

WGF Celebrates Earth Day 2022

Earth Day is a celebration of the planet we all call home, and a day to remember why it is so important to fight for the conservation and protection of our natural resources. We asked some WGF leaders to share what makes Earth Day so special to them, and why they choose to dedicate their life for the protection of the planet.

Remembering the First Earth Day

Why is Earth Day important to you?

"On the first Earth Day in 1970 I was an undergrad at Northwestern University. I attended a 24-hour Earth Day "teach-in" headlined by Paul Erlich, Tom Paxton, and Pete Seeger and supported by dozens of scientists of national stature. It opened my eyes to the entire environmental situation. I remember thinking (at 7am after an all-night event) that this environmental movement was a good fit for me. For the next 52 years I have worked personally and professionally to improve the environment. The first Earth Day changed my life."

-Bob Martini

Photo: Foam from Weyerhaeuser Paper Company below Rothschild, WI in 1976. Photo from Wisconsin DNR.



"I was a student in Biology at UW-Stevens Point during the first Earth Day and participated in the activities on that day. At that time, you could not go near or eat fish out of the Wisconsin River. The Cuyahoga River in Ohio was regularly catching fire. The



Milwaukee River was also a polluted mess. I, like Bob Martini and others, were angry and motivated to help make a difference. After receiving my BS in Biology, I went to UW Law School, with the goal of becoming a lawyer at [the] Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) to help fight to protect Wisconsin's waters and resources. I

clerked for them for my three years of Law School and was hired to work on water issues (initially groundwater, and then on surface waters for 32 years). I was involved, while at WDNR, in developing the process for establishing the Riverwalk and making sure that the public had access along the Milwaukee River shorelines. It hasn't always been easy, but there have been some great success stories."

-Michael Cain

Photos: Lower Wisconsin River near Ferry Bluff as it looks today, taken by Michael Cain

[Read more about Michael and Bob's memories here](#)

Conserving Nature for the Next Generation

What is your favorite Earth Day memory?

"A favorite memory of Earth Day is co-chairing the 25th anniversary celebration with a teacher friend for all the public-school students in Bayfield County. We held it at the Bayfield County Fairgrounds and mother nature brought us six inches of snow overnight before the event! Needless to say, we pivoted quickly on changing the logistics of the celebration to match the weather. The teacher and I still chat with each other on Earth Day. Earth Day is important to raise awareness and move people to continued and new action to save the planet from human destruction and to also celebrate progress made!"



-Nancy Franz

Photo: Nancy hiking at the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, taken by Nancy Franz



"One of my favorite Earth Day memories was from 2008. We were sitting outside with about 50 students and teachers from the Northwoods Community School in Rhinelander witnessing the signing of a conservation easement being granted by a landowner. As the Executive Director of the Northwoods Land Trust (NWLTL), I had worked

with him to prepare the conservation easement documents.

The landowner, a retired teacher and former resort owner, was conserving in perpetuity over 3,800 feet of natural shoreline frontage on an extensive peninsula on Squash Lake, a 396-acre popular recreational lake west of Rhinelander. As he told the students: "I could have been rich and had it made, but money isn't everything. Part of my help towards Earth Day is the fact that this isn't just for me, this is for the whole world. This is something forever, and I believe in it. I hope that it can have some meaning for you young people too."

-Bryan Pierce

Photo: The landowner (2nd from right) signed a conservation easement to protect a peninsula on Squash Lake, as witnessed by (from left) NWLT Board member Bob Martini, Attorney Bill Dickens, and Executive Director Bryan Pierce. Taken by Dr. Walt Gager.

Sharing the Earth with Wildlife

"In the three weeks or so leading up to Earth Day each year, on warm nights when spring rains convince us winter is being washed away, a largely unseen parade takes place on the floors of hardwood forests.

Blue-spotted salamanders (pictured right) move at that time from their burrows in upland soil to shallow, seasonal wetlands to breed.

Several hundred feet or more of unfragmented woodland surrounding an ephemeral pool is necessary to ensure both safe travel and a sustainable population for this amphibian.

Earth Day is about sustaining life on the home planet. This year, walk in a woods and look for a vernal pool knowing that both form the Blue-spotted salamander's critical habitat. It is depending on us to protect them."



Photo: Blue-spotted salamander found in a Washington County woodland preserved by the Cedar Lakes Conservation Foundation. Taken by Don Behm.

Read more Earth Day memories
here

WGF Represented at Events Across Wisconsin



In early April, Wisconsin's Green Fire staff and members attended events across Wisconsin to share the important work WGF has spearheaded for Wisconsin conservation. The events included the Wisconsin Lakes and Rivers Convention in Stevens Point, the Wisconsin Society of Science Teachers "Comeback Conference" in Wausau, and a meeting

with the Association of Retired Conservationists (ARC) in Middleton.

The Wisconsin Lakes and Rivers Convention is hosted by the [Wisconsin Lakes Partnership](#), a collaboration between the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), the Extension Lakes Program, and Wisconsin Lakes. Jenny Oren, WGF's Communications and Membership Fellow, and WGF volunteers Bruce Neeb and Diane Daulton staffed a table at the three-day Convention (pictured above).



WGF Science Director Sarah Peterson also provided an introductory presentation to the [Association of Retired Conservationists \(ARC\)](#) (pictured left). She shared some general background on WGF and highlighted some of WGF's exciting new initiatives.

Finally, four WGF members attended the [Wisconsin Society of Science Teachers \(WSST\)](#)'s "Comeback Conference." WGF Environmental Education Work Group co-chairs Dolly Ledin and Karen Mesmer staffed a table at the conference, and assisted Mike Foy and Adrian Wydeven in their presentations on [wolves in Wisconsin](#) and [Chronic Wasting Disease in Wisconsin deer](#) at the conference.

[Visit our website](#) to read more about these presentations and our work across Wisconsin.

Read More
Here

Your Support this Spring Will Help Us Launch Our *Conservation Pathways* Program



In 2022, Wisconsin's Green Fire is launching an exciting new program that brings together our career experts and members of our Student and Young Professionals group to promote careers in conservation. **Our WGF Conservation Pathways program will provide mentoring, social support, and scholarship support to students from diverse**

and non-traditional backgrounds considering careers in conservation.

Will you support us with a gift this spring to help support students in conservation through Conservation Pathways? You can learn more about this and other work we're doing this year on our website at www.wigreenfire.org/springappeal

As a Wisconsin's Green Fire supporter, **your gift this spring will make it possible for us to lead efforts like these and continue our role as Wisconsin's Voice for Conservation.**

Your contribution of \$1000, \$500, \$250, \$125, or any amount that is meaningful for you, will allow us to meet our goals for 2022 and successfully launch or expand these and other programs. You can learn more on our website [here](#).

Make a Gift for Conservation
Today

Get Involved in Wisconsin Conservation

Attend the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters Climate & Energy Webinar Series: The Wisconsin Academy is hosting a series of webinars centered around fostering purpose and knowledge and inspiring

action around climate and energy issues in Wisconsin. On May 18th, there will be a webinar about the [Monroe County Climate Readiness and Rural Economic Opportunity Assessment](#) led by WGF. This project was an effort to conduct a rapid, comprehensive assessment that brought together climate readiness and conservation-based economic opportunities at a county level. WGF's Fred Clark, Heather Stricker, and Nancy Turyk, all members of the project team, will share the results of their assessment and implications for use of local climate assessments in community climate preparedness. [Click here](#) to register and learn more.

Additionally, on April 28th, the Academy will host a webinar about the Tribal Adaptation Menu (TAM), a tool and framework that integrates indigenous and cultural knowledge into climate adaptation and planning processes.

Visit the Academy's website [here](#) to learn more about upcoming events, register, and view recordings of past events.

[Attend the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Center for Water Policy's Webinar on Depolarizing Water:](#) On Thursday, April 28th from 12-1:30pm, UWM's Center for Water Policy and the Institute for Systems Change and Peacebuilding will host a webinar *Depolarizing Water in Complex Social-Ecological Systems: Navigating Conflict and Consensus in Lake Beulah, East Troy, Wisconsin*. Participants will learn about the complex interconnections between hydrology, community values, water uses, and governance using Lake Beulah in East Troy, Wisconsin as a case study. [Register here](#).

[Participate in Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe College Sustainable Agriculture Research Station Spring Events and Learning Opportunities:](#) The Lac Court Oreilles Ojibwe College Farm (LSARS) is hosting a number of online and in-person events and workshops this spring! Topics range from the role of water in ecosystems and the Ojibwe culture, growing gourmet mushrooms, and seed swapping and starting. View the events and registration information [here](#).

[Celebrate the Field Museum's 27th Parker/Gentry Conservation Award Recipient August Ball:](#) The Field Museum will present its 27th Parker/Gentry Conservation Award to August Ball, founder of Milwaukee-based [Cream City Conservation and Consulting \(C4\)](#). C4 simultaneously trains and employs young adults from underrepresented populations through their Conservation Corps program, and also offers consulting and training to environmental organizations to increase and promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice. WGF has participated in some of these trainings hosted by August and her team, and we would like to congratulate August on this well deserved award!

The virtual award ceremony will be April 27th at 4:30pm CT. Register and learn more [here](#).

Wisconsin's Green Fire needs your support. Your donation assures that conservation issues around the state are addressed with the best scientific information available.

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Tomorrow!**

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