



The Door County Environmental Council

SPRING 2015

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Environmental News for Door County

"To foster the preservation of Door County's rich heritage of natural resources...for the health, welfare and spiritual uplift not only of its inhabitants, but for generations to come."

Who's On First? Door Bluff Headlands EAB Progress Unclear

We're confused!! As you may recall from previous newsletters, last year the Door County Airports & Parks Committee (A&P Committee) dusted off a seven year old DNR Stewardship Plan for a timber harvest in Door Bluff Headlands Park, a county park unique in its dedication as a nature sanctuary rather than a nice place to have a picnic, swim, or camp.

After much sincere public outcry, the A&P Committee revisited the issue this January. From the minutes:
Motion by J. Gunnlaugsson, second K. Fisher to forgo any and all potential tree harvesting at this time, and to evaluate the management plan and to work with all citizens specifically Liberty Grove to develop a long range Door Bluff Headlands Park plan suitable to full fill (sic) educational experiences and viable sustainability of the forest. Motion carried.

Then in April, after some comments highlighting "at this time" in the previous motion, the A&P Committee changed course. From those minutes:
Motion by J. Gunnlaugsson, seconded by K. Fisher to have Erik (Aleson) Park & Airport Director, Richard Virlee Airport &

Parks Chairman, Grant Thomas Corporation Counsel, Dan Austad County Board Chairman collaborate on a list of 7 members for Ad Hoc Committee of volunteers to address concerns for a Door Bluff Headlands Management Plan and report back to the Airport & Parks Committee. Prepare a resolution to form this committee and send on a future County Board meeting. Motion carried.

But there's more! At the May meeting, following discussion and a motion by the A&P Committee, they decided *NOT* to form the ad hoc committee for Door Bluff Headlands Park.

Without any input from citizens and others attending, the Committee felt that since the Door County Invasive Species Team (DCIST) was already investigating the emerald ash borer issue and the DCIST was comprised of a diverse group of qualified individuals (DC Soil and Water, DNR, Land Trust, Nature Conservancy, etc.) creating another advisory group for Headlands Park was a duplication of efforts.

Is it? Where is the evaluation of the management plan and working with all

citizens, specifically Liberty Grove, to develop a long range Door Bluff Headlands Park plan? DCEC asked for comment on this article from the government officials involved, but there was no response by press time.

Apparently unannounced, the DCIST “Emerald Ash Borer Working Group” held its first meeting March 19th. A cynic might think that some folks in county government had just enough time to gin up a group, reserve a room, and have a meeting just in time to say, “Hey, we’re already doing that EAB stuff at DCIST.” But, you have to ask yourself: “Why?”

Manure Still a Threat

Door Peninsula Safe Water?

Spring is in the air and another season is upon us. Manure is also in the air and it is being spread upon the newly thawed ground. One can sense an “air of hope” drifting on the breeze—hope that events that occurred last season will not be repeated.

Last season, two major incidents occurred. One involving a manure lagoon leaking 640,000 gallons of liquid manure into a Southern Door stream. The other involved the erroneous spreading of liquid manure directly into a sinkhole which contaminated 12 families’ wells in Jacksonport and Egg Harbor, causing adults, children and pets to fall ill.

These events are a piece of a much larger and growing threat. The Door and Kewaunee Counties’ shallow soil depth and karst geology are not capable of absorbing or filtering large amounts of liquids carrying toxic or pathogenic substances. A result can be that those dangerous

substances will pass into the groundwater, our drinking water. Manure is not the only source of pollution, but it is the one source that is growing at a rapid rate and requires our attention. Confined animal feeding operations (CAFOs) are growing in size and number in Kewaunee County, while the acreage of land available for manure spreading is not. So as a consequence, these CAFOs are now transporting their manure (nutrient waste) into Door County to be spread on available, but not geologically safe, land.

Since those incidents, Door County residents have met in town meetings and have learned a number of things including:

1. Door and Kewaunee County’s karst topography is neither suitable nor safe for excessive manure spreading--especially liquid manure, which runs quickly into the aquifer where there is limited soil and where the bedrock fractures are deeper. *One in three* wells are now contaminated in Kewaunee County. In general, residents learned, that any well in Door County, if tested throughout the year, could test positive for contaminants roughly one third of the time.
2. Land owners who choose to rent their land to farmers may share some liability for activities taking place on that land. Land owners should be advised that they can create their own “rules” stating what may or may not be done to their land in their rental contract.
3. The Door County Soil and Water Conservation Dept. (SWCD) has the task of enforcing agricultural regulations. They have recently stepped up their efforts to review the Nutrient Management Plans (NMPs) created by farm owners. According to the SWCD, out of eight NMPs reviewed, all eight

were found to be inaccurate and some misrepresented the truth. The SWCD also helps farmers create NMPs and provides computer programs to assist in the process. This program unfortunately has some glitches, creating frustration for the farmers trying to abide by the NMP rules.

4. The SWCD has the authority to enforce the NMP rules but lacks the manpower to “keep an eye on everyone, all the time,” says Bill Schuster. To avoid any further contamination of wells, NMPs need to be monitored and willingly adhered to by each farmer.
5. As far as any meaningful legislation to help the situation? At this time that seems to be a pipe dream. The current State Budget Proposal calls for deep cuts in the DNR’s personnel – the very people who are responsible for studying and advising the state on issues of Wisconsin’s air and water quality.

In an effort to reduce health issues caused by manure spreading, several townships have adopted policies banning central pivot spraying methods which send liquid manure into the wind which carries toxic substances beyond the borders of the intended field. Kewaunee County has also adopted a policy of “no spreading dates” from Jan. 1 through April 15 to keep manure off frozen fields that cannot absorb. However, this ordinance does nothing for massive spreading on April 16th. It is possible that without special attention by the legislature, the residents of Door County may eventually be forced to install costly UV treatment systems in their homes to ensure safe water for their families.

Several ideas that can help have been suggested. A microbiologist from UW-Madison is working on an early warning system to notify residents if their ground water was in jeopardy. Other ideas include

sustainable farming techniques like building hedgerows to reduce field runoff, rotating crops to build stronger soils, banning liquid manure application, and removing drain pipes that divert toxic runoff into ditches.

For this 2015 season, a lot is expected from farmers and more accountability will be enforced by local authorities. *But the fact remains that the quality of our water will be at risk.* ONLY through everyone’s attention, education, involvement, and actions will clean water be maintained. Please contact your Congressmen, your state representatives, your SWCD, and find out what you can do to ensure the safety of your drinking water. The best thing to do this year is have your well tested.

Southern Door Testing

What’s In *Your* Drinking Water?

The Door County Environmental Council has introduced, coordinated, and promoted the U.W. Stevens Point Residential Well Water Testing Program to all of northern Door County. Over the past five years all seven northern Door towns have participated in the water testing program. This year, the southern Door towns of Clay Banks, Forestville and Nasewaupée and the Village of Forestville will participate in the program as well.

The following dates are tentative and need to be confirmed by the participating communities. But here is how we believe it will work:

- Residents who wish to participate need to register by June 30 by calling their respective town office.
- The participants will need to pick up their test bottle sometime during

town business hours the week of July 13. At that time, they will need to decide on their choice of test package and pay in advance.

- Then, on Monday, July 20, 2015, the participants will need to collect their water samples and bring them to their town office between the hours of 8 am and 4 pm.

The individual test results are strictly confidential and will be mailed to each participant approximately four weeks after they submit their samples. The public will then have an opportunity to attend a community wide educational program, at a date yet to be determined. There, U.W. water quality specialists will discuss how to interpret results and talk about overall water quality for the Towns of Clay Banks, Forestville, Nasewaupee and the Village of Forestville.

The three test options available are:

- **HOMEOWNERS PACKAGE - \$49.** Includes tests for nitrate and coliform bacteria, the two most important tests to perform on a private well, as well as pH, alkalinity, hardness, conductivity, corrosivity and chloride.
- **METALS PACKAGE - \$45.** Tests for arsenic, lead, copper, iron, zinc, calcium, magnesium, manganese, sodium, potassium and sulfate.
- **DACT SCREEN - \$27.** A screening for diaminochlorotriazine (DACT), which is a breakdown of the commonly used corn herbicide atrazine.

DCEC encourages homeowners to choose all three tests at a reduced rate of \$110. The northern Door participants have been very satisfied with the program. Interested residents should call their Town Clerk with

questions regarding registration and/or testing, bottle pick, and payment.

What a great way to find out what is in your drinking water!

Dark Skies Initiative for Newport State Park

Newport State Park could, with YOUR help, acquire the coveted status of an International Dark-Sky Association Dark Sky Park—the first in Wisconsin! It is not easy to get this designation and the folks at Door Peninsula Astronomical Society have worked hard in difficult weather doing photometry to verify that the park is relatively free of light pollution.

Here's what you can do to help: Write a letter indicating that you as an individual, or your organization, support this, to Michelle Hefty at Newport State park at Michelle.Hefty@wisconsin.gov. Or send it by snail mail to Newport State Park, 475 County Road NP, Ellison Bay, WI 54210.

Bottom line: you want to preserve the rare places where children can see the wonders of the universe with just their eyes, up close and personal. It's better than TV. There is no substitute.

--From an April 26, Facebook Post from Holly Erskine.

Don't miss the **SUSTAINABLE LIVING FAIR**, June 5-6, 2015 at Crossroads & Heritage Village at Big Creek!! *Stewardship today for a better tomorrow* with FREE entry, food, music, & demonstrations. Kick-off June 5 at 6:30 p.m. focusing on our own Niagara Escarpment! Plus activities all-day June 6 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

ASIAN CARP THREAT IS REAL AND URGENT

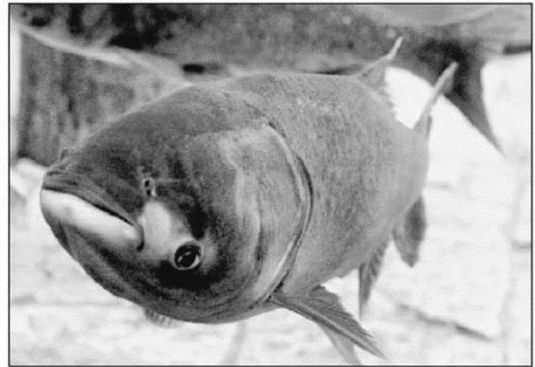
Door County is blessed to be surrounded by fresh water. Lake Michigan and the Bay of Green Bay, are part of the phenomenal Great Lakes natural resource which Asian carp are now threatening.

What is the Door County Environmental Council doing about this threat? **At 7:00 pm on September 9, 2015, DCEC will host a program on Asian carp at the Baileys Harbor Town Hall.** The program will feature two great speakers; Mark Smith and George Meyer. You may remember George Meyer as Wisconsin's former DNR Secretary from 1993-2001. Mark Smith is the National Wildlife Federation's Policy Director.

Our speakers will bring us the latest news on efforts to stop the carp invasion. They believe, as we do, that even though Asian carp DNA was recently found in waters near Chicago, it is not too late to keep these menacing fish from establishing breeding populations in Lake Michigan and the other Great Lakes. We hope you will attend this informative presentation, and join DCEC and the National Wildlife Federation in the fight for our lakes, people, wildlife, and economic well-being. The program is free and open to the public.

The Great Lakes are really a network of five inland freshwater seas that span 94,000 square miles of surface area. They contain 20% of all surface freshwater on the earth and comprise the world's largest fresh water ecosystem. The five lakes, Superior, Michigan, Huron, Erie, and Ontario, provide drinking water for 25 million people, support a \$7 billion fishery, and are an integral part of North America's cultural

AQUATIC PEST



ASSOCIATED PRESS

- Lower-set eye, large upturned mouth without barbs.
- Scaleless head; body scales are very small.
- Adults may weigh more than 85 lbs. and be 4 feet in length.
- Voracious feeders. They eat native fish and destroy their habitat.
- Silver carp, one of four species of Asian carp, are sensitive to motor vibrations of boats. The vibrations make them leap out of water, occasionally injuring boaters. It is compared to being hit with a thrown bowling ball.
- They have been described as the poster child of invasive species.

THE BLADE

and economic well-being. They are the foundation of Door County's economy, heritage, and way of life.

Asian carp represent one of the greatest threats to the Great Lakes in decades. They are now poised to enter the Great Lakes. DNA evidence of the presence of Asian carp has been discovered in Lake Michigan, near Chicago, and a live bighead Asian carp was captured in Lake Calumet, also near Chicago. These incidents highlight the

urgent need to stop Asian carp now, before they infiltrate Lake Michigan and all of the Great Lakes. The carp could be catastrophic for Door County and for the millions of people who depend on the lakes for their jobs and way of life.

Asian carp in the Great Lakes will take a huge bite out of the food chain that supports the lakes' \$7 billion fishery. They will drive out native fish and decimate other aquatic life in the lakes and their many tributaries. The carp leap out of the water when disturbed by the sound of boat motors, endangering boaters and anglers. Can you imagine the possible injury to a water skier or someone on a jet ski? What would the arrival of Asian carp do to tourism in Door County? What effect would it have on jobs and property values? There is no doubt the presence of Asian carp would disrupt the region's \$16 billion recreational boating industry and have a devastating economic toll on Door County.

So you may ask, where did these carp come from and how do they get to Door County? Asian carp were imported to Arkansas in the 1960s to control algae in commercial catfish farms. The fish escaped into the Mississippi River during a 1993 flood and spread to the Illinois River and the Chicago waterway system, which is a series of manmade canals that carry Chicago's sewage to the Mississippi River. Those canals link the Great Lakes and Mississippi River watersheds creating a pathway for Asian carp. Without swift action, the massive fish will invade Lake Michigan and the Bay of Green Bay, and spread throughout the Great Lakes.

So, what can be done to stop this invader? The best defense is building a physical barrier that separates the Great Lakes from the Mississippi River. If done right, separation will involve smart, well-planned

investments that will establish new infrastructure in the Chicago area that make the region more globally competitive and upgrade treatment of wastewater and storm water.

Please make your voice heard. Tell your Congressional representatives to direct the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to begin working on projects in the Chicago waterway system that immediately reduce the risk of Asian carp from entering the Great Lakes. At the same time, the Corps must work to build a system of control points and barriers that permanently prevents transfer of Asian carp and other invasive species to the Great Lakes from the Mississippi River (and vice versa). It is time we close the gate on this "superhighway" not only for Asian carp, but other invasive species as well. For example, the zebra mussel utilized the Chicago canal system to spread as far west as Nevada.

--Condensed and adapted from an article and information provided by the National Wildlife Federation.

Microbead Ban Bill Awaits Governor's Signature

Wisconsin Senate Bill 15, to ban manufacturing and selling personal care products containing "synthetic plastic microbeads," passed its final legislative hurdle on April 21. When the legislature *officially* transmits SB 15 to Governor Walker, he has six days in which to sign or veto the bill.

If signed (which is expected), the bill will ban the manufacture of personal care products containing microbeads beginning Dec. 31, 2017 except for over-the-counter drugs. Selling personal care products or manufacturing drugs with microbeads is

prohibited as of Dec. 31, 2018. Finally, the bill bans the sale of over-the-counter drugs with microbeads as of the end of 2019.

Illinois was the first state to enact a ban, followed by New Jersey and Indiana. Microbeads, tiny non-biodegradable plastic particles, are commonly found in body wash and toothpaste and pose a threat to commercial fisheries and human health. SB 15 was originally introduced by Sen. Rob Cowles of Green Bay and co-authored in the Assembly by Representative Joel Kitchens of Sturgeon Bay.

Rep. Kitchens says the state is trying to be at the forefront of protecting the Great Lakes. "Microbeads have proven to be a serious problem as we have found large quantities of them accumulated in Wisconsin's inland lakes and streams as well as the Great Lakes," said Rep. Kitchens. "This is an issue that affects us all, so it is good to see legislators on both sides of the aisle coming together in support of this bill."

Clean Wisconsin says mounting evidence shows these tiny plastic particles are becoming more numerous in the Great Lakes. Microbeads are used in body scrubs and toothpaste. They can pass through wastewater treatment plants and enter waterways, aquatic life and human bodies. Once there, they keep adding up because they don't easily break down. Recent research suggests an average of 17,000 microbeads per square kilometer in Lake Michigan. Their chemicals can harm digestive systems of fish, cause other abnormalities and also pose problems higher up the food chain.

While in most states the time for the governor's signature is counted from the date of the bill's final passage, in Wisconsin the six-day period (excluding Sunday)

begins with *official* receipt of the bill by the governor's office. This allows the governor to consider proposed legislation in a more orderly fashion. If the governor fails to act on a bill (which is unusual in Wisconsin), the bill becomes law without his signature.

Viste Retirement Party June 14!

As we announced in our last newsletter, Jerry Viste, Door County Environmental



Council's long-serving Executive Director, retired on February 1. We are pleased to announce that his retirement party will be held **on Sunday June 14, at the Crossroads at Big Creek from 1 to 4 p.m.**

featuring coffee, wine, cheese plates, and cake. Please mark your calendars and plan on attending this send-off to one of Door County's most highly-regarded environmentalists!

Sturgeon Bay West Side Waterfront Project and the Public Trust Doctrine

BREAKING! May 8, The Midwest Environmental Advocates hand delivered a letter regarding the City of Sturgeon Bay West Side Waterfront Project Public Trust Issues to Attorneys Correll and Kavanaugh of the DNR's Bureau of Legal Services.

It states in part, "The purpose of this letter is to provide the Department with available evidence of the extension of the natural shoreline of the Hotel Parcel by filling. We believe this evidence incontrovertibly shows that a significant portion of the lands

underlying the hotel building footprint were submerged lakebed at the time of Statehood. The city's proposed conveyance of these lands for private development would clearly violate the public trust doctrine." (Emphasis added.) Stay tuned.

LOCAL BUSINESSES DOING GOOD!

Ecology Sports Lives Up to Its Name with Travel Green



Of 55 Door County businesses certified under Wisconsin's Travel Green program, there are only a handful retailers like Ecology Sports in Sister Bay. As its name asserts, Ecology Sports' incentive is to "get back to a more natural environment and improve quality in living."

"We have been Travel Green certified for about seven years. It's valuable for us and for the State of Wisconsin," said store owner Alicia Kersebet.

Ecology Sports came to Sister Bay in 1984 and moved to its current location on the north end of town in 1999. Kersebet, whose parents started the original store in their

Manitowoc basement in 1972, said "both my parents were educators and wanted to expose people, particularly young people, to the wonders of nature."

"We decided to participate in Travel Green because it is important for our store and is a gentle reminder to every one of the things we should do every day for our environment. With our focus on travel, nature and the outdoors, it is a perfect fit," she said.

She added that "most of our merchandise emphasizes environmental awareness, particularly our clothing and books. About 75% of our clothing is organic cotton and we are working to get to 100% of clothing being in sustainable fibers. We also look for merchandise that is easy care and can be used for multiple seasons and years."



The Department of Tourism (DOT) initiated Travel Green Wisconsin in 2006 to promote smart, environmentally friendly business practices. The program was the first state-sponsored sustainable travel green certification in the nation and has become a model for sustainable travel efforts. The Travel Green program, which now boasts 550 participants state-wide, has its roots in Wisconsin's heritage of stewardship. By participating, businesses and tourists are supporting the principles of Wisconsin's John Muir, Aldo Leopold and Gaylord Nelson.

Kersebet likes the fact that Travel Green helps to uphold this Wisconsin tradition of environmental education, which is also consistent with her parents' original goals for the store as well as her own. "We are so fortunate to be where we are," she says.

To earn the Green certification, applicants must complete the detailed 19-page Travel Green Wisconsin application with nine categories ranging from Purchasing to Energy Efficiency to Air Quality. There is a \$95 initial application fee (which is now pro-rated depending on month of application) and a \$95 biennial renewal which allows the program to be self-funded, even in the face of recent proposed budget cuts.

DOT's Travel Green marketing specialist, Christina Torkelson, said "Door County really does an amazing job of promoting this program." Door County alone has 10% of the certified businesses in the state, including many accommodations. According to a TripAdvisor survey at the end of 2012, 79% of travelers from 26 countries placed importance on hotels implementing eco-friendly practices.

The Green application collects baseline performance for the amount of energy, fuel, water, and solid waste the business consumed during the last calendar year. This allows the applicant to measure their improvements. Applicants commit to sustainable green business practices found within Travel Green Wisconsin. Continual improvement and education on the environment is strongly encouraged. To create a green program comprehensive enough to be relevant across the diverse tourism industry, the DOT decided to allow participants to be "ecopreneurial" and adopt the green practices that made the most sense for their type of operation.

Ecology Sports can be found at 10904 Highway 42 in Sister Bay or call 1-800-274-6731. A list of all Travel Green businesses, as well as information on how to become certified, may be found at <http://www.travelwisconsin.com/experience-fun/travel-green-wisconsin>.

Or call Torkelson at (608) 266-1238.

MORE LOCAL BUSINESSES DOING GOOD!

Sisulak Nominated for National Arts Sustainability Award

Door County's own Mary Ellen Sisulak, owner of the Turtle Ridge Gallery in Ellison Bay, was one of only 21 artists nominated for the first "Honoring the Future Sustainability Award" at the 2015 Smithsonian Craft Show. Widely regarded as the most prestigious juried show of



American fine craft, the Smithsonian Craft Show was held April 23 - 26 at the National Building Museum in Washington, D.C.

Sisulak said that she strives "to use the most

eco-friendly materials & techniques: starting with my SIP building, heated with a water heater. Vegetable extracts such as rhubarb and oak are employed in the production of the German and Italian vegetable leathers that I use."

The award recognizes an artist whose work educates the public about climate change or inspires or models a sustainable response to climate change. "Climate-change art is a rapidly growing field. These pioneering

artists make environmental concern part of the artistic design or process. They are true cultural leaders who deserve recognition,” said Fran Dubrowski, Project Director of Honoring the Future.

The 2015 Craft Show featured the work of 121 artists, chosen from a pool of 1,100+ applicants. In addition to Sisulak, artists Wence and Sandra Martinez of the Martinez Studio in Jacksonport were also juried into the show. The Smithsonian announced the Sustainability Award

winner, Leah Evans of Evans Textile Work in Madison, WI at the show’s preview night on April 22.

The new Award is the result of a partnership between Honoring the Future and the Smithsonian Women’s Committee. Honoring the Future is a nonprofit project dedicated to harnessing the power of art to educate, empower, and engage the public on climate change.

The Old Ash Tree



The cosmic tree of nine worlds or planes of the multiverse is Yggdrasil*, Goddess of the North, who existed even before Odin came from the East. This axis mundi or pillar at the center of the Norse world is described as a giant ash tree, holding together all parts of the universe and serving as a symbol for a dynamic cosmos, including heaven, earth and the underworld. She has never had it easy.

Her latest threat is the Emerald Ash Borer. For untold ages she has suffered not only four stags devouring her foliage, but also a huge serpent gnawing at her roots whose endless conversations with a great eagle nested atop her highest branches are conveyed by a squirrel running up and down her spine. The three roots that support Yggdrasil extend into the three separate worlds of gods, giants and the dead. Each root is nourished by a well.

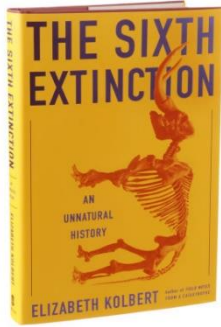
The ash has lived in our northern forests for millions of years. Yggdrasil would die were it not for three Norns who nurture her trunk with a potent salve, drawing water each day from their spring to mix with mud and coat the ash trunk. In the long run, will their attempted healing be in vain?

The great tree trembles and groans at rumors of coming battles. Will Ash be able to defeat her latest predator – also out of Asia – the Emerald Ash Borer? The struggle is upon us!

--Carol B. Sills, DCEC Board Member

*Details from *The Prose Edda*, Penguin classics, 2005

What We're Reading A 2015 Nonfiction Pulitzer Prize-Winner!



Elizabeth Kolbert won the Pulitzer Prize in general nonfiction, for her book *The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History*.

Kolbert, a *New Yorker* staff writer since 1999, has covered climate change and the natural world for more

than a decade, beginning with 2002's *Ice Memory*, about glaciologists in Greenland, and continuing with her series "The Climate of Man," which won the 2006 National Magazine Award for Public Interest.

--From the *New Yorker*.

In the Works

DCEC Educational Programs

On Wednesday, May 20 in Sturgeon Bay, the DCEC presented an evening talk by environmentalists Lynn and Nancy Utesche on the impact of manure spreading. For centuries, farmers used manure to raise their crops. The Utesches talked about how farmers can continue the tradition of feeding their crops while avoiding "too much of a good thing."

In response to the recent actions on property in Sturgeon Bay (see story on page 7), the DCEC is planning a "Public Trust Seminar"—date and time to be announced. The public trust doctrine is a body of common and statutory law that provides that the state holds title to navigable waters in trust for public purposes. This concept

was included in article IX, section 1, of the Wisconsin Constitution. The legislature, as the state's representative, must not only take action to prevent endangerment of the trust but it must also take affirmative steps to protect the trust.

Also in the works, a presentation by Mark Kastel, co-founder of The Cornucopia Institute, on how our food choices impact our health *and* our environment! Date to be announced.

Watch the Door County Environmental Council's Facebook page for dates, times, and places and the DCEC web site for more details on these programs!

DCEC's Leadership

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1st VICE-PRESIDENT: Eileen Andera, Sturgeon Bay
2nd VICE-PRESIDENT: Phyllis Ingwersen, Sister Bay
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Ray Kostiuk, Fish Creek
BOOKKEEPER: Nancy Rave, Sturgeon Bay

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