

## January News from Wisconsin's Green Fire

### Q & A with Meleesa

*by Ruth Oppedahl,  
WGF Interim Program Coordinator*

Recently, Ruth Oppedahl spoke with the new Executive Director of Wisconsin's Green Fire (WGF), Meleesa Johnson. Meleesa took on this role at the end of October 2023, enthusiastically steering the organization with continued leadership in science-based conservation of natural resources.

With this quick [10-point Question and Answer](#) conversation, we invite you to get to know Meleesa a little better and learn more about her vision for Wisconsin's Green Fire!



*Meleesa Johnson, WGF Exec. Director*

[Read the Q & A with Meleesa](#)

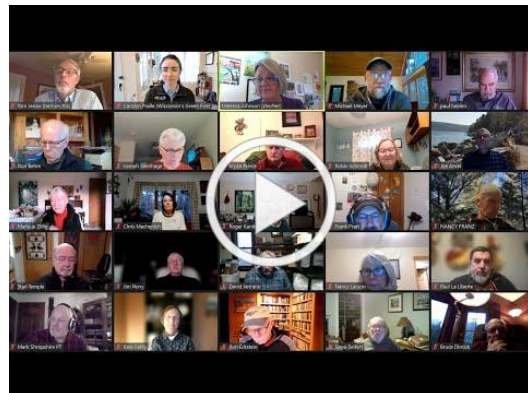
## Annual Meeting 2023 - Watch the Recording

*by Carolyn Pralle, WGF Comms. Coordinator*

We were thrilled to see so many Wisconsin's Green Fire members at our virtual meeting on **December 27th, 2023**.

We highlighted the ongoing efforts of our Work Groups, with a special focus on the effects of wake boats on lakes.

Watch the recording on the WGF website or our YouTube channel.



*YouTube: 2023 Annual Meeting for WGF*

[Watch the Recording](#)

## Top Policy Issues in 2024

*by Paul Heinen, WGF Policy Director*

Every January, Wisconsin's Green Fire (WGF) Policy Director, Paul Heinen, writes a "top issues" report on the policy issues that WGF is prioritizing for the year ahead.

From PFAS to climate, agriculture, wake boats, and more, this update is one way we keep WGF members updated about the work ahead for this community of conservation experts.



*Capitol and downtown Madison, image via Pixabay*

[Read Paul's Full Report](#)

## How Dr. King Inspires Our Work

*Reflection by Jim Perry,  
WGF Board Vice President*

As we commemorate MLK Jr. Day on January 15, we've been thinking about Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s work in the context of Wisconsin's Green Fire (WGF).

In 1967, when he was student body president at UW-Marathon County, Jim Perry organized a visit and speech from Dr. King for an audience of about 1,100 students and community members.

Now as the Vice President of the Board for WGF, Jim reflects on that historic visit by Dr. King and what it means for WGF today.



*Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (left) and Jim Perry  
(right) on the stage of the UW-Marathon County  
Park Youth Building, May 12, 1967,  
photo courtesy of Jim Perry*

[Read Jim's Reflection](#)

**Aspiring Conservation Professionals -  
Reflection on the 2024 Retreat**



The student retreat co-hosted by UW-Oshkosh's Student Environmental Action Coalition (UWO-SEAC) and Wisconsin Green Fire's [Aspiring Conservation Professionals work group](#) occurred January 3-5 in Land O' Lakes. 54 professionals and students came together for a weekend of connecting and nature. We are grateful to Dr. Shannon Davis-Foust and the UWO-SEAC for all their planning and organizing for the event.



*2nd Annual Conservation in Wisconsin  
Group Photo - January 3rd, 2024,  
Photo by Shannon Davis-Foust*

The agenda included networking, exploration, and connecting with like-minded conservationists. Professionals led expeditions into the New Year's snow to explore the local bog, diatoms, and solar energy. A number of Wisconsin Green Fire members participated in a **career panel** for the students. And, the nights were filled with bonfires and trivia. View a photo album from the retreat on [our Facebook page](#).

The Aspiring Conservation Professionals came together for an in-person meeting. We focused on launching the [Project Intake Form](#). The purpose of this form is for other work groups to submit bite size projects for students and other volunteers to assist with and gain experience. If you have any feedback as to how this form works, please reach out to Isabelle Bieser at [isabieser@gmail.com](mailto:isabieser@gmail.com).

[Learn more about the ACP Work Group](#)

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## *Get Involved in Conservation*

- **WGF Members:** Have you completed (or have plans for) an outreach activity for Wisconsin's Green Fire in 2024?
    - Help us track our impact around the State by taking five minutes to fill out this [Activity Tracker form for 2024](#). **Thank you!**
    - *Pro tip: Bookmark the form for easy access throughout the year!*
  - Attend Wisconsin Women in Conservation's free [Conservation Camp Webinar](#) on sustainability and self-care on **Jan 25** at 12-1pm.
  - Attend Marquette Law School's annual [Water Law CLE Program](#) on PFAS regulation and litigation, **Feb 1** at 12-1pm.
  - Join WGF for [Meleesa Johnson's virtual workshop](#) on Wisconsin Environmental Policy for the Wisconsin Association for Environmental Education (WAE) on **Feb 6** at 6-7pm.
  - Join WGF at the upcoming [WI Wildlife Rehabilitators Association Conference](#) **Feb 10** in Madison.
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## Wisconsin's Green Fire in the News

**Wisconsin State Legislature** - Jan 16. - [Hearing for Ron Grasshoff's reappointment to the Land and Water Conservation Board](#). Ron is co-chair of WGF's Public Trust and Wetlands Work Group.

**WPR** - Dec 28 - Danielle Kaeding references our PFAS 2.0 report: [The state budget set aside \\$125M to address PFAS. Months later, communities are still waiting for relief.](#)

- This story was also published in the [Iron Mountain Daily News](#) on Jan 2.

**WisPolitics** - Dec 20 - Published our news release: [WGF: Statement on WDNR's request for Joint Committee on Finance action on PFAS funding](#)

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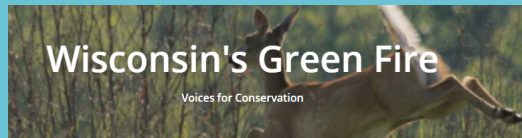
Wisconsin's Green Fire needs your support. Your donation assures that conservation issues around the state are addressed with the best scientific information available.

**Give Today to Support Conservation Tomorrow!**

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