

September News from Wisconsin's Green Fire

Conservation Socials Kick Off



By Paul Heinen, WGF Policy Coordinator

We started our 2023 Conservation Socials with a full house at the Delta Beer Lab in Madison on September 6, 2023. Joining Delta Beer Lab patrons were Wisconsin's Green Fire members and friends. Board President Tom Jerow and Executive Director Fred Clark spoke to the crowd about our organization and our current work, including our focus on PFAS. People gathered around the PFAS table to see which products in their homes contain PFAS. Thanks to Board members Don Behm and Bob Gurda for finding this wonderful community location and to Flossie Siebert for organizing this fun event. Delta Beer Lab is hosting a month of events throughout September that will help support WGF. Check it out in the story below.



Photos by Flossie Siebert and Paul Heinen

Fall Conservation Socials - You're Invited

By Flossie Siebert, WGF Development Director

Our fall events season is under way! It was great to see so many members of our community at our [events](#) so far this month!



We hope to see you at more of our upcoming Conservation Socials around the state. These engaging and casual gatherings bring together WGF members and conservation enthusiasts from all over the state.

Come connect and socialize while enjoying local drinks and food, all in the name of preserving Wisconsin's natural resources. During each social, you'll have the opportunity to learn about WGF's impactful work and discover how you can get involved. Students and

early-career professionals are welcome, as is anyone who cares about conservation!

Here's a quick look at the rest of our fall events line-up:

- ❑ **Sep. 22 – Madison Nonprofit Partner Event** - [Delta Beer Lab](#) Live Music, Food Truck & WGF Guest Beer-tenders, 5:00-7:00 pm
- ❑ **Sep. 28 – Madison Nonprofit Partner Event** - [Delta Beer Lab](#) Crafting Conversation — Panel Discussion on PFAS in Drinking Water, 6:00-7:30 pm
- ❑ **Sep. 30 – Washburn Conservation Social** - Oppedahl Homestead, Apple Cider Pressing & Pulled Pork Feast, 4:00-6:00pm
- ❑ **Oct. 4 – Madison Nonprofit Partner Event** - [Delta Beer Lab](#) Presentation of Check to Wisconsin's Green Fire—Final Delta Event, 4:30-6:00pm
- ❑ **Oct. 11 – Eau Claire Conservation Social** - [The Brewing Projekt](#), 5:00-7:00pm
- ❑ **Oct. 12 – Athens (Wausau) Conservation Social** - [Stoney Acres Farm](#), Pizza on the Farm, 5:00-7:00pm
- ❑ **Oct. 18 – Manitowish Waters Conservation Social** - [North Lakeland Discovery Center](#), 5:00-7:00pm
- ❑ **Oct. 23 – Milwaukee Conservation Social** - [Urban Ecology Center \(Riverside Location\)](#), 4:00-7:00pm
- ❑ **Oct. 25 – Appleton Conservation Social** - [Bubolz Nature Preserve](#), 5:00-7:00pm

These events are open to the public and completely free, but we recommend registering for the Conservation Socials ahead of time to secure your spot. Space is more limited (max. 30 attendees) at the Washburn and Athens events. **Visit our Events page for the full event details and register today!** <https://wigreenfire.org/events>.

Let's come together, support conservation efforts, and make a positive impact on Wisconsin's beautiful natural environment. See you at the Conservation Socials!

Image by C. Pralle via Canva: Graphical map of Wisconsin with Conservation Socials locations.

**Read More and Register for
Events**

WGF and Clean Wisconsin Launch 2-year Project to Re-envision Farm Conservation



By Fred
Clark, WGF
Executive
Director



With support from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Wisconsin's Green Fire and Clean Wisconsin are launching a two-year project to assess feasibility and design a new model for farm incentive programs.



Sarah Walling, Water and Agriculture Program Director at of Clean Wisconsin, will co-lead the project with WGF's Executive Director, Fred Clark. WGF's Farm Conservation Work Group leaders Paul LaLiberte, Jim Baumann, Jim Matson, and WGF member experts in farm conservation, will also guide the project. Sara Walling told us, *"Through this work we'll have a chance to bring together key stakeholders who can help us re-envision farm conservation in Wisconsin. The learning generated by this work will bring multiple benefits, and the relationships we'll build will help create the foundation to make these ideas a reality."*

Photos: Monroe County farmland and Sarah Walling

While Wisconsin farmers have a long tradition as committed conservationists, market realities and the current structure of government farm incentive programs too often result in failure to protect water quality in farm country. As a result, contamination of water supplies from phosphorus, nitrates, and bacteria still threatens human health and the environment - affecting an increasing number of rural residents in Wisconsin and surrounding regions. We believe that more positive outcomes are possible if we reassess our investments in farm conservation through voluntary efforts.

WGF members have been working for several years on better methods to use our investments that support farmers and farm conservation. We believe this is a powerful idea whose time has arrived, and we're excited to be launching a significant effort to test these ideas at scale.

As the project launches, we'll be bringing on dedicated staff and a larger team of stakeholders to help develop and refine ideas and envision new ways of supporting farmers while conserving working lands and our state's most precious resource, clean water.

WGF Pilots Northern Lakes Toolbox Workshops

By Terry Daulton, WGF Past President and Mike Meyer, WGF Staff Scientist



Wisconsin's lakes are one of its most valued resources. University of Wisconsin Extension estimates 750 lake associations and districts work on stewardship across the state representing thousands of lakeshore owners and enthusiasts. While many training

opportunities exist, fully engaging in lake management is often beyond the capacity of lake groups. To address this need, WGF piloted two Northern Lakes Toolbox Workshops in August and September. The goal is to provide lake leaders with tools to obtain and interpret data about their lake – and to use the information to make lake planning and management decisions. The primary data source is the WDNR Lakes Program. The sessions included Tribal perspectives presented by Lac du Flambeau Tribal Natural Resources Director, Celeste Hockings.

Twelve lake association leaders from Vilas County, Oneida and Iron Counties participated. One participant observed, “There is a lot of data out there and I now have a better idea how to get at the data to help define an action plan to improve and maintain the health of our lake.”

When asked what they would do with the skills and information, lake leaders were enthusiastic. One participant said, “I will recommend applying for programs/grants for our lake for aquatic invasive species education and increased water monitoring.” Another was interested in attending the session for a second time to learn more about how varied lakes would benefit.

Based on the results of these pilots, WGF may offer sessions to reach broader audiences, including at the 2024 Wisconsin Lakes Conference. Funding was provided by the Arthur L. and Elaine V. Johnson Foundation, WDNR Surface Water Grants (Lake Education), with Wisconsin's Green Fire providing in-kind support. The Toolbox Workshops will be featured at WGF's Conservation Social in Manitowish Waters on October 18. Join us there to learn more!



Photos: Terry Daulton

Aspiring Conservation Professionals



By Isabelle Bieser, Aspiring Conservation Professionals Work Group Chair. In the photo Isa checks wood duck nesting boxes.

This October, the Aspiring Conservation Professionals Work Group will meet to plan and discuss the winter retreat! Last year, we partnered with UW-Oshkosh Senior Lecturer, Shannon Davis-Foust, and Wisconsin's Green Fire to provide professional development and networking for WGF student members. Students learned about limnology, forestry, and became certified in the Project WILD curriculum. They networked, cross-country skied, and howled at the moon.

Join us October 25 for an on-line planning session to contribute to the conversation. If you're interested in attending or supporting the event, contact ACP Workgroup Chair, Isabelle Bieser at isabieser@gmail.com

And in your Careers Corner, here are three reasons why I volunteer:

My conservation career pathway began as a volunteer at a local nature preserve owned by the Massachusetts Audubon Society. I started because I needed scheduled and structured outdoors time because I wasn't making it for myself! And then I discovered that I was building skills in trail maintenance, birding, species identification and invasive species removal. Key conservation skills. So my manager became a job reference for me when I was ready for my first job in conservation work at Philmont Scout Ranch's Conservation Department.

1. **Growing a skillset:** by volunteering with Nearby Nature, a Milwaukee conservation group, and birding weekly through migration and breeding season, I was able to hone my bird calls and song skills. And I know my walk in the woods was helpful!
2. **Networking:** I have been able to build relationships that carry over into my professional sphere – like [hosting Black Birder's Week at the Zoo](#) in partnership with Nearby Nature.
3. **My next job:** I have leveraged the unpaid experiences and skills from volunteering into getting a job. Volunteering demonstrates a willingness to be a team-player and that you're active in your community. Both, in addition the skill-building, are attractive to employers.

Read More about WGF's ACP Work Group

Get Involved in Wisconsin Conservation

Attend a WGF Conservation Social this fall!

- **Register at wigreenfire.org/events.**

Saturday September 23 9-12 Public Lands Volunteer Workday at Sugar River Wetlands. More info at

<https://www.wisconservation.org/wayfarers/>.

Timber Wolf Alliance Wolf Awareness Week

Speakers

Wednesday 10/18 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm at the Lake Superior Zoo, Duluth, MN
Join wolf biologists to learn about their work on wolf recovery and depredation mitigation in

Minnesota. <https://www.facebook.com/events/3460857420822706/?ref=newsfeed>

Friday 10/20 7:00 pm – 8:15 pm at the Sigurd Olsen Environmental Institute Sentry Room, Ashland, WI

Dr. John A. Vucetich will discuss the importance of the endangered species act of wolf recovery and the future of wolf management in the Great Lakes region. <https://www.northland.edu/event/wolf-awareness-week-keynote-speaker-dr-john-vucetich/>

Workshops – Registration Required

Wolf Ecology Workshop Saturday 10/21 9:00 am – 4:00 pm Northland College, Ashland, WI: <https://www.northland.edu/event/wolf-ecology-workshop/>

Join Northland College Professor Dr. Erik Olson, **Timber Wolf Alliance** Chair and WGF Work Group Chair Adrian Wydeven, WDNR Wildlife Technician Sarah Boles, and Timber Wolf Alliance Coordinator Melanie Michaels to learn the basics of wolf ecology and management—including natural history, identification, monitoring techniques, wolf-human conflicts, predator-prey ecology, and wolf management.

Carnivore Tracking Workshop Saturday 11/4 9:00 am – 3:30 pm Northland College, Ashland,

WI: <https://www.northland.edu/event/volunteer-carnivore-tracking-training-and-refresher/>

Learn the basics of tracking medium-to-large-sized carnivores in Wisconsin, including track identification, gait patterns, and conducting snow track surveys.

Wisconsin Conservation News

WI Public Radio - The Morning Show with Kate Archer Kent on The Ideas Network Sept. 1. Fred Clark discussed WGF's broad set of conservation priorities from the Climate Crisis to PFAS. <https://www.wpr.org/exploring-goals-rhineland-based-wisconsin-green-fire>

WXPR Sept 7 interview with Michael Cain, WGF Public Trust and Wetlands Work Group Chair [**U.S. Supreme Court decision removes majority of wetland protections in the country.**](#)

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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