

DCEC Newsletter

Environmental News for Door County



published by:
the door county environmental council, inc.
p.o. box 114, fish creek, wi 54212
www.dcec-wi.org
phone 920-743-6003
fax 920-743-6727
email: info@dcec-wi.org

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Save Big Bucks Saving Energy! Attend Our Feb 20th Forum—Get a Free Gift!

WANT TO SAVE BIG BUCKS on your energy bills? Come to DCEC's first forum on saving money by saving energy. Find out how and get some free gifts to boot!

Being held on Wednesday, February 20th, 6:30 PM **[note new time!]** at Crossroads at Big Creek, our forum will feature speakers from energy providers, and the heating, cooling, and automotive industries. Each representative will give a brief overview of ways to save money by saving energy within their respective fields, followed by a question and answer forum. DCEC President Eileen Andera will moderate the discussion. There is no charge for the event.

"This will be the first time we're providing a free gift as an incentive for people to attend one of our events," said Andera. "We've been putting away 'goodies' for this event as an incentive for people to come out. While the money-saving information that's going to be presented at the forum has value of its own, we thought it'd be additionally valuable to provide some useful give-aways to those attending."

Currently scheduled as presenters at the forum are Melissa Moren, Energy Services Representative from Sturgeon Bay Utilities; and Mike Schinkten, General Manager from Guilette Heating and Air Conditioning. Also scheduled to appear is a representative from the automotive industry.

"People who plan to come should bring lots of questions," continued Andera, "as we are allowing ample time for lots of dialogue with the audience."

"A wise man once said, a penny saved is a penny earned. When it comes to saving on energy with outstanding energy management, we all win. There is more energy to go around and less pollution is created from energy manufacturing. It's the ultimate in sustainable living," concluded Andera.



No Horse Trails for Door Bluff...

At the December meeting of the Door County Park Committee the vote was taken on the issue of horse trails or no horse trails in the pristine Door Bluff Headlands Park, north of Ellison Bay. The vote was tied at two in favor and two opposed, with

Chuck Brann as absent. This resulted in denial of the permission. The request was to establish a few miles of marked and "cleared-for-horses" trail winding through the upper reaches of the park, winding back and forth in close proximity.

Please see "HORSES"—page two



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

Blasting Still Possible for Schauer Park

THE CONROVERSY over blasting/dredging to revitalize the boat launch facility at Schauer Park, south of Jacksonport village is heating up—with the advent of a funded feasibility study. The study, to determine possible actions, was requested to best address the problem of local access to Lake Michigan.

Everyone agrees there is a need for a boating facility, somewhere in the Jacksonport area, to provide access to Lake Michigan for *all* users. The facility must be located with the best interests of the lake's fishery and ecology being balanced with long-term benefits to the entire town of Jacksonport.

Historically, small villages up and down the peninsula have had permanent docks/boat launch facilities located right within those villages. Local business interests have benefited and helped to sustain the importance of each village.

Jacksonport village had dock facilities in the past, but had to deal with storm destruction and constant sand drift complicating the location there. The newer location at Schauer Park has the problem of an exposed rock bottom, for several hundred feet before the water gets deep enough for boating. This problem is not unique to Jacksonport, similar situations exist around the entire Lake Michigan basin and

the other Great Lakes.

The prospect of continual lowering lake levels, predicted by most experts, will further complicate the Schauer Park location. Official charts, at



Lake Michigan waters recede making boating difficult. Note car parked on bedrock!

both locations, show shallow water depth extending far out into the lake—a distance that will increase as water level drops, creating a never-ending need to extend blasting farther into the lake.

The feasibility study may help determine the course of action needed to resolve this problem. DCEC hopes this study will include an in depth examination of the long-term effects on whitefish spawning on the rocky bottom (known to be the preferred spawning areas of adult whitefish in the entire lake). The study should also address the possible transfer of invasive species to Clark Lake, because of its close access.

Still other considerations to be addressed are: possible benefits to all residents of the community, including Jacksonport village, and the impact that unending blasting, dredging and concrete construction could have on the future of this small community on the Lake.

~JMV

Horses *(cont. from page one)*

In 2007, at the request of citizens and the Park Committee, experts from The Nature Conservancy and Land Trust conducted a preliminary survey of exotic and possible threatened plant species.

Unique species were found with further in-depth studies recommended. Findings were documented, by specific species experts, in the preliminary evaluation study. Hopefully, the evaluation effort will continue until all species can be documented and protected as necessary.

Supporters of the proposed horse trail have

done considerable lobbying to influence committee members to concur with their proposal. With spring elections coming, and a potential change in elected members within the County administration, there could be a shift in the philosophy of the park committee in either direction.

It is the wish of DCEC that the original mandate, outlined more than 60 years ago by people with the wisdom to preserve this park, remain as doctrine: That this tiny park “be kept in its natural state” unto the next generations.

~JMV

Urgent Need for Great Lakes Compact Approval NOW!

America's Water Crisis is not being managed.

WITHOUT ARGUMENT, the Great Lakes are one of the most precious resources of Wisconsin and its neighboring states. These lakes provide thousands of us with drinking water and innumerable recreational services. They drive industry and are home to countless native species.

Those of us in Door County, who see Lake Michigan every day, know first-hand that water levels are diminishing. Yet, Lake Michigan and the other four Great Lakes are under constant threat by water-thirsty states who believe states like Wisconsin are "awash in water".

In 2000, a congressman from Texas said, "We aren't going to be buying your water, we will steal it." Unfortunately, many western states now share his desire. They want to tap into our Great Lakes

water resource to feed water shortages caused by their own uncontrolled wasteful water resource practices in the past. As these western states are now realizing, their water resources are diminishing faster and far in excess of anticipated declines. Still, they are making no real efforts at conservation or limiting wasteful uses of this valuable resource.

Many people believe that lake levels will again return to the historic levels of the past. If the experts are correct in their forecasts, these people are wrong. Some will argue that less than normal rainfall and snow amounts have been causing our low lake levels. If you take the time to do some simple mathematics, you will realize that nothing short of major flooding will affect the lake's levels to any great degree. There are too many man-made losses that cannot be compensated for by natural recharge.

For example, the Great Lakes Commission is urging the U.S. and Canadian governments to immediately start on a plan to plug the Saint Clair River "drain hole" outflow from Lakes Michigan and Huron. That river was dredged to a new depth of 27 feet in 1960 and flow dams, underwater "speed bumps" were included in the plan. Those restrictive dams were never put in place, resulting in erosion of the river bottom and increased water flow. The logic at that time was that lake levels were high

and the restrictive dams were not needed—even though the design plan called for them to be installed.

Scientific research indicates there will be a further drop in water levels in the Great Lakes, including Lake Superior, which many assumed was immune from the changes affecting the other lakes. Some predictions indicate a situation that will be disastrous for everyone normally using the lakes for support and recreation.

A hidden benefit, small as it may be, is that these low water levels dramatize the urgency for governments to finally take action and demand that the long-awaited *Great Lakes Compact* be approved by border states and sent to Congress for action. Wisconsin State Senators Cowles and Lehman recently published an article stating they were leading this legislation in Madison. We urge our local District One representatives

to join this effort to protect our Great Lakes water.

DCEC has been actively involved in promoting the *Great Lakes Compact* for more than six years. Little has changed. Three of our *Annual Summer Programs* have focused on this important issue featuring prominent speakers. DCEC's Executive Director participated in recent conferences to facilitate promotion of the *Compact* and to address the issue of changes brought on by low water levels.

We appreciate the effort the *Alliance for the Great Lakes* has shown in providing speakers and other support to assist in this urgent promotion. We applaud the efforts of the Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters to keep this issue before the public. Still, not much has been done to get the state of Wisconsin to approve the *Compact*. All of our legislators need to be involved in making sure that the Great Lakes states do not become victims of political pressure coming very soon from western states.

Let Wisconsin become a leader again, the time for action by Wisconsin is here now, DO IT! ~JMV



The Further Adventures of Kurt Ellison

[Here's our next update on the adventures of DCEC scholarship winner Kurt Ellison. See past DCEC Newsletters at our website for earlier articles— www.dcec-wi.org — we last saw Kurt at the end of his tour of duty on the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society's ship the Farley Mowat, protecting baby seals from the annual "harvest by clubbing" in Newfoundland. He was heading back home to Wisconsin after a six-month voluntary tour of duty.]

Having been at sea several months, in extremely cold conditions, Kurt Ellison was ready for a break. He was returning to Madison where he would rest for a while in the balmy winter weather of Wisconsin before going back to UW graduate school. He was happy for his tour with Captain Paul Watson, the internationally known protector of whales and endangered wildlife.

He would jump at the opportunity to volunteer with Watson again, if finances would ever so permit. But, now he would look for work in the commercial kitchens of Madison and Door County, and get himself back into grad school.

Fate had other plans.

Kurt went to see the 2006 Tall Ships Festival in Milwaukee. One of the ships he toured

Please see "Kurt Ellison"—page four



Kurt Ellison

Failed Septic Systems Big Problem!

Recently DCEC learned that the estimated percentage of failed shore-land properties septic systems is 70%. That's right, *seventy percent!*

This implies that 7 out of 10 privately owned shoreline wastewater systems along the shores of our county may fall under the *failed category*.

To be legitimately classified as failed systems, these existing wastewater systems may:

- be of improper construction or
- be non-functional or non-conforming or
- have a visible effluent discharge or
- be non-compliant in size or location,

Many residences along our shores have systems that were installed many years ago under less stringent requirements in force at that time. Others were installed when there were no guidelines for proper installation or maintenance. Some areas of the County have low-lying shore properties where conventional or mound systems are not acceptable. In other locations there are existing installations where the drainage field cannot possibly function properly because of

soil type or limited size of the property.

It is a fair conclusion that these percentages also could apply to interior home wastewater systems. While the surface/groundwater impact of these failed inland systems is possibly less than that of shore properties, the chances of direct conduit to groundwater are greater because of the underlying fractured dolostone strata and shallow topsoil.

The County Sanitarian's Office is working hard to bring existing home wastewater systems into compliance with current and future standards. This task is a tremendous challenge now, and will be into the future.

We each need to ensure that our own wastewater system is up to standard with current ordinances. You can have a licensed wastewater system installer check your system and help bring it into compliance *before* it becomes an enforcement issue. Consider this: Your own ground-water supply can be at risk if your wastewater system has failed. It makes sense to maintain a properly functioning wastewater treatment system on your property.

~JMV

Kurt Ellison— con't.

was the State of Wisconsin Flagship, the *Sullivan*. While aboard, he happened to see a job posting for a paid deck hand's position.

Given his past interest in social and environmental justice and all things maritime, Kurt dropped off a resume. That was on a Friday. On Wednesday next, he was aboard and working on the daily sailings the vessel was providing for the public in Milwaukee.

In a very short time, Kurt was promoted to third mate. September came, and the *Sullivan* traveled through the St. Lawrence Seaway, down the East Coast, to its winter port in Miami.

The *Sullivan*, a Great Lakes Schooner of 137 feet, seemed a perfect fit for Kurt's strong interest in the environment and the sea. It's primary purpose was that of an educational vessel focusing on maritime history and the environment. While in Miami they would take local students for day sails and conduct workshops on the environment.

In January, they sailed across the Gulf Stream to the Bahamas for some time off for snorkeling. In February, they headed to the Dry Tortugas for more educational classes.

On April 21, the sea would again challenge Kurt Ellison.

At 11:00 pm, on their way back from the Dry Tortugas, with students aboard, the *Sullivan* received a distress signal from a sport fishing boat. The boat had become disabled outside the reefs near Key West in fairly strong winds with waves of six to eight feet. The *Sullivan* switched to motor power to lend assistance.

As 3rd mate, Kurt was a watch officer on duty, manning the

bow of the *Sullivan*. In addition, he was responsible for the safety of all the deck hands and students aboard.

The *Sullivan* was the first vessel on the scene to lend assistance.

What they found was a completely disabled 33-foot cabin cruiser, three men aboard, one seriously injured internally, bleeding from the mouth, unconscious. The other two men were in fair shape, suffering from exposure. All three were rescued from the cabin cruiser by an inflatable fast boat dispatched from the *Sullivan*, the 1st mate standing-by in fins and snorkel in case of a man overboard.

But, during the course of the rocky rescue, the *Sullivan* took a stern blow below the waterline and started taking on water, bilge alarms blaring... just as the Coast Guard's helicopter arrived.

The Coast Guard dropped a rescue swimmer from the helicopter, emergency bilge pumps in hand, to keep the *Sullivan* from sinking. Then, all three victims were lifted onto the helicopter for evacuation.

The *Sullivan* made her way back behind the reefs where they made temporary repairs. After completing major repairs in Key West, they sailed back to Miami.

The students who were along for this adventure were glad to be home, and this experience must have been particularly special to them, Kurt said. "These were all students from the Riverview Beach, Florida, Maritime High School. What a great way to meet the sea!"

We agree, and we'll keep you posted as we continue to follow Kurt's adventures in our environment.

~RJV

What You Can Do for Our Earth

When I calculated my carbon footprint at www.carbonfootprint.com I realized the biggest negative against my score was my transportation. Living in Door County has many benefits, but public transportation is not one of them.

Most of us living here do a lot of driving up and down the peninsula for work, meetings, the arts, recreation and whatever else. Like most Americans living in rural areas, we depend on our cars and trucks to get around.

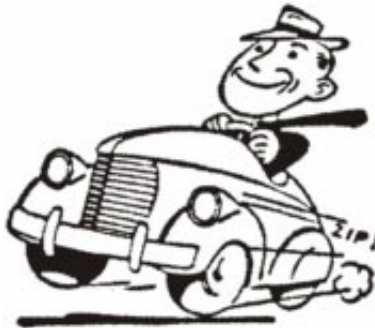
So, short of relocating to a big city with efficient public transportation, here are some tips to increase your mileage that will reduce your carbon dioxide emissions and also save you money.

Drive the speed limit. — With gas at \$3.00+ a gallon, you can save 15% on fuel economy. That's 45 cents a gallon, if you drive 55 mph instead of 65 mph. That's like paying \$2.55 a gallon! Slow down and reduce your carbon footprint.

Check your tires. — Under-inflated tires are a drag on your car. This reduces your mileage. Have your mechanic check your tire pressure and show you how to do it yourself. Then check them monthly. Properly inflated tires can improve your fuel economy by up to 6%.

Relax your foot — Accelerate slowly, avoiding jackrabbit starts. Flooring the gas pedal wastes gas. Calm down.

Keep your *James Dean* impression at home and improve your gas mileage up to 31%. (www.edmunds.com/fueleconomy)



Don't idle —If you are stuck in a long line for over 2 minutes—like waiting for a drawbridge to raise and lower—turn off your engine and enjoy the show of boats floating past.

Carpool — Chances are, there is somebody else going to that meeting or show you are headed to. So, share the ride and enjoy the camaraderie.

Combine errands — Rather than making individual trips to and from home for your errands, combine your banking, haircut, groceries, library and

meetings into one trip.

New car — When buying a car, consider one that gets better mileage. Assess your needs and downsize if possible. For a list of cars, their fuel costs and mileage go to www.fueleconomy.gov

Light trucks and passenger cars accounted for 21% of Wisconsin's carbon dioxide emissions in 2005. Every little bit we each can do to reduce those emissions will help, not only our wallets, but our planet, too!

Eileen Andera DCEC President

DCEC Will Help You Dispose of Your old CFLs

DCEC encourages everybody to discontinue use of the old incandescent light bulbs and switch to the cork-screw shaped compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs)—not only because they last 6 to 19 times longer, but because they use 75% less electricity to operate. This is a simple, yet very effective, way to reduce global warming pollution that everybody can do in his or her own household.

One thing to keep in mind when bulbs finally do burn out is proper disposal. Because the bulbs contain a tiny bead of mercury in the glass tubing, they are considered hazardous waste and should not just be thrown out in the garbage.

Since DCEC is promoting the use of CFLs, we will also be collecting burnt out, unbroken bulbs for proper disposal, and we will bear the cost of that disposal (25-cents per bulb.) Our collection box will be at all our public presentations throughout the year, starting with our February 20th forum at Crossroads at Big Creek in Sturgeon Bay.

[See cover story—page one] Just bring in burnt out bulbs,

preferably in the box from the new bulbs you bought as replacements, and them into our CFL recycle box. DCEC will take them into the hazardous-waste recycling program that Sturgeon Bay Utilities conducts quarterly.

A word of caution...

These CFLs are just like the mercury vapor lights you see as farmyard lights and some streetlights. If they are broken or shattered, they will emit a dangerous mercury vapor into the air. If you break one, the EPA recommends opening nearby windows to ventilate and carefully sweeping up the fragments with a broom. Then, follow up with a damp paper towel. **DO NOT USE A VACUUM**

CLEANER, as it will blow the vapors around. Place all fragments, wrapped, into a sealed plastic bag and place it in your trash.

~EA



Bullets & Gobies—in Your Lake Michigan!

Bullets

A lawsuit is targeting the FBI's shooting range in North Chicago, seeking to halt the discharge of lead bullets into Lake Michigan over pollution concerns. The lawsuit accuses them of damage to natural resources and causing a government-created public nuisance. The U.S. Justice Department, Coast Guard, Navy, Marines and Department of Defense were named as defendants in the lawsuit, filed Monday, January 14th, in U.S. District Court in Chicago.

Steven Pollack, attorney and executive director of Blue Eco Legal Council in Northbrook, Illinois, who filed the suit, said the lawsuit seeks a court order barring the FBI from firing the ammunition into Lake Michigan because of possible environmental contamination, especially to North Chicago's water supply. The city's public water intake pipe is within the 2,900 acres of Lake Michigan assigned to the firing range. The lawsuit, also asks the court to order a cleanup of spent shells possibly costing more than \$35 million.

The military used this firing range as a training facility before World War I. At the end of World War II, the range was deeded to the FBI to train agents and local police officers. The practice, according to the lawsuit, violates federal and state laws set out in the *Clean Water Act* and other statutes designed to protect environmental and human health.

Information received from the Justice Department, through the Freedom of Information Act, indicated the North Chicago firing range was designed to use 2,900 acres of Lake Michigan for its facility. (Officials also estimated 650,000 rounds of ammunition are fired at the range *each year* by approximately 2,500 law-enforcement agents.)

Gobies

Invasive species have become a huge problem for the Great Lakes. A new one is discovered, on average, about every six months. Research shows that the overwhelming majority of invasions in the past few decades have come via ocean-going vessels. They include zebra and quagga mussels, as well as round

gobies—a bug-eyed fish that feasts on the eggs of native Great Lakes fish species

The United States requires seaway-bound oceangoing vessels to exchange their ballast water in mid-sea. But most ships are exempt from these regulations because they are loaded with cargo and do not officially carry ballast water in their tanks. These tanks, though technically empty, can still carry residual amounts of water and muck, both having been found to support foreign creatures.

To curtail the influx of invasive species into the Great Lakes, the federal government wants ocean-going ships using the St. Lawrence Seaway to flush even empty ballast tanks with saltwater to kill stowaway organisms. The tank cleanout would have to take place 200 nautical miles from any North American shore. (U.S. and Canadian ships would not be affected by the rule.)

Disinfecting ballast water in ocean freighters may not keep the ships from importing more foreign species into the Great Lakes, according to a new study. The reason: Some foreign species enter the lakes on hulls of ocean freighters, according to a study by University of Notre Dame biologists John Drake and David Lodge.

The scientists claim the problem, called "hull fouling" or "biofouling," may pose as serious a threat to the Great Lakes as exotic species imported in a freighter's ballast water tank. "Overall invasion risk from biofouling may be comparable or exceed that of ballast water discharge," Drake and Lodge said in an article published recently in the scientific journal *Aquatic Invasions*.

There is no easy solution to either of these problems. The approved way of conducting training operations in the past has been negated by current technology and must be changed for reasons of water resource protection. Shipping interests also need to be brought into compliance with common sense practices, to preclude further degradation of our precious Great Lakes resource base. These are both urgent issues and immediate action is a mandate.

~JMV

Going Garbage Gets Going with Seminars

Responding to a variety of questions that the company routinely receives about issues such as recycling, hazardous waste, and composting—as well as taking interest in many environmental issues that have the ability to affect Door County communities and their families, *Going Garbage and Recycling Inc* of Sister Bay has formed an Environmental Speaker Series. The series will be held in the Sister Bay Fire Station in Sister Bay on the second Wednesday of every month, January through May at 7:00 pm.

"We wanted to create a speaker series because we believe in advocacy," says Christi Decker, who co-owns *Going Garbage* with her husband Jeff Johnson. "There are so many questions that we get asked that we don't always know the answers to, or that we would like to know ourselves. The speakers who have graciously agreed to come and speak are some of the most knowledgeable in their field in the State of Wisconsin, and we are excited to bring this caliber of knowledge about these issues to the Door County community."

The rest of the *Going Garbage Environmental Series* is still being firmed up for the rest of the winter and spring, and will

include a speaker from the *Travel Green Wisconsin* program, Wess Damro from the *Brown County Recycling Center* will discuss the proper disposal of hazardous waste. Marcy McGrath from the *Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources* will talk about the fundamentals of composting. *Friends of Gibraltar* coordinator and lifelong outdoor educator, Vinni Chomeau, will speak about reconnecting children with the outdoors.

For more information on the *Going Garbage Environmental Speaker Series* please call Christi Decker at (920) 854-2114.

Going Garbage Seminar Schedule

Feb 13th	Growing Greener Kids
March 12th	Travel Green Wisconsin
April 9th	Composting 101+
May 14th	Hazardous Waste

My Door County Water in 10 years?



Not If You Can Help It!

If you're not already a member, please consider joining DCEC today. Help preserve the quality of the peninsula we love for now and for generations to come. Thank You.

dcec membership application

- \$25 Individual \$35 Family \$50 Sustaining
 \$100 Donor \$_____ Other \$15 Student/Limited

This amount would really help! Thanks!

Name(s) _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
 Phone: _____ Door County voter? () yes () no
 Township or Municipality: _____
 Email: _____

Summer mailing address, if different:

Address: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
 Phone: _____

Please mail to: DCEC, P.O. Box 114, Fish Creek, WI 54212

Annual Memberships Now Due

REMINDER: Your membership in DCEC runs with the calendar year with renewals happening every January. New members joining at or after our Annual Summer Program in August get their following calendar year's dues included with their membership.

Your Elected Officials



GOVERNOR James Doyle
 115 East State Capitol, Madison WI 53702
 (608) 266-1212 • governor@wisconsin.gov

STATE SENATOR Alan Lasee
 130 South State Capitol, Madison WI 53702
 (608) 266-3512 • Sen.lasee@legis.wisconsin.gov

STATE ASSEMBLY Garey Bies
 125 West State Capitol, Madison WI 53708
 (608) 266-5350 • Rep.bies@legis.wisconsin.gov

US SENATOR Russ Feingold
 505 Hart Senate Bldg., Washington DC 20510-4904
 (202) 224-5323 • russell_feingold@feingold.senate.gov

US SENATOR Herb Kohl
 330 Hart Senate Bldg., Washington DC 20510-4903
 (202) 224-5653 • http://kohl.senate.gov/gen_contact

US CONGRESSMAN Steve Kagan
 1232 Longworth House Office Building
 Washington DC 20515-4908
 (202) 225-5665
http://kagen.house.gov/IMA/issue_subscribe.htm

[Ed. Note: visit <http://www.vote-smart.org> if you don't vote in Door County Just enter your zip code and they'll display all of your elected representatives with links to detailed fact sheets and contact information about every one]

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door county
environmental council, inc.
p.o. box 114
fish creek, wi 54212

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Save Big Bucks on Energy!
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0108



**Save Big Bucks
Saving Energy!**

Find Out February 20th!

Crossroads at Big Creek

Michigan St East of Hwy 42-57

6:30 PM (new time)

Join us for the first of DCEC's seminars this season and find out how to save "oodles" of money on your energy costs. Scheduled to present are:

Melissa Moren

Sturgeon Bay Utilities

Mike Schinkten

Guillette Heating & AC

Chum Nault

Jim Olson Motors

Wednesday, Feb 20th, 6:30 PM

Free Gift to All Who Attend!

Bring your burned out compact fluorescents for free disposal!

The DCEC Endowment Fund

THE *DCEC ENDOWMENT FUND* EXISTS to fund the activities of the Door County Environmental Council far into the future.

Every year that the fund grows is one year sooner that DCEC can devote our efforts exclusively to protecting our county's beautiful environment.

You can help this important fund grow even faster by remembering DCEC in your estate. This has become easier with the recent federal law allowing donors to transfer IRA balances *without first paying federal income taxes* on those amounts. (Consult your financial advisor, please.)

So, whether you can contribute now or later, please make a point of supporting the *DCEC Endowment Fund*.

Legacies, memorials and direct gifts are all deeply appreciated. Please call, or have your advisor call, Jerry Viste at (920) 743-6003 for further information. Donate directly online at <http://www.dcec-wi.org> the official website of DCEC.

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