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WGF Strategic Planning

Assessing Strengths, Creating a Path Forward

By Kate Reilly and Terry Daulton

This spring, Wisconsin's Green Fire leaders plunged into planning. We assessed our accomplishments and challenges since incorporation (2017). Overarching questions we addressed were: What has WGF achieved? Should changes in the Governor's office cause a change of course? How should we focus our efforts in the next few years and beyond?



Photo credit: Nancy Larson

We gathered information about what is working well, what could be improved, and whether WGF is on track with its mission—through member surveys, interviews with work group chairs, and online chats. The WGF Board completed a SWOT assessment, a technique used to identify *strengths*, *weaknesses*, *opportunities*, and *threats* related to strategic planning.

With feedback in hand, on May 15, WGF staff, board members, work group chairs, and a few leaders from partner organizations convened for a planning workshop (photo above). The goals were to revisit the founding mission and set goals and strategies for the next 2-3 years.

Facilitators Kate Reilly (WGF Board) and Dolly Ledin (Education Work Group Co-Chair) helped participants review the problems that WGF is trying to solve and the role (niche) that WGF serves in solving each problem. The group recognized problems or their symptoms, as a *lack of*...

- public understanding of linkages between environmental issues and economics.
- understanding about how science can inform public policy to achieve positive outcomes.
- access to trusted unbiased science.
- citizen involvement due to mistrust of science.
- understanding as to how to engage in science policy decision-making.

Strategic Planning continued on page 3

President's Message

Photo credit: Diane Daulton



Finding Hope, Sustaining a Legacy

By Terry Daulton

Having spent considerable time in Florida recently, I can appreciate both the paradise of wave-washed beaches and a landscape marred by unplanned development and human greed. Florida is partly a drained wetland full of non-native species, but also an incredibly resilient and rich set of ecosystems. For example, this spring, in the backyard of my family's modest ranch house in the squared-off street landscape of Vero Beach, I saw wondrous painted bunting, roseate spoonbill, and wood stork. A 20-minute drive inland from the suburban sprawl finds you in deep cypress swamps, pine forests, and lakes ringed by osprey nests.

Florida has shared some wisdom with me. I can grieve for things lost—the unbroken dunes of barrier islands or sea turtles tangled with plastic. Or I can find hope in the green anole I see, as I write this, on the screen porch, puffing out his pink throat to attract a mate—even though his species battles for survival against invasive Caribbean lizards. Like Florida, Wisconsin has been cut over, drained, and fragmented—into what Leopold loosely referred to as “a world of wounds.” But Wisconsinites can look to the resilience of nature for hope and inspiration.

On my recent trips to Florida, I provided help to my aging parents. My father, who passed this year at the age of 92, spent his career designing highways and later writing environmental impact statements. When we drafted his obituary, we found it difficult to winnow his full life down to a few hundred words—and I wondered how I'd sum up my own existence. I hope I will be remembered as a person who made a difference, if small, protecting the beauty and richness of Wisconsin's landscape.

While my mother struggles with Alzheimer's, she still finds joy in nature, noticing a beautiful cloud or clever squirrel. Today at the ocean, she said “Can you imagine, the waves move and sparkle like that all the time?” She helped me pause and wonder at the vast mystery of the sea. My trips to Florida are teaching me to look for hope and beauty in unexpected places.

Wisconsin has its challenges, but it also has a wealth of healthy ecosystems. Most importantly, it has a dedicated public who appreciate its beauty and are willing to strive for science-based conservation. The members and work of Wisconsin's Green Fire are one of those places I find hope.

This newsletter shares some of our plans for the future, winnowed down through the lens of strategic planning. Perhaps these plans will help insure a legacy, a summing up that will say we did well and left the world a better place.

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
Thomas Hauge
Paul La Liberte
Bob Martini
Michael Meyer
David Mladenoff
Kate Reilly
Shannon Thielman

Staff

Fred Clark, Executive Director
Nancy Larson, Communications
Paul Heinen, Legislative Liaison
Ruth Ann Lee, Administration

Newsletter Editor

Lucy Tyrrell

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Strategic Planning (continued from page 1)

Those present identified the following state conservation groups (in addition to Federal and state natural resources agencies, e.g., Wisconsin DNR) as most closely aligned with WGF's mission, making these good candidates for best partners in solving the problems we identified: Center on Wisconsin Strategy, Conservation Congress, Conservation Lobby Table, Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission, Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters, Wisconsin institutions of higher education (UW System institutions, UW Extension, Nelson Institute), Wisconsin Lakes Partnership, Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, and Wisconsin Wildlife Society.

Workshop participants agreed that our mission statement (see page 2) adequately reflects WGF's current niche among Wisconsin's conservation organizations.

For those who participated in our surveys, discussions, and planning, you will be pleased to know that we are using the planning outcomes to build a work plan for the next three years, with goals to...

- improve our communications with members, the public, and decision makers. This means leaping into selected social media and working with those who can help us share our conservation messages.
- expand and diversify our membership, especially looking at ethnic and age diversity and needed professional expertise.
- increase opportunities for volunteers, both natural resources professionals and general members.
- continue to strengthen partnerships and focus on key audiences (the news media, policymakers).
- launch a speaker's bureau, with good communication tools like short videos, podcasts, etc.
- continue to work on the issues identified in our publication *Opportunities Now*.
- increase our ability to include economic information in our policy and education work.
- build our organizational capacity and financial base to support mission driven work.

Field Trip Success

by Ron Eckstein and Tom Jerow

On June 18, 2019, Ron Eckstein and Tom Jerow gave a wetland ecology and appreciation event near the village of Springstead in Iron County. Starting with a PowerPoint, the outreach event toured five local wetlands. The event was co-sponsored by the Northwoods Land Trust and Wisconsin's Green Fire. There were 26 participants.



Photo credit: Troy Walters

Updates from Committees

Communications

By Bruce Neeb and Jim Perry

To follow up on ideas generated at the WGF planning session in May, the Communications co-chairs will be asking WGF members interested in communications to serve on teams focused on specific tasks.

We continue to assist work groups with outreach. For example, we assisted the Public Trust and Wetlands Work Group with the development of a PowerPoint and fact sheet. We worked with the Environmental Rules and Water Resources Work Group on PowerPoint presentations related to agricultural impacts. These PowerPoints will have pre-recorded narration and be posted on the website.

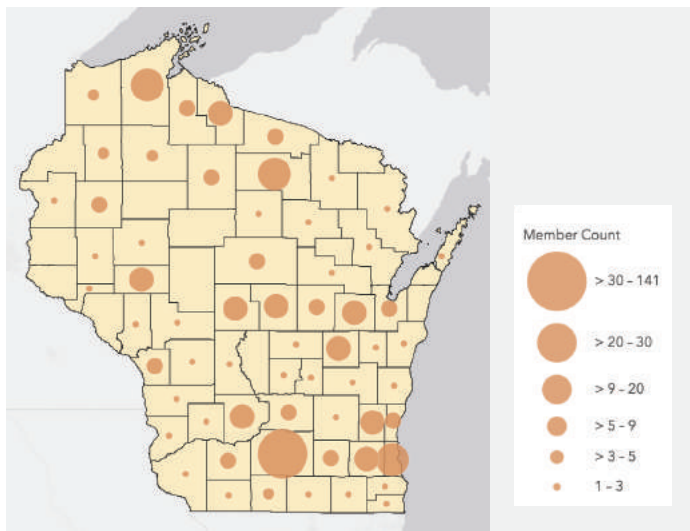
Another goal is to have WGF members record podcasts—to share resource and science stories from their careers—for posting on the WGF website.

A web site redesign is underway. The new design will incorporate more photos of Wisconsin's natural resources and resource management. If you have such photos to share, look for instructions later this summer on how to contribute them.

Membership

By Jim Perry

WGF member and retired cartographer Robert Gurda prepared a map of the geography of our membership by county (see below). Note the legend gives the WGF membership count (range) by size of brown circles.



Updates from Work Groups

Air Quality

By Jon Heinrich

There are important state issues of interest, and our work group has continued our collaboration with the Climate Change Work Group. On June 19, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) replaced the Clean Power Plan (Obama initiative) with the Affordable Clean Energy rule, changing required reductions in greenhouse gas emissions from 35% to ~1.5% (in comparison to 2005). Also a recent EPA proposal would freeze mileage targets for cars at 37 mpg (instead of 50 mpg) by 2025.

Update on Federal Mercury Air Toxics Standard

We have followed closely, and provided comment on, the proposed changes to the Mercury Air Toxic Standard (MATS), which limits mercury emission from coal-fired power plants.

Art credit: J.R. Lince-Hopkins



As of this writing, the EPA has not taken final action on the proposed changes, although the public comment period has ended and public hearings have been held. Substantial opposition

was expressed, however, it is expected that EPA will eliminate consideration of co-benefits by cutting the methodology used to show that the MATS requirements are cost effective and have substantial public health benefits. This methodology, considered regulatory overreach by the current EPA Administrator, considers the gains for human health achieved (reduction of other pollutants, including fine particulate matter) beyond the principal focus of the rule (reduction of mercury).

If the EPA were to eliminate the methodology, this action threatens future federal air toxic rulemaking and raises concerns that EPA may still propose rescinding MATS.

Ozone Nonattainment in Southeast Wisconsin

Foxconn, with manufacturing facilities located in Racine County, benefitted from a redesignation of the county to "attainment" for ground level ozone—meaning that the standards are less stringent for reducing air pollution emissions. Questions remain about this action and whether all air quality data available was considered.

Work Group Updates continued on page 5



2019 Annual Membership Meeting: ***“Working Together - Working Better” October 4-5, 2019***

Join us at Treehaven, UW-Stevens Point’s field station near Tomahawk, on October 4–5 for a beautiful time in the Northwoods—with Wisconsin’s Green Fire (WGF) friends and colleagues. Treehaven offers an all-inclusive location for our meeting, with meals and reasonably-priced lodging on-site. Plan to enjoy the trails and wild land.

Our 2019 meeting will be organized around members working together on priority issues. We will have Friday work group meetings and Saturday sessions for member interaction on WGF work products related to the public trust of waters, climate change, forestry, wolf management, and impacts to water quality from agriculture, among others. (See reverse side for General Program.)

Our Saturday keynote speaker is State Treasurer Sarah Godlewski, who is also on the Board of Commissioners of

Public Lands (BCPL). Sarah will discuss her vision for the BCPL and the management of its forest lands. She will also discuss her role and vision in helping prepare Wisconsin for climate change and our future in fossil-free renewable energy.

Visit our WGF website at <https://wigreenfire.org> for updated program information throughout the summer. Register on-line or use the registration form below.

We will post a final agenda and candidates for the WGF Board of Directors by the end of the summer. If you are interested in running for the WGF Board, please contact Terry Daulton at tdaulton@centurytel.net.

Please consider making a donation to help fund student participation at the annual meeting.

cut or fold/tear along line

Wisconsin’s Green Fire, 2019 Annual Meeting, Registration Form

Please use on-line form if possible. (Find the form at www.wigreenfire.org).

*If using this form, please fill out both sides. Send with payment to: Wisconsin’s Green Fire
P.O. Box 1206, Rhineland, WI 54501*

Name(s): _____

Street Address: _____

City, State, Zipcode: _____

Email: _____

Fill out the remainder of the form on the reverse side to register for program/meals and lodging.

Wisconsin's Green Fire, 2019 Annual Meeting, General Program

Friday, October 4

9:00 - WGF Board Meeting (members welcome)

12:00 - Lunch

Afternoon Agenda:

- Work Group Meetings
- Hikes with Naturalists

3:30 - Wolf Delisting/Wolf Management Panel Discussion

4:30 - Social Hour

5:30 - Dinner

7:30 - Wolf Howling Field Trip

Saturday, October 5

7:30 - Breakfast

8:30 - Meeting Begins

Morning Agenda:

- Welcome, Introductions, Welcome Student Participants
- Wisconsin Budget/Legislative Process 101
- Concurrent Sessions by Work Groups
- Member Discussion on Work Group Directions and Projects

12:00 - Lunch

Afternoon Agenda:

- Keynote by Sarah Godlewski (Wisconsin State Treasurer)
- Business Meeting
- Wrap Up

3:30 - Adjourn

Photo courtesy Treehaven



Treehaven

For more information on Treehaven, visit <https://www.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/treehaven/Pages/default.aspx>.

Sarah Godlewski

Saturday's Keynote Speaker is the Wisconsin State Treasurer.



Photo courtesy Office of State Treasurer

Wisconsin's Green Fire, 2019 Annual Meeting, Registration Form

If using this form, please fill out both sides. Questions? Call us at 715.203.0384 or email Ruth Ann Lee rlee@wigreenfire.org.

Indicate your cost on the lines that apply.

Registration (per person)

\$ _____ Friday and Saturday Oct 4, 5 (includes Friday lunch, dinner, Saturday breakfast, lunch, all breaks) \$70

\$ _____ Friday Oct 4 only (includes Friday lunch, dinner, breaks) \$53

\$ _____ Saturday Oct 5 only (includes breakfast, lunch, breaks) \$48

Lodging at Treehaven (Friday, October 4)

\$ _____ Dormitory style \$40

\$ _____ Private room (single or double occupancy) \$80 List all names for private room _____

Donation

\$ _____ Additional donation to support student scholarships for this annual meeting

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Meal Preferences

_____ Request vegetarian meals Please list any dietary restrictions _____

Receipt of Information

_____ I would like to receive the final agenda and list of WGF Board candidates via U.S. mail rather than electronically.

Make checks payable to: **Wisconsin's Green Fire**

Send registration form and payment to: **Wisconsin's Green Fire**, P.O. Box 1206, Rhinelander, WI 54501

The ozone problem in southeast Wisconsin extends beyond county or state boundaries; however, in-state sources contribute and should not be immune from appropriate control of ozone-causing emissions. The Air Quality Work Group plans to evaluate the change in designation and decide whether to provide comments to the Wisconsin DNR and EPA.

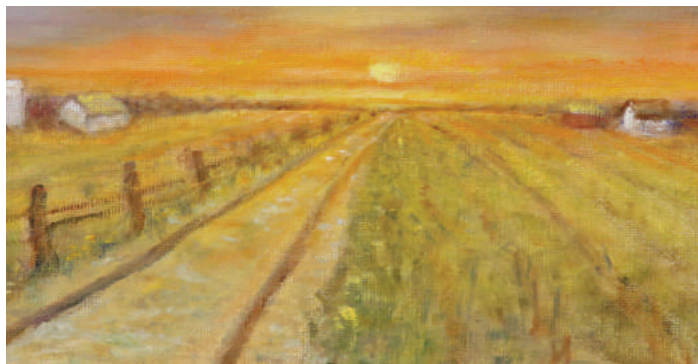
Conservation Funding

If you are interested in leading this work group, please contact Fred Clark at fclark@wigreenfire.org.

Climate Change

By Mike Meyer and Nancy Turyk

On behalf of WGF, Mike Meyer, Frank Pratt, and Nancy Turyk have spoken around the state many times in recent months. These presentations on climate change are well attended and questions and discussion periods can be extensive. People seem eager to learn more about climate change, how it is affecting Wisconsin's natural resources, and steps they can take to collectively slow the change. The presentations spin off new requests and second meetings for continued discussions. For example, Mike Meyer presented to the Northwoods Climate Action Network at the Minocqua Library on May 20. Over 50 people attended.



Art credit: Dora Kling

Environmental Education

By Dolly Ledin and Meta Brandt

As WGF continues to define our specific niche in the science and conservation arenas in Wisconsin, the Education Work Group continues to define our role in supporting our members in their work. While we may hope to reach a variety of audiences, our most important initial audience is you—our own members. We want to help you to become engaged in our work and help you access the resources you need to have in order to be effective citizens in support of science-based conservation.

Toolkit for Education and Communication

We would like to find members with expertise and ideas to help develop a “Toolkit” or set of resources for WGF members to use in their communication and education work. We have further developed a general PowerPoint about WGF and have drafted “guidelines for presenters,” but need your help to find and organize resources for working with specific audiences. If you have ideas or would like to work on this, please contact: Meta Brandt MetaL@live.com or Dolly Ledin daledin3@gmail.com.



Art credit: Samuel Cablk, Washburn School Grade 2

Diversifying our Membership

To address our current and future goals, we need to incorporate diverse perspectives on Wisconsin's environment, resources, and issues of concern to all Wisconsin citizens. To encourage new voices to share with us, we are inviting college students to our annual meeting where they can learn about our WGF work and advise us on engaging student members. If you have ideas for student engagement, please contact Dolly or Meta.

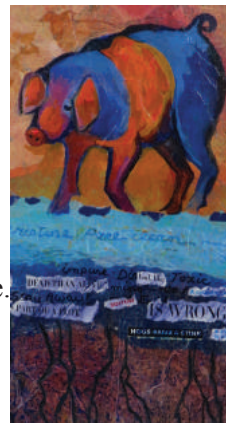
Environmental Rules and Water Resources

By Paul La Liberte

The materials we created on agriculture and water quality will be posted soon on the WGF website. We created instructional videos as well as issue papers and policy analysis. Because of the interest by both the Governor and legislators, WGF invested significantly in developing these materials. The influence of the materials is already visible in budget and legislative proposals.

On behalf of WGF, our work group...

- appeared at legislative sessions on CAFO funding and water quality trading.
- selected Bruce Moore as the WGF representative to serve on the Non-Metallic Mining Advisory Committee.
- encouraged Eau Claire County to adopt ordinances to locally enforce agricultural performance standards.



Art credit: Barbara McFarland

- commented on proposals to establish site-specific water quality standards for phosphorus.
- presented information to the Agriculture, Environment, and Land Use Committee of the Wisconsin Counties Association.
- provided interviews with radio and news media on agricultural impacts to water quality.

Fisheries

By John Lyons

We have completed our formal review and submitted comments on the proposed Wisconsin DNR Statewide Trout Management Plan.

Art credit: Mural at Iron River Fish Hatchery



Forestry and Public Lands

By Ron Eckstein and John Robinson

Forestry

Representing WGF's Forestry Work Group, Ron Eckstein continued to work on the DNR's Silviculture Guidance Team (two conference calls to improve the Silviculture Handbook, a meeting to hear the DNR Forestry's 2019 management and research plans, and a meeting to review the guidelines for oak rotation). He also attended the March and May meetings of the Governor's Council on Forestry (Madison) where the Council agreed to send a letter of support for renewing the Stewardship Program.

Ron gave a presentation on forest habitat and biodiversity issues to 35 members of the Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association (Hayward). He also met with the Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest forestry supervisor (Woodruff) to help successfully resolve an old-growth management issue.



Art credit: Pete Sandker

Public Lands

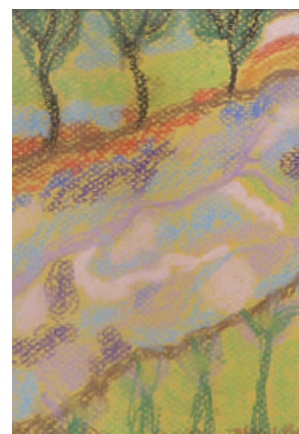
Members of Wisconsin's Green Fire worked with a coalition of 50 organizations to try to secure a ten-year extension of the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund at \$33.25 million per year. The coalition was led by Gathering Waters: Wisconsin Alliance for Land Trusts and The Nature Conservancy. Governor Tony Evers switched his support from a two-year extension of the Fund to the ten-year reauthorization. However, on June 11, the Wisconsin legislature's Joint Committee on Finance adopted a motion which approved the Governor's original budget request, extending the Stewardship Program for two years until June 30, 2022, at \$33.25 million per year (a total of \$42.6 million in new funds).

The Governor's Budget Message proposed that an advisory commission be appointed to develop recommendations on a long-term reauthorization of the program. This commission will conduct an evaluation of the Stewardship Program—its funding level, projects covered, and how the program is funded.

Public Trust and Wetlands

By Ron Grasshoff and Michael Cain

The Wisconsin Constitution declares that Wisconsin waters are "common highways and forever free" for the citizens of our State and the nation. The Wisconsin courts have, since the 1800s, recognized and expanded the "Public Trust Doctrine" to assure protection of these resources for all citizens of the State—in perpetuity. Based on WGF's internal surveys, the public dissemination of this information was seen as a priority.



Art credit: Mary Uedelhofen

Calling our project "Whose Waters? Our Waters," our work group has developed educational materials to introduce citizens to the Public Trust Doctrine and to WGF: a PowerPoint and a fact sheet *Protecting the Public Trust in Wisconsin's Lakes and Streams*. By fall, we plan to complement these materials with a Doctrine summary.

We welcome your use of these materials for presentations in your communities around the state. We are also seeking ideas for additional outreach to help members, who have more in-depth knowledge of the Doctrine concepts and history, be able to present programs to larger audiences.

Wildlife

By Tom Hauge and Adrian Wydeven

The Wildlife Work Group addressed important state wildlife management issues (bears, wolves, deer).

In April, on behalf of WGF, our work group submitted comments on the new state *Bear Management Plan*. We focused our comments on population estimates and modeling, population goals, baiting practices, and length of baiting season. Several of our comments were incorporated into the bear plan, but not shortening of the baiting season.

We also worked on the new federal delisting rule for gray wolves in the lower 48 states. While our work group and the leadership of WGF support the nationwide delisting of gray wolves, especially in reference to the Great Lakes region, not all WGF members hold the same view. Wildlife Work Group member Randy Jurewicz provided testimony on the wolf delisting at a public hearing sponsored by Senator Ron Johnson in Hudson on May 3. Wolf delisting and the WGF position on the rule were discussed on two occasions when Paul Smith (Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel) and Rich Kremer (WPR) interviewed Tom Hauge.



Art credit: Barbara McFarland

We discussed metrics for assessing deer impacts and other aspects of deer management. We hope to promote deer management that returns to a scientifically-sound approach. We submitted a letter to the Natural Resources Board to influence their deliberations on 2019 antlerless deer quotas and seasons. We drew their attention to the need to apply effective regulations to reduce overabundant herds, especially in Wisconsin farmlands.

We continue to participate in the Chronic Wasting Disease Action Initiative (www.cwdaction.com) to urge Governor Evers and the legislature to take actions that will reduce trends of increased prevalence and spread. In particular, we sought action in the next budget that would provide funding for increased testing, improved carcass disposal options, and increasing bio-security regulations for Wisconsin's captive cervid farms.

Several members of the Wildlife Work Group commented on the 5-year work plans for the Bureau of Wildlife Management in the Wisconsin DNR.

Profiles in Conservation

Wisconsin's Waters and Watersheds

By Nancy Turyk, UW Stevens Point for 28 years

I served from 1990 to 2018 as a Water Resource Scientist at UW-Stevens Point—working in the lab of the Environmental Task Force (ETF) and assisting Dr. Byron Shaw with his research.



Photo courtesy UW Stevens Point

Initially, I conducted research to evaluate sources of groundwater contaminants from a variety of land use practices. Research on septic systems revealed that in sandy soil, phosphorus flowed freely to groundwater about 15 years after the septic system was installed. Prior to that, it was assumed phosphorus would never reach groundwater. Most types of agriculture impacted groundwater, often above the drinking water standard. Rotational grazing was the exception—likely due to the perennial vegetation utilizing nutrients before they leach, the relatively short time animals spend on the pasture, and the denitrification occurring at the water table below grazing lands. Denitrification was inhibited at a nearby cropped site, suggesting pesticides may have been reducing the denitrifying bacteria.

For the balance of my career at UW-Stevens Point, I focused on Wisconsin's lakes and rivers. I studied the groundwater/surface water interface, adding to the scientific knowledge about the delivery of contaminants from groundwater to lakes and streams. Many of my projects were applied studies aimed at finding community solutions to water quality and habitat problems.

I represented the North American Lake Management Society on a national committee to review proposed federal policies related to climate change and the country's freshwater resources. I co-chair WGF's Climate Change Work Group.

Reaping Results from Opportunities Now

By Paul Heinen

Because Wisconsin's Green Fire staff and volunteers spent months preparing our *Opportunities Now* report, we hoped that it would be a document that policy makers would use to help guide their decisions on the five natural resources issues that we included (Agricultural Water Pollution, Groundwater Withdrawals, Our Land and Water Legacy, Chronic Wasting Disease, and Climate Change).

Opportunities Now continued on page 8

P.O. Box 1206, Rhineland, WI 54501

Not a member?
Please join
Wisconsin's Green Fire

Please visit:

<https://wlgreenfire.org/make-a-difference/>
to join or renew on-line or to download
a membership form.

Thank you for supporting
the conservation legacy of
Wisconsin.

Art credit: Joanne Meierhofer



Art credit: Lucy Tyrrell



Art credit: Lucy Tyrrell



Art credit: Fond du Lac Community College



Photo credit: Lucy Tyrrell



Opportunities Now (continued from page 7)

In April and May, we distributed the report to office holders in the State Capitol, to statewide conservation and environmental groups, to senior state agency staff and agency Secretaries, to regional and local policy makers, to academics, and to those in other places where policy is debated and implemented.

We are hearing from many about how valuable our report has been. At legislative hearings, committee members quote it. At statewide meetings of conservation and environmental groups, people use our information. Staff at the Capitol are asking for extra copies to share with constituents. The recommendations in the report are in Governor Evers's 2019-2021 State Budget. Attorney General Kaul is taking the positions we suggested on dairy farm expansions and high capacity wells.

Sharing *Opportunities Now* with new people we meet allows us to show them what Wisconsin's Green Fire is all about, what we stand for, and what our goals are. We can be proud of our work. It is making a difference.

In the autumn WGF newsletter, we will be able to share additional information about how the recommendations we presented in *Opportunities Now* fared in the legislature.