



Photo Credit: Dennis Pepe of GreenFireAZ

Wisconsin's Green Fire: Voices for Conservation Newsletter Winter 2017-2018

Wisconsin Green Fire board members wish to share with you, the nearly 200 members, what's been happening since the annual meeting—the details of starting a new organization are myriad, daunting, and exciting!

We thank you members for your support—conceptually and financially. We hope eventually WGF members will receive regular quarterly newsletters.

We are already looking forward to what we can accomplish in 2018—please save the date of September 7, 2018 for our Annual Membership Meeting. To pique your interest, the tentative location is the Bayfield Peninsula area, with an evening performance for us at Lake Superior Big Top Chautauqua. We'd like to make this a family event!

Happy Holidays to you and yours!

Board Members of Wisconsin Green Fire—

Jerry Bartelt Terry Daulton Fred Clark Ron Eckstein Tom Hauge Tom Jerow
Nancy Larson Paul La Liberte Bob Martini Mike Meyer Jim Perry

WGF Board Meetings: Since the annual meeting in September, the WGF Board has had two six- hour face-to-face board meetings. Hundreds of emails have kept communications flowing, along with a file sharing and instant messaging platform called Slack.

Development of Logo: Jane Frantz (general member, Appleton) has volunteered to spearhead the process of creating of a logo for WGF with ideas for how such a logo will be selected. She has also volunteered to help us with branding and marketing WGF.

Wisconsin's Green Fire: Voices for Conservation is an independent nonpartisan organization. We support the conservation legacy of Wisconsin – promoting science-based management of natural resources.

Website: www.wigreenfire.org Contact: info@wigreenfire.org Address: WGF, P.O. Box 1206, Rhinelander, WI 54501

This newsletter was produced by Jim Perry, Nancy Larson and Lucy Tyrell

Setting up Non-profit Status: Ron Grasshoff (professional member, interim board member, Prairie du Sac) is dealing with the details associated with setting up a non-profit organization. Attorney Jessica Harrison is assisting with the creation of the WGF 501(c)3 designation. To date, the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation has served as our fiscal agent for receiving our membership donations. WGF appreciates very much their assistance, but it's time to be on our own.

Response to Requests for Assistance: Paul La Liberte has fielded more than three dozen pleas for assistance (coming in to the WGF email address) with various conservation issues around the state. Requests cover many topics, but concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) seem to be high on the minds of many people. It's been hard to tell people we lack the expertise to provide assistance in a few areas, such as air quality, where legislation is pending.

Science vs. Advocacy: Jerry Bartelt has helped us with the thorny issue of science vs. advocacy. From a literature search, he produced a masterful reference document.

The essence of walking this fine line of science versus advocacy is: *We want legislators with an open mind to come to rely on us for unbiased, science-based information. There are plenty of organizations that are lobbying them either in support of or against issues, but we need to gain their confidence that while we may assess how legislation is supported (or not) by science and the natural resource implications; we don't want to be adversarial. Already some legislators have called on us.*

Work Groups and Committees: Brief reports from work groups and committees are found below. We hope to have two co-chairs for each work group or committee. If you are interested in serving on a group, please let us know by emailing the board at info@wlgreenfire.org.

Development and WGF Operations Committee - Fred Clark and Jim Perry

Two families have offered dollar-for-dollar challenge grants to help us obtain the financial resources we need to address our many natural resource challenges. Your year-end donation will help earn this matching challenge. See <https://wlgreenfire.org/make-a-difference/> If giving is fully matched, we will have \$40,000 in the bank. This funding will help address the many, many requests for assistance. (We were all surprised and maybe even a little overwhelmed by how many people are asking.) Members, you have been incredibly generous in your support so far in getting WGF off the ground. Thank you!

The Board has decided that if we are to be effective at addressing the state's resource challenges, we need to hire a part time administrative assistant so our natural resource professional volunteers can concentrate on using their expertise. The administrative assistant would track memberships, funnel the requests that come in via the WGF website to the proper workgroup, field calls from the media, and maintain a virtual office.

Anticipated expenses of WGF include Directors Insurance to cover liability of individuals working with WGF and possible purchase of a subscription for on-line literature searches to benefit workgroups. And we want to continue to improve our website.

Communications Committee - Nancy Larson

Nancy has been busy forming the team. A face-to-face meeting will be held in Stevens Point in January. This committee will create media-friendly press releases from policy papers generated by the work groups and also edit white papers. They will be updating and improving our website. Nora Simmons keeps our website up to date—thanks, Nora! See the latest updates at www.wigreenfire.org

Climate Work Group - Mike Meyer

This group is assembling a "Climate Change Library" for public access via the WGF website. The library will contain peer-reviewed scientific research relevant to measured climate change impacts as well as recommended adaptation and mitigation strategies relevant to Wisconsin.

WGF membership will be contacted to learn of climate expertise and interest in serving on the WGF Climate Work Group.

This group will contact the leadership of the Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts (WICCI) to collaborate on issues of mutual interest and concern. See [Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts - WICCI : Events & Meetings](#)

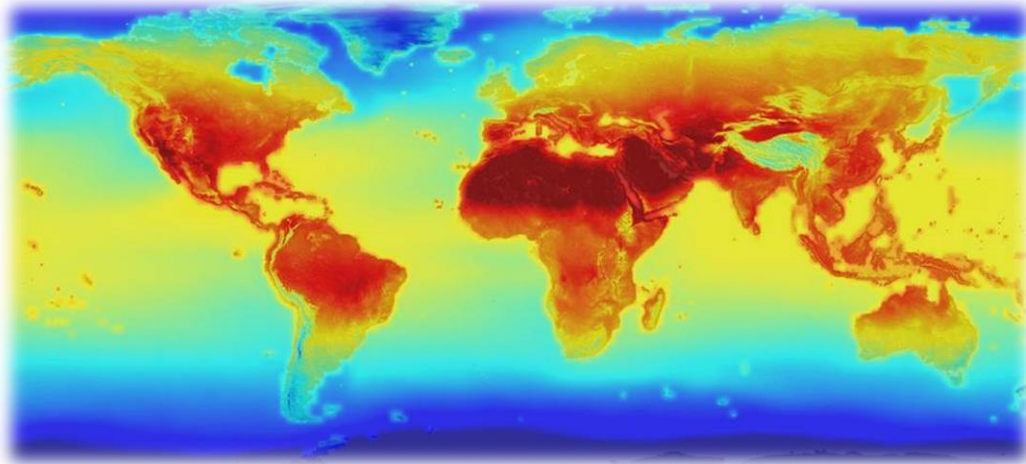


Photo Credit: NASA

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Fish and Wildlife Work Group - Tom Hauge

Tom has been busy developing our first analysis of legislation—a bill that would have implications for the gray wolf. Recently introduced Senate Bill 602 would prohibit Wisconsin law enforcement officers from enforcing any law relating to wolf management—impacting DNR conservation wardens, county sheriff departments, and local police departments. The bill would also prohibit any DNR expenditures for wolf management except for wolf depredation payments or depredation abatement. Thus, no DNR funding would be available for wolf population monitoring. The analysis and any other materials will be on our website when available.

WGF's Board has decided to split the Fish and Wildlife Work Group into two separate work groups (Fish, Wildlife). We are in the process of finding members who are interested in assisting with issues impacting fish and wildlife conservation. Our goal is to organize "get started" meetings for these work groups no later than the first quarter of 2018.



Photo Credit: Guilford Police Animal Shelter

Environmental Education Work Group - Dolly Ledin

Dolly Ledin has assumed a leadership role for this work group.



Photo Credit: Duke University

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Environmental Rules and Water Resources Work Groups - Tom Jerow & Paul La Liberte

Members of these groups convened by conference call on December 7. In addition to getting acquainted, we discussed the issue of “advocacy vs. science” and considered options for how to proceed on the priority issues of metallic mining, CAFOs, high capacity wells, and nonpoint source pollution.

The groups will meet with water-oriented nonprofits January 25, 2018 to explore how WGF can supplement and not overlap with their activities. Since tracking began in late July, WGF has fielded 16 requests for interviews or information pertaining to issues associated with these work groups.



Photo Credit: Jim Perry

Forestry Work Group - Ron Eckstein

Ron has had discussions with several members as the group’s initial focus and workload. Likely we will rename the Forestry Work Group “Forest Habitat & Forest Biodiversity Work Group” so the focus is on habitat and biodiversity and not on silviculture and forest products.

Ron attended the Governor’s Council on Forestry meeting in Madison where the Council discussed a state audit on the Wisconsin DNR’s Division of Forestry. They also discussed the role the Council will play in recommending funding and work priorities for the DNR’s Division of Forestry—an important discussion because the Division of Forestry has a huge influence on forest habitat and forest biodiversity management and policy.

Ron also gave a four-hour “Wildlife & Forest Habitat” presentation to 48 loggers at the Lake States Timber Professionals in Rhinelander as part of their certification program.



Photo Credit: Eric Epstein

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Public Trust and Wetlands Work Group - Michael Cain

This work group is currently developing a response to the proposed wetland legislation that would exempt all “non-federal isolated” wetlands from regulation. The group developed a position paper and a press release scheduled for release the week of December 10. We hope to be involved in negotiations at the Legislature to limit the scope of this bill. We are also coordinating with the Water Resources Work Group to address issues in the Central Sands that are adversely impacting lakes and streams. Long term, we hope to get together with people who are interested in these issues in early 2018 to generate ideas for establishing protocols to respond to legislation, development activities that impact Public Trust waters and wetlands, and public outreach and education.

If you are interested in working on these issues, please contact Michael Cain at cainmjc@gmail.com with your thoughts on the focus for our resources and on how we can we set up an effective system to respond to issues.



Photo Credit: Eric Epstein

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