



WISCONSIN'S  
**greenfire**  
VOICES FOR CONSERVATION

Spring 2018

# NEWSLETTER

Volume 1, Number 2

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## March Summit Summary

### WGF Leadership Discusses Role of Science and Advocacy



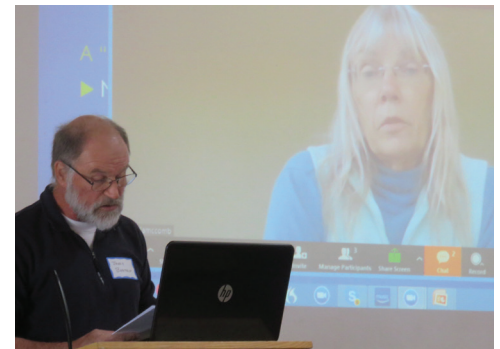
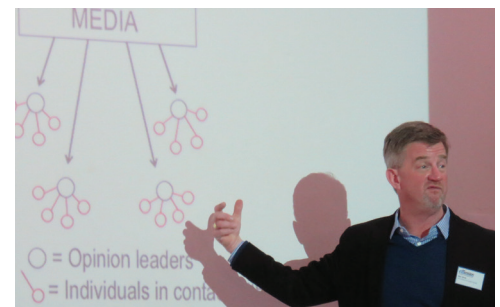
At Wisconsin's Green Fire summit in March, Bret Shaw, University of Wisconsin-Extension, discusses getting resource information to people via "opinion leaders" to whom local people are likely to listen (see diagram below). For example, his conversations with bait shops owners about stopping the spread of invasive aquatic species got the word out to those who fish on many lakes. What are the "bait shops" for other resource issues?

By Nancy Larson

In our first year as Wisconsin's Green Fire, it became clear that we needed a deeper conversation and exploration of consensus to find the right balance between a role of advocacy and a role of strictly providing sound science. As our members developed papers analyzing proposed bills and testified at legislative hearings during the 2017-2018 legislative session, we deliberated whether to take positions or provide input *for information only*. We also carefully considered the tone and language of our work to avoid value-laden language. Our goal has been to develop an organization with excellent credibility and a reputation for good information, recognizing that *how* we communicate is every bit as important as *what* we communicate.

On March 21, about 30 of WGF's leadership (board, work group chairs, members of Communications Committee) met at the Central Wisconsin Environmental

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Jerry Bartelt, WGF Board member, summarizes the strengths and weaknesses of WGF's use of science-based advocacy, and introduces Brenda McComb, Professor Emerita at Oregon State University, who discussed implicit biases, values, opposition, and ways to share science for best advocacy.

Photos on this page credit: Lucy Tyrrell

# President's Message

Photo courtesy: Terry Daulton



## Upholding the Tradition of Aldo Leopold's Land Ethic

By Terry Daulton

During Aldo Leopold Week (the first week in March), I gave a presentation about Wisconsin's Green Fire (WGF) at my local library in Mercer (Iron County). Impressively, 30 people came out on a blustery, raw evening to hear about WGF and to celebrate the legacy of Aldo Leopold.

Elsewhere, during that week, other members of WGF also were invited to speak. After

hosting a discussion in Rhinelander about the film "Green Fire: Aldo Leopold and a Land Ethic for Our Time," Tom Jerow, WGF treasurer and board member, sent an email to the WGF Board sharing his experience. At the end of the film discussion, a woman in her 90s came up to talk with Tom. She retrieved from her purse a tattered copy of *A Sand County Almanac*—so well read that it was held together with rubber bands. She opened the book. Tucked between two pages was a folded newspaper article about the founding of Wisconsin's Green Fire.

In recent weeks, we have received a number of accolades from citizens, other NGOs, journalists, and colleagues thanking us for our work and citing our growing reputation as a source of deep expertise and solid information. These comments suggest that we are on the right track and that the hard work of our dedicated volunteer leaders and members is starting to bear fruit. They also suggest that, as our reputation grows, our responsibility to our members and the public also increases.

Two summits in spring 2018 will set us on course for responding to breaking issues and proposals and for charting proactive goals to improve Wisconsin's natural resources policy. WGF leadership (board and work group chairs) and the Communications Committee met in March (summarized elsewhere in this newsletter). In May, WGF work group members and co-chairs will convene. We look to all of you for ideas and support as we move these plans and ideas to on-the-ground initiatives.

Aldo Leopold Week allowed me to pause in the endless stream of WGF emails to reflect on the purpose of Wisconsin's Green Fire. One attendee at my talk was a long-time friend and dedicated conservative. I had been concerned about how he would respond, but after my presentation, he suggested that the idea of WGF could spread well beyond Wisconsin. "What you are doing [providing unbiased science information] is something everyone should be able to get behind." That comment, for me, was like Tom Jerow's experience with the wonderful nonagenarian. It made me feel an incredible hope that our group will succeed in reaching across ideological barriers to uphold the tradition of Aldo Leopold's land ethic.

## Wisconsin's Green Fire: Voices for Conservation

### Mission:

Wisconsin's Green Fire supports the conservation legacy of Wisconsin by promoting science-based management of Wisconsin's natural resources.

### Vision:

Wisconsin's citizens understand and support scientific and thoughtful long-term management of natural resources, and value the many benefits of clean water, clean air, and healthy ecosystems.

### Values:

- We honor our strong and robust conservation heritage in Wisconsin.
- We believe that public policy, laws, and natural resource management should be informed by objective scientific understanding.
- We believe that robust and independent scientific research, knowledge, and education are necessary foundations for a fair and prosperous society.
- We are dedicated to the principle that all people and groups in our society have the right to clean water, clean air, healthy natural ecosystems, outdoor recreation, and land managed sustainably to produce economic benefit to everyone. We are dedicated to the principle that a sound environment and economy go hand in hand. We are dedicated to environmental justice.
- We support transparent governmental decision-making and fair and just treatment of all sides of issues.
- Our actions challenge policy makers to think beyond the short term and to act on behalf of future generations.

## Wisconsin's Green Fire: Voices for Conservation

### Board

Terry Daulton, President  
Jim Perry, Vice President  
Ron Eckstein, Secretary  
Tom Jerow, Treasurer  
Jerry Bartelt  
Fred Clark  
Thomas Hauge  
Paul La Liberte  
Bob Martini  
Michael Meyer

### Staff (part-time, contract)

Nancy Larson

### Newsletter Editor

Lucy Tyrrell

### For more information

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Rhineland, WI 54501

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Station (CWES) near Stevens Point for a summit to wrestle with these fundamental issues of science and advocacy. Board member Jerry Bartelt reviewed the current research on science in advocacy, shared his peer-reviewed background paper, and proposed an approach for WGF. Two other speakers shared their expertise about psychological and social science facets of advocacy and science (see photos, captions on page 1).

During our discussions, many members spoke to the power of WGF's work with the legislature—when WGF provides credible information without taking a position. For example, George Meyer spoke of the authority WGF brings to our legislative testimony. Kim Wright from Midwest Environmental Advocates added that WGF can provide the credible information that advocacy groups need. Some members spoke of the difficulty of not taking a position when a bill is clearly detrimental to natural resources. Communications member Cathy Techtmann coined a great sports metaphor for WGF—as in volleyball, WGF provides the set so other advocacy groups can spike the ball—to win!

The consensus after discussion was, that WGF strives to be a respected authoritative source of information based on science and on our professional experience in natural resources management, law, education, and communication. To that end, WGF generally will not take a position on legislative matters but will provide information and analysis, which often speaks for itself. And we recognize that, as a young organization, we will learn as we tackle more issues.

*Presentations and background papers from the March 21 meeting are available on [Google Drive](#). We look forward to engaging work group members at the May 17 Work Group Summit to be held at the CWES.*

## Launching Work Groups

### Updates, Priorities, and Options for Volunteers

*By Terry Daulton*

On the pages that follow are summaries from our WGF work groups. These groups were established based on our member surveys and the results of our annual meeting last September. As you read through the updates, you will note that some groups have been quite active over the past few months and others are in early stages of organizing. At our upcoming Work Group Summit on May 17, we will be exploring priorities and focus for work groups, volunteer interest and recruitment, overall organizational structure, and ways we can ask folks to contribute without being overwhelmed.

As we officially "launch" these work groups, we hope to keep our options open on ways to make best use of volunteer skills and to focus on areas where we can make a difference. As we learn and WGF evolves as an organization, work groups also may evolve—some will be combined, split, or otherwise adapted. If you are considering volunteering and/or have expertise in a topic covered by a work group or a potential work group, please let us know by email ([info@wigreenfire.org](mailto:info@wigreenfire.org)) so co-chairs or officers can get in touch with you to explore your ideas and interests.

### *Your Input Needed*

- Stories and photos of research and resource successes for "Profiles in Conservation" (see page 8)
- Photos of natural resources and conservation action in Wisconsin
- Good ideas for WGF newsletter name (Conservation Quarterly? Leopold Legacy Lines? Resources Rag?)

*Please send to [info@wigreenfire.org](mailto:info@wigreenfire.org)*

### *Words of Encouragement*

What is being said about Wisconsin's Green Fire?

*[Click here to read a special blog post.](#)*



# Updates from Committees

## Communications

*By Bruce Neeb and Jim Perry*

We are working on updates and improvements to the ways WGF information is shared via website, newsletter, issue papers, blogs, and social media. Once the WGF Board makes a final decision on a WGF logo, we can apply the logo to these many uses. Our thanks to Jane Frantz for sharing the cost of logo development and lining up a graphic designer.

Nancy Larson, as chair of this committee prior to her exit to be a part-time contract staff person for WGF, convened a conference call on February 1. At that time, Bruce Neeb and Jim Perry were confirmed as the new co-chairs.

Nora Simmons updated the web site to improve consistency, particularly in the presentation of the organization's mission and vision. Lucy Tyrrell has provided major revisions to the WGF PowerPoint and has also taken the lead as editor of this issue of WGF's newsletter. We're soliciting possible names for the newsletter. Communications Committee members have continued working with work groups in the preparation and editing of issue papers and blogs.

We are interested in member photos that might be used on our website and in our newsletter and PowerPoint presentations. If you have photos to share, please contact us at [info@wigreenfire.org](mailto:info@wigreenfire.org) to arrange to email the photos. We will be rolling out some new file storage and sharing capabilities in the months ahead.

Two new members bring this committee's membership to 29.

## Development

*By Fred Clark*

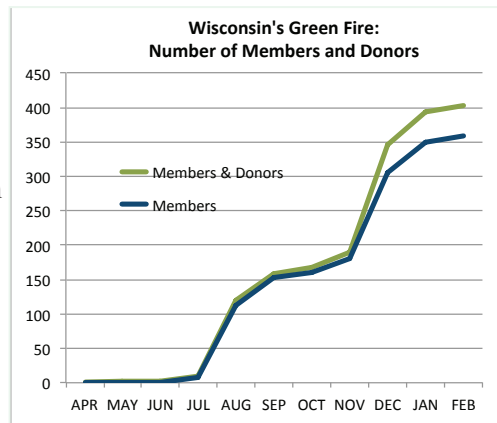
The year end appeal for support by members and others had an enormously gratifying outcome (see "By the Numbers" page 8). We received two challenge grants of \$10,000 each, one from Roger and Lynn Van Vreede of Appleton, and a second from an anonymous donor. Both matches were met and exceeded! To carry on our mission in the future, we intend to seek grant funding as we approach our second year. WGF's budget is about \$42,000 this year, including the contractual and professional services for the office, legal fees associated with a 501(c)3, licenses for video conferencing and other software, logo development, and other minor items.

## Membership

*By Jim Perry*

Membership in WGF has grown dramatically since formation, with another spurt of growth in late 2017 (see graph).

As of April 1, 368 members have joined Wisconsin's Green Fire to support the organization and the state's conservation legacy.



# Updates from Work Groups

## Air Quality

*By Jon Heinrich*

We held an initial conference call in February to assemble this work group. Our first focus was a legislative proposal that would make substantial changes to the regulatory authority of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) to address air pollution.

We drafted an issue paper outlining the work group's concerns with the proposal. Significantly, if that proposal became law, Wisconsin's air quality program would be less effective in protecting human health and the environment.

The legislative proposal would require the WDNR to identify and repeal all existing administrative rules about the regulation of air pollutants that are not regulated under federal law. The paper emphasizes the impact of the proposal on Wisconsin's Air Toxics Rule, but also identifies other concerns affecting Wisconsin's ability to regulate air pollution in areas not addressed by federal law and regulation. All of the regulations that the proposal targets for removal have supported a successful air quality



The health of lichens (such as those on the tree trunk) and of Wisconsin's citizens depends on clean air.

Photo credit: Lucy Tyrrell

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## *Work Group Updates (continued)*

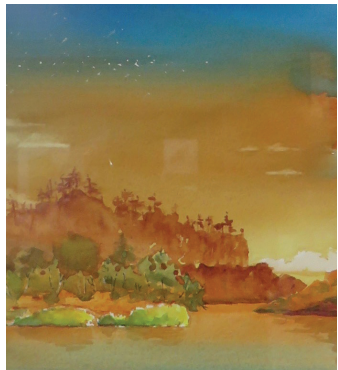
program for Wisconsin. Because this legislative proposal will not be brought for a vote in the current session, we have put on hold the release of the issue paper and press release, but they are ready in case the time frame for voting changes.

Also, our work group is developing a list of issues and topics of concern to pursue. We plan to meet in advance of the WGF summit in May.

## **Climate Change**

*By Mike Meyer*

From interest surveys provided at the WGF annual meeting and follow-up emails, I assembled our current work group of 12 members. These members provided feedback on the draft priorities for the work group. Work group members have identified three priorities:



Art credit: Lois Osterberg "Earth Warming"

(1) Form a partnership with Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts (WICCI) to help elevate the discussion of climate change in Wisconsin.

WICCI's website is: [www.wicci.wisc.edu/](http://www.wicci.wisc.edu/)

By reaching out to Dan Vimont, Director of WICCI, our work group can identify how to best partner with this group. Because WICCI is the flagship climate research organization in Wisconsin, WGF need not replicate their efforts, but back their efforts for sustained or increased funding, and assist them with communication of research findings.

(2) Recommend statewide renewable energy goals and strategies to achieve them.

By contacting WDNR staff involved in energy policy, we can learn of current and ongoing work. Reaching out to Wisconsin utilities will ensure our work group has the latest information on their plans for alternative energy implementation over the next decade.

(3) Propose measures to reduce or mitigate the impacts of climate change in Wisconsin on environmental, cultural, and economic resources.

Our work group plans to assemble the many existing research products with Wisconsin-specific findings about climate change. These findings include future temperature and precipitation projections under various CO<sub>2</sub> scenarios, as well as the impacts on forests, lakes, wetlands, agriculture, fisheries, wildlife, infrastructure, local economies, and human health. We want to collaborate with the Education Work Group and the Communications Committee to make these findings available to the public and to decision makers.

To document our efforts, we are archiving the email correspondence among work group members. Dolly Ledin (Environmental Education Work Group) and Bruce Neeb (Communications Committee) have offered to work with our work group to best communicate our priorities and issues. The Climate Change Work Group held its first conference call meeting following the March 21 summit.

## **Environmental Education**

*By Meta Reigel Brandt (for Dolly Ledin)*

The Environmental Education Work Group convened by conference call on February 14, 2018. The main outcome of the meeting was a plan for each of us to connect by mid-April with individuals who represent the audiences and organizations we are interested in reaching, and/or with whom we are already connected, in order to informally introduce them to WGF and to gather information and ideas as to how WGF might complement or assist with their work.

We want to connect with these groups and audiences:

- (1) WGF members (to help them identify, and be more effective in, education roles)
- (2) K-12 educators and organizations
- (3) College students and young professionals
- (4) Citizen science and stewardship groups
- (5) Legislators and local decision-makers
- (6) Interest groups, e.g., agriculture, sportsmen, land trusts

Our work group will coordinate with the Communications Committee, but will focus more on long-term engagement, building relationships with audiences, and two-way exchanges of ideas.



Photo credit: LS Mills Research

How can you share climate change messages using a snowshoe hare photo such as this?

Camouflage for survival advantage in snowshoe hares is disrupted by climate change when snow cover is no longer synchronized with fur color changes set by photoperiod.

## **Environmental Rules and Water Resources**

*By Paul La Liberte*

We are managing these two work groups jointly because the priority issues overlap. WGF receives requests for assistance from individuals and groups on a variety of topics related to our combined work groups. While some

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### *Work Group Updates (continued)*

of these inquiries align with one of our three identified issues, many do not. Where WGF is not in a position to respond, we attempt to connect the inquiry with a WGF member willing to provide individual assistance.

We are surveying (via email) WGF members with backgrounds or stated interest in Environmental Rules and in Water Resource subjects to better refine the work group.

We held a January meeting with statewide NGOs active in water issues. We created our agenda from the three priority issues for water resources identified by WGF members soon after WGF formation. The NGOs observed that WGF is now the keeper of the institutional and historical knowledge of natural resources management in Wisconsin. They encouraged WGF to find ways to share that knowledge.

We identified WGF leads for each of the three issues, along with a draft action plan for WGF involvement:

#### (1) High capacity wells (George Kraft)

On completing our technical issue paper on the impacts of high capacity wells, we will consult with other NGOs on how best to convey the information to target audiences.

#### (2) Mining (Tom Jerow)

For this issue, we want to identify likely mining sites and interest groups, possibly initiate volunteer monitoring at potential future mining sites, identify the technical expertise needed to critically review proposed mine sites, and recruit that expertise from within or outside WGF.

(3) CAFO & nonpoint source pollution (Paul La Liberte)  
We want to explain the relationship between water quality and crop management by creating two educational tools: a technical document that provides the science and historical details and an eighth-grade-level presentation that emphasizes the health impacts of nitrate and fecal bacteria in groundwater and of phosphorus in surface water.



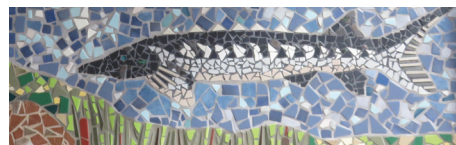
Art credit: Gretchen Burke "A Couple of Pigs"

We also plan to develop a guide for reviewing permit applications in the Wisconsin Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (WPDES) program, recruiting additional technical expertise as needed to complete this task. We are reviewing the report on the Wisconsin River Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) study. The goal of this study is determine how to correct unnatural levels of phosphorus in a large portion of the state's water bodies.

### **Fisheries**

*By David Vetrano and John Lyons*

In mid-March, we agreed to co-chair the Fisheries Work Group. We will have more to share in the next newsletter.



Art credit: School District of Bayfield

*continued on page 7*

## ***Second Annual Meeting Set—September 7-9***

*By Jim Perry*

Please mark on your calendar the weekend of September 7-9, 2018 for our second Wisconsin's Green Fire Annual Membership Meeting—to be held in the beautiful northwoods along the shores of Lake Superior (near Ashland, Washburn, Bayfield).

On Friday, we'll kick off the weekend with dinner prior to a performance of *Wild Woods and Waters* at Lake Superior Big Top Chautauqua (BTC), featuring the Big Top's Blue Canvas Orchestra. Our all-day Saturday meeting takes place at the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center, just west of Ashland. For your convenience, WGF will arrange for a block of rooms to be held and will manage the sale of tickets for BTC.

We selected the Chequamegon Bay region because the northwoods would appeal not only to members, but also to families and friends—all are welcome to participate! We also want to rotate the meeting location to different parts of Wisconsin. We'll provide more details in the summer issue of the WGF newsletter.

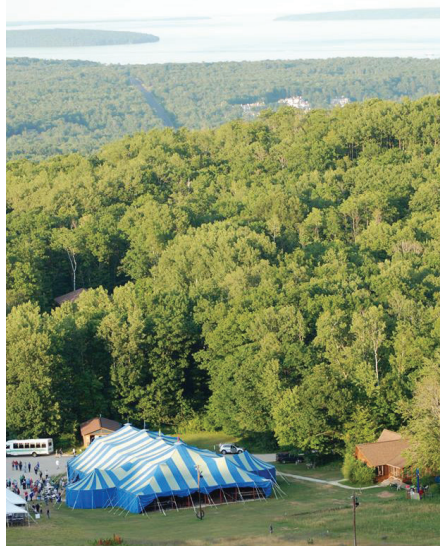


Photo credit: Big Top Chautauqua

## Forestry

By Ron Eckstein

The Forestry Work Group has yet to form. In the interim, Forestry Work Group Chair Ron Eckstein has a position on the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR's) Silviculture Guidance Team (SGT) and represents "Resource Conservation" including

The Wildlife Society, Wisconsin's Green Fire, and other conservation organizations. There are 15 members of the SGT representing loggers, lumber mills, pulp mills, county forests, national forests, the University, small woodland owners, large corporate forest owners, and consulting foresters, as well as silviculturalists from WDNR's Forestry Division.

Current SGT work includes revising the WDNR Silviculture Handbook chapters on management of aspen, red pine plantations, and northern hardwood forests. The state legislature funded a large Forest Practices Study and the results of that multifaceted study must be integrated into the WDNR's Silviculture Guidance Handbook. Handbook changes as a result of the study may have consequences for forest habitat, outdoor recreation, and forest biodiversity.

Since January 1, Ron attended SGT meetings at Merrill and Stevens Point. He participated in two conference calls and attended the meeting of the Governor's Council on Forestry. Ron's role is to provide technical information on forest habitat, forest biodiversity, and outdoor recreation.

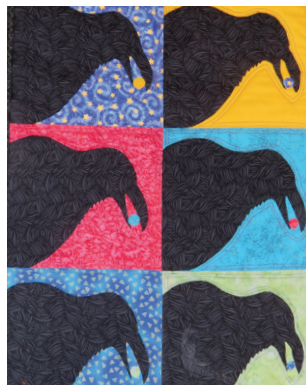
## Public Lands and Conservation Funding

By Ron Grasshoff

I will be stepping down as chair of this work group and the WGF officers and board will be seeking new co-chairs to continue the work on issues related to public lands and conservation funding.



Photo credit: Ron Eckstein



Art credit: Lucy Tyrrell

## Public Trust and Wetlands

By Michael Cain

The Public Trust/ Wetlands Work Group has been actively involved in wetland proposals in the Wisconsin Legislature this session. We developed an analysis of the non-federal wetlands bill, which would have exempted a million acres of wetland from regulation. We had a work group of wetland experts, and we provided examples of the types of critical wetland resources around the state that would be adversely impacted by the bill. We suggested alternatives that could be adopted to address regulatory problems without jeopardizing these valuable resources. Tom Jerow and Ron Eckstein provided testimony at the public hearing in the Senate in Madison. The bill was subsequently modified, narrowing the scope of the bill. We developed an analysis of those amendments, pointing out that the amended law "would still have significant adverse impacts to wetlands and the ecosystem services they provide, primarily flood control, water quality, and wildlife habitat in urban areas." We suggested alternatives that would address some of the perceived problems without impacting thousands of acres of wetlands. The bill was adopted in spite of the concerns expressed by us and other groups.

We hope to work to educate decision makers on the impacts of this bill and to be involved in developing constructive suggestions to address these issues going forward.

Ron Grasshoff provided our work group testimony, before the Senate Committee on Natural Resources in Madison, on an amendment that would preempt the public hearing process for a permit to fill 16 acres of rare wooded wetlands for a frac sand project and would allow the fill to go forward in spite of the decision of the Administrative Law Judge. We objected to the amendment because it "would in effect circumvent the administrative review process available to citizens of Wisconsin." At the time of writing this, the amendment has not been adopted and the hearing process is being completed.

We are organizing the work group to identify issues and legislative actions for our work group to address or review going forward. If you are aware of issues that we should consider, we would welcome your suggestions.



Art credit: Ann Christensen "Bark Bay Slough"

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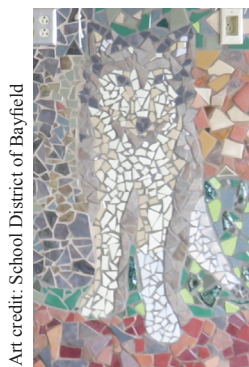


## Wildlife

By Tom Hauge

At the beginning of March, I emailed invitations to 61 professional members of WGF who had previously indicated having expertise or interest in the Wildlife Work Group. As of mid-March, eight members responded positively. Because more responses represent northern Wisconsin, I will reach out to recruit additional work group members from other areas.

On March 10, I participated in a four-person panel on wolf management at the Milwaukee Outdoor Sports Show. Other panelists were Randy Jurewicz, former WDNR wolf program administrator, Peter David, Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission biologist, and Adrian Wydeven, former statewide wolf program biologist. Approximately 50 people attended the discussion moderated by Paul Smith, outdoor writer for the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel and recorded by Chuck Quirnbach, Wisconsin Public Radio.



Art credit: School District of Bayfield

### By the Numbers

Number of WGF members (as of April 1): **368**  
Number of new members (since last newsletter): **283**  
Number of donations (separate from memberships): **83**  
Total donations in dollars: **\$44,590**  
Range of individual donations: **\$2 - \$10,000**  
**Thank you for your support!**

The first of many stories to come—to share Wisconsin's

## Profiles in Conservation

### Fish Health—Vaccinating Trout and Salmon

By Sue Marcquenski, WDNR Fish Health Specialist for 31 years

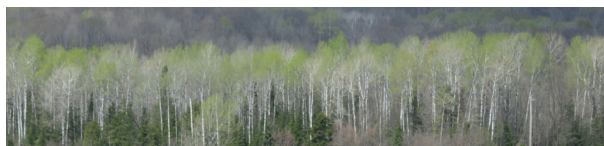
I worked closely with WDNR's fish hatchery staff to insure that the fish stocked into Wisconsin streams, rivers, lakes, and the Great Lakes were healthy and of high quality, which enhanced their survival after stocking.



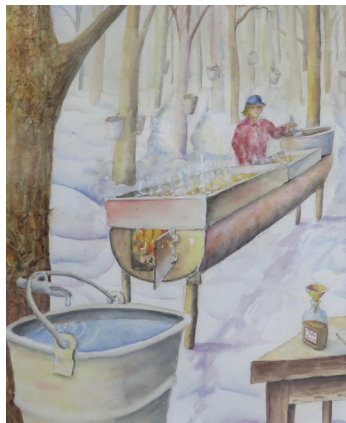
Photo courtesy: Sue Marcquenski

Vaccines can be used to prevent diseases in humans (e.g., polio) and in dogs and cats (e.g., rabies), but they can also be used to prevent diseases of fish. In a team effort with hatchery staff and several fish health labs, we developed a vaccine to prevent a bacterial disease called *furunculosis* which affects trout and salmon. Small fish (~4 grams or less than the weight of two dimes) were dipped in a solution of the vaccine for 30 seconds, and astonishingly, that short exposure protected the fish from getting sick. In a typical year, we vaccinated 1-2 million trout and salmon.

I also assisted state fisheries biologists investigating the cause of fish kills and in diagnosing pathogens that cause lesions on fish, including fish caught by anglers. We relied on the help of microbiologists at a dozen or so labs to identify pathogens from tissues we submitted. During my tenure, for the first time in Wisconsin, we identified seven viruses, one parasite, many tumors, and thiamine (vitamin B<sub>1</sub>) deficiency in wild fish. I can't begin to add up all the fish we sampled, but over ~31 years, I logged more than 775,000 miles on the road to accomplish the work.



Photos credit: Lucy Tyrrell



Art credit: Donn Christensen "Syruping"

## Not a member? Please join Wisconsin's Green Fire

Download membership form:

<https://wigreenfire.org/make-a-difference/>

Additional donations welcome.

Make check payable to: *Wisconsin Wildlife Federation* (not WGF)  
*WWF serves as our fiscal agent while we await approval of our tax exempt status by the IRS.*

Send check to: Tom Jerow, WGF Treasurer  
P.O. Box 1206  
Rhineland, Wisconsin 54501

Thank you for supporting the  
conservation legacy of Wisconsin.