystem comprised of Kohler-Andrae State Park and 247 acres north of the park where, in the face of strong public opposition, the company wants to build a golf course.

A virtual volunteer night on June 9 that was largely focused on the preservation of Kohler-Andrae Lakeshore drew an enthusiastic group of 25. Members worked on postcards, op-eds, letters, and social media posts, as well as a text campaign aimed at getting volunteers to sign up for the Kohler Call-in Campaign that began on June 21.

Members and volunteers called Kohler Company during the week and asked to speak to executive chair Herb Kohler, Jr., CEO David Kohler, or Laura Kohler, VP of sustainability, to voice their concerns about Kohler's plan and to persuade the company to preserve the 247 acres it owns north of Kohler-Andrae State Park. The state park is included in the company's development plans.

Fifty people signed up to call Kohler the week of June 21, including members of Friends of the Black River Forest, the grassroots group that has so far stopped Kohler's golf course plan with legal challenges. Of the 36 people who filled out forms detailing their experiences, most reported being forwarded to voice mail, but one said a weary receptionist simply hung up.

"I think Sierra Club members care really deeply about this campaign," said Wisconsin Chapter campaign director Cassie Steiner, who staffs the Lands Team.

Other highlights of the ongoing campaign include a petition that received 842 signatures in June, which is a large number for an online petition. More signatures will be collected when in-person events resume later this summer. A Twitter campaign and posts on Instagram and Facebook featuring original graphics by Lands Team members were also among the actions taken.

(Continued on page 7)



Rare ridge and swale wetlands like these are being threatened by the Kohler Company's plans to build a golf course adjacent to Kohler Andrae State Park.

Photo by RT Both

SAVE THE DATE

Put Sunday, Dec. 5, from 4 to 8 p.m. on your calendar for the annual Great Waters Group Holiday Party and Fundraiser. We hope to be able to gather in person again for dinner, a silent auction and entertainment.

If you'd like to help organize the event, please email greatwatersgroupsc@gmail.com.

Look for updates in the monthly e-letter, online at sierraclub.org/wisconsin/great-waters or on Facebook at facebook.com/SierraClubGWG. Find fall programs on page 3.

Notes from the Chair

In this edition of the Great Waters Group newsletter, we are thrilled to announce the return to some in-person programs. We are very lucky that the loosening of limitations on gatherings is coinciding with our region's short season of warm and balmy weather.

We are adhering to the careful guidance from national Sierra Club authorities on organizing in-person events and are submitting separate safety management plans for each event. As these plans are approved, we have been adding them to our calendar.

In this issue, you'll find information about monthly beer garden meetups through October, an outdoor gather-

ing at Hawthorn Glen for our September program and a cleanup along Lincoln Creek on Aug. 28, co-sponsored by Nearby Nature.

Whether you've been a Sierra Club member for years or have recently joined, we would love to see you and raise a glass together, pull trash from our local waterways, or sit around a bonfire. Please plan to stop by.

We'd love to get to know you and tell you about our many initiatives to build climate equity, increase outdoor opportunities for all of our neighbors and conserve and protect our natural resources. We hope to see you soon.

Jenny Abel



Beauty is never far from home, as evidenced by this expanse of lily pads on Mystery Lake at the Schlitz Audubon Center.

Photo by William Baurecht

Fun brewing at GWG beer garden parties

By Dan Buckler

Membership Chair and Outings Co-Chair

Break out your lederhosen and attune your ears to the accordion. It's beer garden time!

After so many months of Sierrans not being able to make merry with one another, we will finally reunite for some classic Milwaukee festivities. The Great Waters Group invites you to join us at any of our beer garden meet-ups over the next four months.

All events are on Wednesdays from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at outdoor sites with space to spread out. We'll have a small Sierra Club sign and a few members with Sierra Club paraphernalia to signal our location at each site. Get yourself a drink and come on by! We hope to see you at one or more of the following events:

- Aug. 18, from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. at Hoyt Park
- Sept. 15, from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. at South Shore Park
- Oct. 13, from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. at Hubbard Park

Nearby Nature plans river cleanup

By David Thomas
Equity Chair

Great Waters Group and Nearby Nature Milwaukee are co-sponsoring a summer river cleanup on Saturday, Aug. 28 along Lincoln Creek from 35th and Congress to 34th and Hampton. We will meet at 10 a.m. at 35th and Congress (by the Bee Bus Sign).

This is a neighborhood with poverty levels three times the state average. Poverty, underdevelopment, and urban blight seem to go hand in hand. This is an opportunity for good allies to come forward and make a difference in the community. Look for sign-up information on the Sierra Club GWG calendar and Facebook Page.

One reason for the date is to clean the site for the North Side Pop-up Farmers Market that will take place on the site the following Tuesday, Aug. 31, from 3:30 to 6:30 pm. The
(Continued on page 8)



As always, there will be plenty of trash to pick up when the Great Waters Group and Nearby Nature combine forces for a summer river cleanup along Lincoln Creek.

Fall Programs

We're pleased again to offer programs beginning this fall. Sierra Club has approved a cautious reopening of public events. The Great Waters Group website and e-letter will report details and changes if needed for the pandemic. Stay tuned and follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

--William Baurecht, Acting Program Chair

**Urban Trees, Climate Resiliency
and a Campfire Conversation**
Hawthorne Glen, 1130 N. 60th St. off
State St., Milwaukee

Monday, Sept. 20, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Hear a brief presentation on trees and urban forests from forester Dan Buckler. Learn more about key Sierra Club campaigns including Line 3 and Kohler-Andrae, and celebrate gathering in person around a campfire at the Redwood Picnic Area. (There's a shelter in case of bad weather.) Look for details in the September e-letter and at greatwatersgroup.org.

Contamination and Restoration of Local Waterways
Wauwatosa Public Library, Firefly Room,
7635 W. North Ave.

Monday, Oct. 18, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Cheryl Nenn, Riverkeeper at Milwaukee Riverkeeper for almost 19 years, will join us to talk about the history of the Milwaukee River Basin, including its legacy of pollution and habitat destruction, the current state of the rivers, and the work to protect and restore the Milwaukee, Menomonee, and Kinnickinnic rivers so that they can be safely used and enjoyed by everyone in our community.

Building a Multiracial Environmental Community
Central Methodist Church, 639 N. 25th St.
at Wisconsin Ave., Milwaukee

Monday, Nov. 15, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Thirteen local environmental groups and 90 community members are involved in Building a Multiracial Environmental Community, an initiative started by Nearby Nature (funded initially by Sierra Club), Hummingbird, and Milwaukee Environmental Consortium. Hear from Mandi McAlister, of Hummingbird, and other activists who are working to transform the local environmental movement. The presentation will report on what's been accomplished so far, next steps for the program, and how you can become involved.

Winter and spring programs will also return in the coming year, so stay tuned to our communications in the coming months.



Grassroots people do big things

By Eric Hansen
Conservation Chair

This blog post was originally written for a 2015 regional campaign push against Enbridge's crude oil pipeline plans. Today as we mobilize against Enbridge's plan to construct Line 3 through Minnesota, these empowering stories of successful tribal and citizens' campaigns blocking dangerous industrial projects are still well worth passing on. Line 3 threatens treaty rights and pristine waters in Minnesota. If constructed, it would be a head gate for increased oil shipments through Wisconsin and a carbon time bomb.

A few years back I walked 1,700 miles while researching Wisconsin and Upper Peninsula books, experiencing firsthand many of the magnificent shorelines, sparkling streams and memorable natural areas Enbridge's oil pipeline plans threaten.

It is heartbreaking to imagine globs of spilled crude oil smothering those places — or an oil train explosion decimating our communities.

Fortunately, during that research I also learned of the antidote for the crude oil invasion we face: the powerful grassroots citizen conservation campaigns that time and again have protected our region from ill-advised industrial schemes.

Among those inspiring stories:

- Ojibwe leader Walter Bresette and the Bad River Train Blockade (Look it up, and you may be smiling for days).
- Wisconsin tribes and citizens blocking Exxon's plans for a dangerous mine on the headwaters of the Wolf River — and then

When people organize at the grassroots level, amazing things can happen. That's what GWG members had in mind when they marched with hundreds of members of the Menominee Nation and the Coalition to Save the Menominee River on July 16 to protest Aquila Resources' plans for a sulfide mine.

Photos by Susan Simensky Bietila



pivoting to mobilize notably lopsided votes in the legislature for a historic “prove it is safe first” mining law.

- Michiganders, with help from allies such as Aldo Leopold, campaigning to protect that timeless landscape we know today as the Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park.

Similar stories are sprinkled throughout our region's history, and they are well worth seeking out. Stories empower us and illuminate the path ahead. Write another chapter in this righteous history. Do your part to stop Enbridge's construction of Line 3.

Big Oil has big, ugly plans for the Great Lakes region, and it doesn't want the public to know about them. Tar sands crude oil promoters need a route from Alberta to salt water to export to the world market. Ferocious resistance by the tribes and ranchers of British Columbia and Nebraska has led to plans for a massive expansion of crude oil pipelines here in the Great Lakes region.

(Continued on page 6)

Solar rollout needs focus

By RT Both

Political Chair and Lands Team Member

How should the roll-out of solar energy take place in Wisconsin? Should it focus on individual property owners and neighborhoods meeting their energy needs by locating solar panels on their homes and business and in brownfields, which are landfills, contaminated land or already developed land?

Or should we focus on massive “utility-scale” solar farms like those promoted by the non-profit group Renew Wisconsin?

Renew paints a rosy picture of the future of solar power in this state, pointing out that the “cost of developing solar power projects has dropped by over 75% in the past decade.” The technology has improved so much, they say, “that even a seasonal state like Wisconsin can be a viable place for solar energy.”

According to Renew Wisconsin’s website, “Wisconsin utilities are partnering with companies that want to develop more clean energy at scale, and we support win-win solar development with a voluntary pollinator-friendly standard that will enable bees, birds and soil to thrive where solar development sprouts up.”

But some Sheboygan county residents think that solar developments are being recklessly promoted by companies more concerned with profits than sustainability. Ellen and Robert Hudovernik, along with residents Bob Neeb, Betty Polster, John DuMez, Jeff and Kathy Baumgart and scores of others,



GWG Outings Co-Chair Dan Buckler had some information to share at Nearby Nature’s Lincoln Creek Bike and Hike.

are vitally concerned with *how* solar energy is rolled out in Wisconsin.

The Onion River Solar Project in the Town of Holland in Sheboygan County is of particular concern, because the Hudoverniks say it will “engulf 1,900 acres of prime farmland and wetland.”

Ranger Power, based in Brooklyn, NY, is the developer of the Onion River Solar Project. The Hudoverniks and other local citizens feel that the company has not dealt squarely with residents and has engaged in backdoor negotiations with the town board. One board member in particular stands to reap more than \$1 million by leasing his land to Ranger Power.

Other residents are going to see their properties completely hemmed in by factory-level solar production, reducing their land to tiny islands in a sea of large-scale electricity generation.

The Wisconsin state legislature took away the ability of municipalities to veto such large scale developments, favoring big business and big profits over the rights of individual property owners. The Hudoverniks and others allege that the state Public Service Commission has become a rubber stamp for “pro-solar and pro-energy corporate profits.”

Is sacrificing farm fields and wetlands to satisfy the demand for profits of an out-of-state power company really the way to go? Or would laws that protect the rights of local property owners as well as wildlife and wetlands create a different vision for Wisconsin’s clean energy future?

You can find Renew Wisconsin’s map of renewable energy projects in Wisconsin at: www.renewwisconsin.org/wi-renewable-energy-installations/.

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Why fight to protect the planet? One reason might be to preserve priceless scenes like this when the autumn sun sets through a stand of hardwoods.

Photo by William Baurecht

View issues, actions through equity lens

*By David Thomas
Equity Chair*

Last February, Great Waters Group committed to being part of an important project, Building a Multiracial Environmental Community. In total, 16 environmental groups agreed to

Grassroots people do big things

(Continued from page 4)

Crude oil pipelines and trains threaten our water, our communities' health, and our planet's health. Now is the time to mobilize citizen action and insist that elected officials stand up for not only clean water but also the clean government procedures that protect clean water.

Scan our regional history. Examine the citizens' campaigns in Nebraska and British Columbia and one thing is clear: We've done it before and we can do it again.

Help stop Enbridge's Line 3. See www.stopleveline3.org and www.stopthemoneypipeline.com

For an overview see this blogpost - What's Going On With Line 3 - from Andy Pearson, Midwest Tar Sands Coordinator for MN350 www.350madison.org

“commit to dismantling white supremacy and racism in our community and in the environmental movement.”

We began by forming “unlearning circles” to read and discuss Layla Saad’s book *Me and White Supremacy*. Now that the initial study is done, we are taking a hard look at our practices and finding out how to dismantle white supremacy in our own organizations. Basically, what do we have to do collectively and as individuals and as historically white organizations, to break from our past and become multiracial?

We’ve begun by studying and discussing Saad’s work, to gain a more solid understanding of how white supremacy works. The answers are neither quick nor simple, but we are working to apply an equity and inclusion “lens” to everything we do.

Partners are also participating in an action-alert system to share community issues relating to equity. As you see in the Fall program descriptions, we are focusing on “Building a Multiracial Environmental Community” in our November program.

To find out more, visit the website: www.hummingbirdmke.com or email GWG Equity Chair David Thomas, david@thomerwald.net.

Green events are everywhere

By Karen Samelson
Publicity Chair

Check out these free local events sponsored by area environmental groups. And stop by you if see a Sierra Club table!

Waukesha Green Team Sustainability Fair

Saturday, Aug. 28, from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Retzer Nature Center, S14-W28167 Madison St., Waukesha

The fair, hosted by the Waukesha Green Team and its partners, includes planetarium shows, guided hikes, exhibitors and presentations on renewable energy options, gardening and composting, sustainable transportation, zero waste practices and more.

More at facebook.com/WaukeshaCountyGreenTeam.

Tosa Green Summit

The Tosa Green Summit is back over two Saturdays at Wauwatosa City Hall, 7725 W. North Ave.

Saturday, Sept. 11:

- Recycling: 8 a.m. - 1 p.m., in the parking lot.
- Exhibitors, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Wauwatosa Crimestoppers shredding, medicine, textiles and bikes event, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the parking lot
- “Sustainable Investing for Our Future” presentation, 11 a.m.

Saturday, Sept. 18:

Recycling, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the parking lot
More at facebook.com/TosaGreenSummit

Lands Team fights plan

(Continued from page 1)

Late last May, Sheboygan County Circuit Court Judge Edward Stengel denied Kohler’s petition to have its wetland-fill permit reinstated. The permit, initially granted by the Walker-Stepp DNR, was revoked in 2019 by an administrative law judge.

The Kohler plan includes filling in rare inter-dunal wetlands, razing an old-growth forest, and building a parking lot and clubhouse on land that is a habitat for hundreds of species, many rare and endangered, and a stopover site for 10,000 migrating birds.

Kohler also wants to build a four-lane road plus a roundabout through the entrance to Kohler-Andrae State Park and to build a 22,000 square-foot golf course maintenance facility on a wetland inside the park. It is imperative that members and volunteers continue their efforts with the Kohler-Andrae campaign.

To learn more, or to get involved, go to www.wiscoland.com or www.friendsblackriverforest.org

Fall 2021



You might say these Sierrans had reached their bag limit as they demonstrated the evils of plastic at the Tosa Green Summit.

Executive Committee nominations welcome

By Karen Samelson
Publicity Chair

Do you care about environmental issues and wish you could do more about them? We have an opportunity for you!

The Executive Committee of the Great Waters Group is an elected board of Sierra Club volunteers who meet about nine times a year to determine Group priorities and policy. Our ExCom members take an active part with a committee as part of their volunteer commitment. We expect to have four openings, which are for two-year terms.

A nominee must be a member in good standing of the Sierra Club and the Great Waters Group and must give consent.

If you are interested in becoming a member of our ExCom or in nominating someone, please contact Linda Frank at Linda@frankenvironmental.com by Sept. 24.

Want to wade in more slowly? Join our Volunteer Coordination, Conservation and Political teams. Email us at greatwatersgroupsc@gmail.com.



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Nearby Nature plans summer river cleanup

(Continued from page 3)

Pop-up Market series is a project of the Northwest Side CDC, which also co-sponsors the cleanup.

Nearby Nature Milwaukee is an environmental justice and equity initiative that started in the Fall of 2017 with a grant from the Sierra Club Foundation to build healthier and more resilient communities. The group has grown to two part-time staff members with generous support from many individuals and from the Fund for Lake Michigan, Greater Milwaukee Foundation and Bader Philanthropies.

Besides hosting hikes, rides and paddles, the group continues to get kids outdoors to special places like Havenwoods and Lake Michigan. This summer, Nearby Nature held three bicycle outings exploring sections of Lincoln Creek, culminating in a "Pedal to Paddle" event on July 31.

Mark your calendars for Saturday, Oct. 9, when Nearby




Nearby Nature
Milwaukee

Nature will be assisting with the Urban Ecology Center - Washington Park's Autumn Festival. Sierra Club GWG and Nearby Nature are planning to include a "Camping Expo" area at the event.

New logo for Nearby Nature Milwaukee

With the help of graphic designer Nigeria Riggins, Nearby Nature has a new logo. It represents a green leaf and a blue water drop under an urban sunrise. The group wanted something bold and bright, and Nigeria hit the mark.

By the time of this publication, Nearby Nature hopes to launch a new website with a full "rebranding" announcement. Look for the logo in the future on stickers, buttons, t-shirts and reusable non-plastic water bottles.

 **COMMUNITY SHARES**
OF GREATER MILWAUKEE

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