

## May News from Wisconsin's Green Fire

### WGF Hosts Successful *PFAS in Wisconsin* Conference



On Tuesday, May 2nd over 100 local government leaders attended the [PFAS in Wisconsin: Policy and Practice for Local Government Leaders](#) conference hosted by Wisconsin's Green Fire in partnership with the [Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources](#) (WDNR), [University of Wisconsin-Madison Extension](#), the [Wisconsin Towns Association](#), the [Wisconsin Counties Solid](#)

[Waste Management Association](#), [Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District](#), and [Wisconsin Counties Association](#). The collaborative workshop prepared local leaders to understand, respond, and act to protect their communities from the risks of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, commonly referred to as PFAS, or the "forever chemicals."

Conference attendees included WDNR Secretary Adam Payne and his staff, local mayors and county board members, and other local officials from across Wisconsin.

WDNR staff shared their efforts in addressing PFAS in the state, including establishing the [Wisconsin PFAS Action Council \(WisPAC\)](#), a [statewide PFAS Action Plan](#), and spoke about potential federal funding for statewide cleanup efforts. Speakers also discussed first steps in responding to PFAS pollution, the source of PFAS and its threat to public and environmental health. Local officials like Wausau Mayor Katie Rosenberg discussed specific steps they are taking to address PFAS in their community.

WGF's Contaminants of Emerging Concern Work Group will continue working with WDNR and other partners to address PFAS and other emerging contaminants, equipping communities with tools to address the issue and develop effective solutions.



View a recording of the full conference [here](#).

Photo: From left to right: Tom Jerow (WGF Board President), Fred Clark (WGF Executive Director), and Mark Thimke (member of WGF's Contaminants of Emerging Concern Work Group). Credit: Paul Heinen

[Read More](#)

## WGF To Host Wisconsin Natural Climate Solutions Task Force Workshop

### From Stories to Solutions: Forming a Natural Climate Solutions Task Force

Friday, May 26 (8:00 - 1:30 pm)

Kemp Natural Resources Station, Woodruff, WI  
Online attendance available



Join WGF and the [Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts & Letters](#) on Friday, May 26th for an opportunity to learn from three leaders with a deep connection with Wisconsin's forested lands and **participate in a workshop to build a natural climate solutions task force for Wisconsin.**

This hybrid event, located at Kemp Natural Resources Station in Woodruff, WI, creates a space for shared dialogue on climate solutions for Wisconsin. Participants will have the opportunity to participate in a morning bird walk with WGF

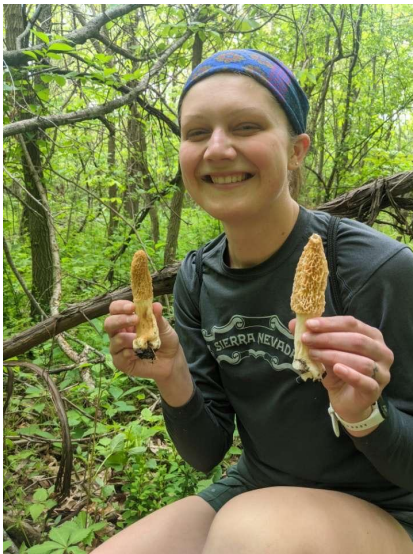
members Ron Eckstein and Linda Parker, join a session of climate success storytelling, and end the day by engaging in a workshop conversation around developing a Wisconsin natural climate solutions task force.

Attendees are encouraged to bring a lunch with light snacks provided.

[Click here](#) to learn more and register.

[Register Today](#)

## Passing the Baton on Communications



*By Fred Clark, WGF Executive Director*

When our Communications Coordinator Jenny Washam (left, holding morel mushrooms) informed us last winter she would be leaving us in June to return to North Carolina, we knew it would be a tall order to find someone equal to the role she has carved out at Wisconsin's Green Fire.

Jenny came on board WGF in summer of 2021 and since then she has contributed substantially to our growth and impact through her high-quality writing and leadership. Among many accomplishments, Jenny led our redesign and re-branding of our newsletters and other communication products, and together with members of our Aspiring



Conservation Professionals group, she helped launch a consistent and successful presence on social media. Jenny has become a familiar voice to our members and the public and we all wish her and her husband Owen well as they return to warmer climates.

While Jenny will be keenly missed, we're excited to announce our newest WGF team member, Carolyn Pralle, who started with WGF this week filling Jenny's role. Carolyn (right, holding turtle) lives in Wisconsin Rapids and joins us from her most recent assignment at the Adams County Land Conservation Department. She is a native of Rhode Island and in addition to significant communications expertise, she has trained and worked as a wetland biologist and wildlife biologist prior to coming to Wisconsin.

Carolyn and Jenny are working together through May, and with their coordination we expect to keep doing what we've been doing well, and begin to do some new things, like branching out into visual and audio formats, we've been wanting to do for a while.

Please join me in extending a well-deserved thank you and best wishes to [Jenny Washam](#), and a warm welcome to [Carolyn Pralle](#) as they transition roles. And please stay tuned for new ways we'll be working to spread our message as Wisconsin's Voices for Conservation in 2023.

Photo 1: Jenny Washam holding morel mushroom. Credit: Owen Washam

Photo 2: Carolyn Pralle holding turtle. Credit: Carolyn Pralle



[Read more about Jenny and Carolyn](#)

## Is Nature and the Outdoors for Everyone?



By Nancy Franz

*The following is a reflection from a WGF member on the importance of diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice in conservation, the barriers preventing people to enjoy natural resources, and practical steps to making conservation and natural resources more enjoyable and accessible to all.*

I take Wisconsin's Green Fire's mission seriously:

*Wisconsin citizens enjoy the benefits of clean water, clean air, and healthy ecosystems achieved through scientific and thoughtful management of natural resources.* However, I sometimes wonder if all people feel comfortable enjoying Wisconsin's natural resources.

After attending many webinars, reading lots of books, and talking with others, I've rediscovered and reaffirmed that wider inclusion in engaging with natural resources creates more durable conservation impacts, improves human wellness, and develops community by bringing us closer to each other. These

are important outcomes, so where is everyone?

My exploration of diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice in conservation and management of natural resources has surfaced barriers that prevent some people from engaging with nature and the outdoors. So, what is WGF doing to address and reduce these barriers to engage a wider variety of people in conservation? The organization has integrated diversity, equity, and inclusion in its work overall, as outlined in a recent Wisconsin's Green Fire [newsletter](#).

***However, the great work by the organization doesn't have a strong impact unless every one of us acts in alignment with the organization's vision.***

Here are some examples of how I support this important effort:

- **Donate funds and other resources** for targeted programs that reduce engagement barriers.
- Encourage a **wide variety of people** to serve in [leadership](#) roles with Wisconsin's Green Fire.
- **Help build partnerships with organizations** that support getting a larger variety of people outdoors and into conservation and management of natural resources.
- **Personally bring people outdoors who are new to the experience or location.**
- **Be an architect of environments** that enhance engagement in both indoor and outdoor spaces focused on conservation and management of natural resources.

I'm looking forward to seeing more people than ever before enjoying WGF groups, publications, events, and programs. I hope you'll join me to help realize this important goal.

[Read Nancy's Full Reflection](#)

## Wisconsin Tribes: Leading the way in protecting and restoring wetlands and watersheds



To celebrate American Wetlands Month in May, WGF is joining with [Wisconsin Wetlands Association](#) to share how Tribes in northern Wisconsin care for and protect their wetlands. The [Wisconsin Tribal Conservation Advisory Council](#), Wisconsin Wetlands Association, and

[USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service](#) have partnered with the Bad River and Red Cliff Bands of the Lake Superior Tribe of Chippewa Indians to raise awareness of this important work by producing four short videos highlighting these stories.

The long-term landscape approach both the Bad River and Red Cliff Bands take to protect and manage their reservations is maintaining high water quality, managing flood waters, and providing vital habitat. It's also helping to sustain their culture and way of life. The healthier natural environment provides opportunities for their people to hunt, fish, and gather what nature has provided and establishes relationships that will build a stronger community today and for future generations. These videos are part of a larger initiative by the partners to raise awareness of the vital work Tribes in Wisconsin are doing to protect and restore wetlands and watersheds.



[Click here](#) to view the video series and learn more about this important partnership.

Photo: Canoe in water in northern Wisconsin. Credit: Wisconsin Wetlands Association

[View the Video Series Here](#)

## Aspiring Conservation Professionals Column

### Join WGF's Aspiring Conservation Professionals for an Evening on the Terrace



To celebrate the beginning of summer, WGF's [Aspiring Conservation Professionals Work Group](#) is hosting an informal evening at the University of Wisconsin - Madison [Memorial Union Terrace](#) on Thursday, May 25th 6:00-7:30pm! This event is open to anyone interested in learning more about Wisconsin's Green Fire, the ACP Work Group, or just wanting to spend an evening with fellow conservation enthusiasts. Feel free to bring a friend and pass along the word!

We plan to meet outside weather allowing, look for Wisconsin's Green Fire signage. We hope to see you there!

[Read more about WGF's ACP Work Group](#)

## Get Involved in Wisconsin Conservation

**Volunteer with the Rice Lake Association for Weedpull 2023:** The Rice Lake Association in Mercer, WI is currently seeking volunteers for Weedpull 2023 to help remove Curly Leaf Pond Weed from Rice Lake. There will be three opportunities to volunteer between May 31st and June 11th, each volunteering opportunity will span over three days.

[Click here](#) to learn more and register.

### **Apply for Wild Ones Fox Valley Area chapter Wisconsin Native Plants**

**Program Scholarship:** Wild Ones Fox Valley Area chapter is offering a scholarship for college students to get one year of 75% off course fees for the Wisconsin Native Plant Certification program! Students must be enrolled in a natural resources-related major, and be committed to a 50-hour certification program with hands-on learning experiences in botany, ecology, conservation, and uses of native flora in Wisconsin.

Click [here](#) to learn more, and [here](#) to apply for the scholarship by June 2nd.

**Attend the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts & Letters Event: Canoe Conundrum: Unraveling the Mysteries of the Ho-Chunk Nation's Dugout Canoes in Lake Mendota:** On June 8th, the Wisconsin Academy is hosting a

hybrid event focusing on the historical find of two Ho-Chunk Nation dugout canoes in Lake Mendota in Madison, Wis. Join Bill Quackenbush, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer for the Ho-Chunk Nation, and Dr. Amy Rosebrough, the Interim Wisconsin State Archaeologist, for an exciting talk covering the scientific and cultural significance of these canoes and celebrate the life and legacy of Dr. Skibo, the “People’s Archaeologist.”

This free event will be in-person at Rutabaga Paddlesports in Madison, WI and online via Zoom. [Click here](#) to learn more and register.

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## Wisconsin Conservation News

WPR's April 26th article featuring WGF's Ron Eckstein: [The nation now has an inventory of old-growth forests. Some hope protections will follow.](#)

WSAW Channel 7 News May 2nd article: [Wisconsin leaders attend PFAS workshop in Wausau](#)

WXPR Public Radio May 4th article: [PFAS in Wisconsin workshop highlights progress and struggles communities face when dealing with contamination](#)

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

**Give Today to Support Conservation Tomorrow!**

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