

DCEC Newsletter



published by
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**Spring
2005**

**Environmental News
for Door County**

*Make a Legacy Bequest to
DCEC see page 8 for
details!. See page 6 for
Membership Information!*

Protect Your Water!

Door County is blessed with scenic bluffs, beautiful wetlands, hardwood forests and nearly pristine streams. However, these ecological features all rest upon, and are interconnected by, a bedrock of fissured dolomite that is peppered with lengthy fractures that can carry pollutants for long distances.

When coupled with Door County's sinkholes, these fractures create a need for special regulations to protect our limited water resources. Since we're currently without these regulations, it's extremely critical for each of us to take steps to protect our own water, especially in view of declining aquifer levels and the increased use of water common in our modern affluent society.

Very often homeowners find out too late that their ground water, or the surface water feeding their streams, has been compromised by the actions of others. This has happened repeatedly in the past and will continue as "more of everything" continues to be the *manifest destiny* of Door County.

Without increased regulations to protect our water resources, homeowners will have to protect themselves.

Some will insist that our water resources are being protected and the problems we hear of are isolated instances, minor violations or of someone not following proper procedures. While this may be true, in part, the homeowner and people using our streams are frequently the losers who are not compensated when their water quality and quantity is diminished.

Unfortunately, in Wisconsin, state statutes allow compensation for groundwater pollution **only** if a municipality owns the water withdrawal source. This means a county, city or town has the obligation of proving the source or origin of pollution and then may seek compensation.

Although this statute is archaic in the real world, it is the best we have and, at a minimum, does create an opportunity for after-the-fact compensation for those municipal water sources.

Homeowners presently have no recourse.

However, new technology exists today and processes are being developed that should enable both municipal wells and *private homeowners* to be able to determine the exact source of a contamination in whatever form it may take.

While much testing is done, and great attention is being given to E-coli in water and its health effects on humans, very little is being done to explore the adverse effects of elevated nutrient levels in our water sources and the streams.

As we all realize, streams are direct conduits to the Lake and Bay where obvious nutrient excesses are adding to the "green stuff" creating a decline in water quality along with the nuisance from the algae.

(please turn to page 7)



DCEC Incorporated in 1971 under the laws of Wisconsin as a nonprofit, tax-exempt corporation

DCEC Scholarship Winner On Duty for Marine Mammals

We've recently been in touch with Kurt Ellison on the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society's (SSCS) vessel the *Farley Mowat*, and we're pleased to report that all is well on his first voyage. At this writing, Kurt should be working on the ice floes of Newfoundland to legally obstruct the clubbing of harp seal pups.

Here's a short bio that the SSCS is running about Kurt on their website, www.seashepherd.org:

Kurt is a freshwater tar [sailor] who grew-up on the shores of Lake Michigan. At an early age he became interested in the lakes and oceans including both the ships that sailed above and the creatures that lived below.

During his college days at the University of Wisconsin-Madison he became involved in environmental and social justice issues and was a student worker at the Madison InfoShop.

While taking an active role in a wide variety of issues Kurt realized that direct action does get the goods, and if you want to question the mass society in which we all exist, it's the only way to even start to stop exploitation in its tracks.

While in-between campaigns and taking some time off before grad school, Adrian [his close friend and current fellow crewmember] talked Kurt into packing his bag to come aboard the *Farley Mowat*. Kurt currently serves as a deckhand, but has been recently eyeing-up the engine room for a new job and some nicer tools.



Kurt R. Ellison, aboard the conservation vessel *Farley Mowat* as she nears the coast of Newfoundland to monitor and observe the annual slaughter of harp seal pups. Ellison is the son of Bob and Maryellen Ellison of Forestville, and a past recipient of a DCEC scholarship.

DCEC 's Annual Essay Contest Begins

All Door County public, private and home-schooled students, 6th through 12th grades, are being challenged once again to compose the best environmental essays of the year by the Door County Environmental Council (DCEC.) This is an annual student essay contest sponsored by the DCEC where students are invited to write an essay of 900 words or less on the topic: *Sources of Phosphorus in Door County Surface and Ground Waters: Its Effect on Our Health and How to Deal with the Problem.*

Cash prizes will be awarded to the top three essays for middle school students and the three top essays for high school students with first, second and third prizes in each category being \$100, \$75 and \$50. Entries will be judged on originality, research, accuracy, neatness and sincerity. The contest is in its 16th year.

Students wishing to submit an essay must mail it to: DCEC Essay Contest, 1916 Viste Road, Sturgeon Bay, WI 54235, postmarked by April 5th. Winners will be notified by

April 20th and will be given their award in a presentation at their respective schools, in conjunction with Earth Day, April 22nd.

Students must include with their essay their name, address, grade, school and phone number. Decisions of the judges are final. All entries become the property of DCEC.

"We're making our biggest effort ever to get the word out to students this year," remarked Jerry Viste, Executive Director of DCEC. "We've always had a gratifying response in past years, but we're hoping an expanded public relations effort will bring us more essays than ever."

This year the DCEC is making a special effort to get contest information and rules into the hands of every student in the county, and they've enlisted the help of several teachers throughout the county to inform county students about the contest.

To receive information about entering, or for further information about DCEC, contact Viste at (920) 743-6003.

DCEC Holds Wind Generation Town Hall Meetings!

The Renewable Energy Task Force (RETF), a sub-committee of the Council, has begun the process of seeking public opinion on the viability of wind generation as a cash crop for landowners here in Door County.

A huge enthusiastic crowd responded to first public information meeting held on February 9th at the Forestville Town Hall in Maplewood. While there was no advance indication of the attendance, the committee was extremely pleased with the crowd of more than 110 people interested in the new prospect for rural income for residents of the County.

The intent of the evening presentation was to educate residents to the possible benefits, and drawbacks, to any possible large-scale wind generation facilities in rural areas and the financial benefits that landowners could gain.

The presenter for the evening, ***John Hippensteel***, Professional Engineer of rural Claybanks, is a knowledgeable wind energy resource person who has been involved with projects all over the United States and many foreign countries. His background with generation systems and photovoltaic energy sources is extensive, making John the logical source of reliable information and the promotional aspects of possible installations here in the county.

He indicated that Wisconsin is lagging behind the surrounding states, in using new technology for electrical generation, while Iowa and Minnesota are among the leaders. Each new fossil fuel plant that is built adds to global warming, and the other adverse effects of coal combustion. Facts known to scientists world-over.

In his presentation John stresses the income that could be kept local if these generation facilities were locally owned, and eventually would become income-producing sources for the owners and landowners that become involved as owners.

A second information and discussion forum is planned for the Baileys Harbor Town Hall on Wednesday, April 13th, beginning at 7 pm with the same program and presentation. A question and answer session will follow the presentation with refreshments afterwards. We anticipate a large attendance again with much valuable insight being gained into the possibility of future wind generation in northern Door.

In these days of high expenses for farm folks, and other landowners, a viable means of creating a new source of



Graceful giants of the landscape: these four are among 31 turbines producing environmentally friendly energy in Kewaunee County, providing income to local farmers and reducing taxes for county residents. ***Should Door County harvest the wind?***

income will help to maintain the present farm operations and keep properties from going on the real estate market.

Hippensteel has indicated that Door County is one of the areas with reliable and constant wind prevalent all seasons during the year, making it a prime area for wind generation. Presently, there are some restrictions in county ordinances governing tower height, effectively keeping out-of-state power developers from being attracted to our area.

Other considerations are the natural location and proximity to existing three-phase major power lines necessary for power connection to the existing grid.

All preliminary indications, from this first of our meetings, were that most attendees were supportive of this new cash crop effort. Those attending from areas where turbines are in place, indicated no serious problems. As always, there are some that have visions of many adverse effects from turbine generation facilities, though when comparing the benefits with the detrimental effects, the benefits are greater in most instances. Recent ozone alerts and global warming are indicators that we are not doing a very good job of maintaining a sustainable planet and some serious changes must be considered for the future.

Build Your Own Rain Garden!

A rain garden is a landscape tool that not only adds colorful accents to your yard but, more environmentally important, filters pollutants from runoff protecting the groundwater. Other assets include providing food and shelter for many interesting birds, butterflies and insects.

Rain gardens are designed to slow down the infiltration of water runoff from either snowmelt or rain storms. The root system of the rain garden plants acts as a natural sponge, slowing down the rate of absorption and filtering out the pollutants.


Building a rain garden is no more difficult than creating a flower bed on your landscape. Choosing the site is crucial to getting the best advantage. Your goal is to slow absorption of runoff. So evaluate your landscape to locate the best site. You may need to direct water to your site with a swale or downspout.

Pick a naturally low spot in your yard that ideally drains from a hard surface, such as a driveway or road, or create an area with these attributes. You can use a rope or garden hose to make the boundary. Call your utility company **Digger's Hotline** to locate any buried utilities. Dig your site to a depth of 6 to 18 inches in the deepest spot creating a saucer shape.

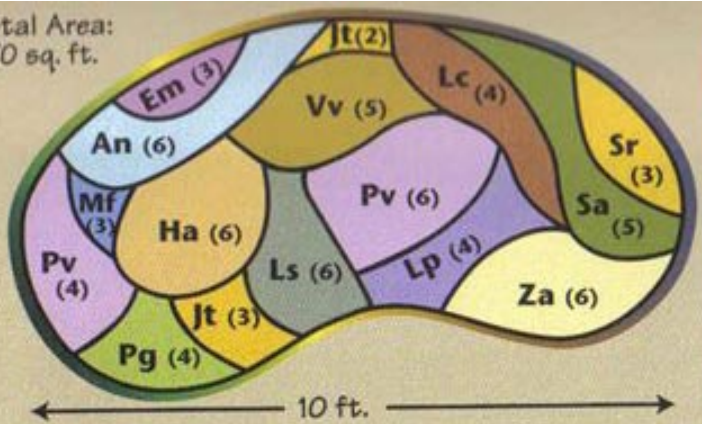
Once the site is prepared, plant it with native plants that are recommended for your soil type. Natives have the advantage of deep root systems and tolerance to a variety of drought and wet conditions.

Use plants that bloom at different times for continual growing season color and winter interest.

RAIN GARDEN: Well-Drained to Sandy Soils



Total Area:
70 sq. ft.



10 ft. 7 ft.

Abbrev.	Common Name	Species Name	No. of Plants	Shopping List	Abbrev.	Common Name	Species Name	No. of Plants	Shopping List
An	New England aster	<i>Aster novae-angliae</i>	6	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pg	Marsh phlox	<i>Phlox glaberrima</i>	4	<input type="checkbox"/>
Em	Spotted Joe-Pye weed	<i>Eupatorium maculatum</i>	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pv	Mountain mint	<i>Pycnanthemum virginianum</i>	10	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ha	Sneezeweed	<i>Helenium autumnale</i>	6	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sa	Green bulrush	<i>Scirpus atrovirens</i>	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jt	Torrey's rush	<i>Juncus torreyi</i>	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sr	Stiff goldenrod	<i>Solidago rigida</i>	3	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lp	Prairie blazing star	<i>Liatris pycnostachya</i>	4	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vv	Culver's root	<i>Veronicastrum virginicum</i>	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lc	Cardinal flower	<i>Lobelia cardinalis</i>	4	<input type="checkbox"/>	Za	Golden Alexander	<i>Zizia aurea</i>	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ls	Great blue lobelia	<i>Lobelia siphilitica</i>	6	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Mf	Wild bergamot	<i>Monarda fistulosa</i>	3	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Total Plants Needed								70	

A few more tips can assure a successful, attractive rain garden:

- Do not apply lawn fertilizers too close to the rain garden. Fertilizers will stimulate weeds and create competition for the native plants.
- Don't worry about mosquitoes. Dragonflies, swallows and birds will take care of them.
- Don't plant your rain garden on top of a septic drain field. This could overload your system.
- Stay at least 10 feet away from a foundation to avoid flooding your basement.
- Place a bird house and comfortable bench nearby so you can enjoy your garden.

GOOD LUCK!

Road Salt—Calcium Chloride/Sodium Chloride

We have grown accustomed to having our roads clear of ice and snow as soon as possible after a storm or snowfall. That is fine for safety and convenience.

We have also become accustomed to having our cars slowly decay long before they have reached the mileage potential of today's modern cars. Recently it has become a commendable adopted procedure to combine road salt with sand. In many instances sand is used alone because of the concerns about excessive salt use.

Historically, we often don't address a problem before it occurs, but are reactive when the damage becomes evident. The limiting of road salt use is a pro-active measure and should continue to be encouraged.

The cumulative effect of these huge amounts of road salt on our surface waters, Bay and Lake, might not be known for some time. This will be a problem that future generations will have to address, when the salinity of our waters has become sufficiently impacted affecting the natural mineral content of the water. When the large bodies of surface water have been changed, the inherent live creatures within that water will either have to adapt, or become endangered—possibly extinct.

You are probably thinking, the amount of salt used on our roads is so miniscule compared to the sheer volume of the Bay and Lake, there is no real reason for concern. Possibly that might be true if these minerals were not cumulative and long-lasting. However, the millions of tons of salt products used on our roads during the snow season extends to ***every major roadway in our State and nation.***

The argument is made by Department of Transportation officials that the vehicle fluids leaked, and road salt used in winter, are absorbed and filtered by the roadside vegetation long before they will

reach a stream and be conveyed into the Bay or Lake. The problem with this reasoning is that the ground is frozen and vegetation is still dormant when the major spring rains come and wash the roads and ditches of the salt residue and other pollutants from vehicles.

It's hard to imagine these materials remaining in place until spring comes, when they can be filtered and absorbed by natural processes. They will have, no doubt, already gone downstream in the spring run-off, becoming a cumulative part of the increase in salinity of our water resources long before seasonal growth begins.

What's the alternative? More use of sanding practices and limiting the amount of chloride products used on our roads, lessening the damage to vehicles and water resources. Give this some serious thought and convey your ideas to your **County Board Representative or the County Highway Committee.**



Spreading the damage?

Do You Love Door County???

Then help us protect it... please.

I support the Door County Environmental Council, working to preserve our heritage of natural resources.
Please enlist me as one of the following: (check enclosed)

<i>Individual Member</i>	<i>\$15</i>	<i>Family Membership</i>	<i>\$25</i>
<i>Student Member</i>	<i>\$10</i>	<i>Sustaining Member</i>	<i>\$35</i>
<i>Guarantor</i>	<i>\$50</i>	<i>Donor</i>	<i>from \$100</i>

Renewal? _____ New Member? _____ Door County Voter? yes _____ no _____

Name _____

Summer Mailing Address _____

Winter Mailing Address _____

E-mail Address and or Fax number _____

Please name your Door County Municipality (town, village or city) _____

All donations are tax deductible to the extent to the law provides.
DCEC is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization.
We supply receipts that meet IRS requirements for your gift of \$250 or more.
Thank you for being part of DCEC!

mail to: **Door County Environmental Council, Inc. P.O. Box 114, Fish Creek, WI 54212**
for more information, call DCEC at 743-6003 email dcec@itol.com

Please contact DCEC if you are interested in volunteering for the Board or special projects.

Visit DCEC on the Internet!
www.dcec.us or
doorcountycompass.com/dcec/

Read the DCEC Column in the *Door Peninsula Voice* (free at many locations.)

Governor James Doyle Room 115E State Capitol Madison WI 53702	Representative Gary Bies PO Box 8952 Madison WI 53708	US Senate Washington DC 20510
Senator Alan Lasee PO Box 7882 Madison WI 53707	WI Senators Russ Feinbold & Herbert Kohl, write them at:	WI Representative Mark Green US House of Representatives Washington DC 20515

DCEC People

TREASURER Pat Harris Fish Creek	Honorary Directors Margaret Cowles Flora Langlois John Wilson Karen Wilson*	STAFF <i>Executive Director</i> Jerry Viste Sturgeon Bay
PRESIDENT Bernice Shumway SisterBay	Tony Haswell Tucson AZ	<i>Membership Coordinator</i> Ray Kostiuik Fish Creek
SECRETARIES Carol Farwell Ephriam	James Ingwersen Sister Bay	<i>Publicity Coordinator</i> Ralph Valatka Sturgeon Bay
1st VICE-PRESIDENT Jon (Fritz) Renner Gibraltar	Sarah Stuart Juddville	
2nd VICE-PRESEIDENT Phyllis Ingwersen SisterBay	Libby Zimmerman Madison	
DIRECTORS Donna Brown Baileys Harbor		

What can you do to ensure a safe and healthful water supply for your family into the future?

First: If you live in an area where a potential threat exists to your ground water, you need to **establish prior base-line data** for your water source.

Potential threats might be: a large cattle operation with the increased waste spreading, a mining operation with direct exposure to the dolomite fissures, being next to any land use that has chemicals, lubricants, fuel storage or any material capable of contaminating water resources.

To establish base-line-data, you will need to have your present water supply tested for possible contaminants that might enter your water supply. This will cost you some money, but the protection this testing affords will far outweigh the costs.

You can have your water tested for nitrates/nitrites, fecal and bacterial contamination, ortho-phosphates, phosphorus, and other contaminants by **Analytichem Laboratory** of Luxemburg, Wisconsin.

Pick up a sample bottle from the County Sanitarian office in the courthouse in Sturgeon Bay. Take an afternoon water sample and mail it directly to the laboratory at N9190 Bay Meadows Lane, Luxemburg, WI 54217. (Call 920-866-3944 in advance for fees for each particular nutrient or bacterial test to arrange for payment. The lab itself is located north of Dykesville.)

The basic tests for bacteria/nitrates will cost \$45. Additional testing is extra. **Analytichem** can do all necessary testing for most contaminants. The results will give you legally-binding documentation, establishing your water's necessary base-line-data, should it become necessary to pursue legal action in the future. You should choose to include this vital information as an integral part of your permanent landowner records.

Second: The simple procedure of obtaining a

documented measurement of the “depth-to-water” in your well would be invaluable to prove the effect of high-volume water withdrawals from your aquifer.

All too often, the claim is made that “my well has gone dry” or needs to be re-drilled after a high usage well goes into production nearby. Any plumber or well-driller can furnish you with a dated and signed document establishing the water level in your well.

Having this information documented can prove invaluable. After-the-fact complaints of diminished supply cannot withstand a legal challenge. They simply can't be proven.

Third: Make aware anyone responsible for an activity that might impact your groundwater, that you have established base-line data documentation for your well and streams and will proceed with legal action, if it becomes necessary.

This can be a powerful deterrent to potential polluters—encouraging that best management practices are followed, proper pollution control measures are installed and remain functional, and that the operation is run in a manner respectful of the rights of surrounding homeowners.

Shore property owners, river frontage owners and users of our inland streams can document the present quality of their precious waters. A coalition of property owners can work cooperatively in getting base-line-data, for the benefit and preservation of these important resources.

Dated base-line test documents of the water quality of streams can be a valuable asset when a challenge is brought for damage done by careless operators and/or intentional abusers.

Again, the knowledge that this information exists can serve as an effective deterrent to those who might not share our concern for Door County's precious water resources.

Jerry Viste, Executive Director
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ROAD SALT.
*How much is too much?
See page five.*

Planning your Estate or Legacy?

***Please Consider
DCEC.***

Many individuals and families are making plans to support volunteer organizations such as DCEC when they legalize their estate and asset transfers.

We have on-going programs such as our *Annual Essay Contest* that could be underwritten by a legacy, or supportive grant, to ensure your funding would receive wide recognition.

The DCEC Endowment Fund, established in 1985, is a growing secure account to ensure the long-range functions of your organization.

Any of these funding allocations would be a welcomed and a dedicated show of support for the environmental protection of our county far into the future.

...and, after you read it, please pass this newsletter along to a friend.