

The Door County Environmental Council News



June 2017



“The mission of the Door County Environmental Council is to advocate for the protection and preservation of Earth’s natural resources for all its inhabitants and future generations.”

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Four Giants Captured in Sevastopol

Tuesday, April 25, 2017

Four of Door County’s Environmental Giants were captured on video and televised on the Sevastopol television station in a rare historical event during Door County’s Earth Week Celebration. Charlotte Lukes, George Evenson, Carl Scholz, and Jerry Viste were summoned to attend the Earth Week Green Door Legacy Round Table event. The historical event, moderated by Mr. Mike Madden, was an attempt to document the environmental deeds of these great people and to pass on their environmental legacy to our younger generation.

The forum began at 7pm with Mike Madden asking the participants to tell the audience a little bit about themselves. A summary of their responses follows below:

Charlotte Lukes moved

to Door County in June 1972 after marrying her wonderful husband, Roy Lukes, and together they began their lives being the naturalists for the Ridges Sanctuary in Bailey’s Harbor. Together they worked by leading hikes, writing newsletters and participating in many other environmental events around the area. They supported groups with donations and volunteerism to help in the many environmental endeavors. In 1993 Charlotte and Roy started their own nature classes out of their home until 2005. They enjoyed teaching about local geology, mushrooms, flowers, birds, trees, and had a lot of fun with group adventures to Washington Island and Rock Island. They built their home with the environmental concepts of earth berm and solar energy principles. Often fielding phone calls at home, Roy was always a teacher and enjoyed helping others learn.



Mike Madden, Jerry Viste, Carl Scholz, Charlotte Lukes, and George Evenson

Charlotte is Door County's mushroom expert and is the Door County coordinator for the Bluebird Restoration Program of Wisconsin. She also helps other cavity nesters such as tree swallows, house wrens, and chickadees.

Unfortunately, Roy passed away at the age of 86 on June 26, 2016, and he is sorely missed in Door County. However, Charlotte continues to share his past work with us through the reprinting of many publications that he created in his lifetime, and we thank her for that.

George Evenson was a farmer in Door County and is presently the president of the Door County Historical Society. George boasts being 89 1/2 years old and having the opportunity to connect the past to the present. He sees the changes that Door County has and is going through and reminds us that everyone has the right to clean water and pure air, "These are our rights and they need to be protected today more than ever before." He said, "If somebody had plucked me out of this world 50 years ago and brought me back today, I would have to say I don't think this [DC] is the same place. Of course, there would be people gone, but things change and things change a lot." He encouraged everyone listening that night to take a little drive on Dunn Road (County P) starting at Bayshore Drive (County B) going east through the town of Institute until it meets Ploor Road. "I think this is one of the most beautiful drives that you could take if you fully understood the history of Dunn Road. You start by driving up the rock ledge escarpment until you reach the top where Martin orchards used to be, 1,000 acres of orchard, and there are some nice trees there now. On the right-hand side of the road there is a little stand with some flat stones

on it, go stand on that sometime, particularly on a clear day so you can see across Sevastopol...Stand there and meditate and see it as if you were the first person to come to that spot and see those gorgeous forests... As you drive down from the escarpment you see the fertile fields of farmers who have taken and are taking good care of the land. So when you think of what people can do, think of what people can do to help the environment. When people get together they can do marvelous things and I think we can do marvelous things."

Jerry Viste grew up on a farm that was homesteaded in 1877 by his great uncle, Chris Johnson. After he graduated from high school he applied to the Milwaukee School of Engineering, but family members convinced him to go to school to become a teacher. His first teaching job was in 1953 in a one room school house in West Jacksonport with 49 students. If one more student was added, the district would have had to build a second room to make a two room schoolhouse and hire a second teacher. The townspeople watched very closely that no one else moved into the school district! Jerry said, "You want to know about stress? I invented it!"

Jerry was later drafted into the army. However, his brother died in an accident and he was released from the army to go take care of the farm, which he eventually inherited. He got married, had five children, and grew his farm to 400 acres. Then destiny knocked at his door. The local power company had just purchased land along the Sturgeon Bay Canal, where they wanted to build a nuclear power plant, but the land turned out to not be stable enough for nuclear power. So they decided to build a coal-burning power plant but needed to find a place to dump the toxic

coal fly-ash. Jerry's farm would be ideal. Jerry mounted a coalition of neighbors to oppose the proposed fly-ash dump and the unwanted coal-burning power plant. Calling themselves the SOS (Save Our Soil) Organization, they notified the media. They hired the most notorious shyster lawyer they could find. They fought eminent domain with eminent domain and, after a long exhausting opposition they finally won in court. And that started Jerry's long history of environmental protection. He joined a newly formed group called the Door County Environmental Council and later became the long-standing executive director of the group. They led the charge against the uncontrolled development of Door County. They helped create the Door County Land Trust. They helped to protect the endangered Hines Emerald Dragonfly from the pressures of overdevelopment. The list goes on and on, year after year, fighting to save the best things about Door County

Carl Scholz is a man with great integrity. For decades he was the leader of the Sevastopol School District and holds the record for being the longest standing school district superintendent in the history of Wisconsin. But possibly more important than that, he is a great leader for his promotion of a healthy Door County environment. He reflects, "I was very fortunate throughout my entire life to have known a lot of great people. I met Aldo Leopold when I attended The Pines Conservation Camp two years in a row at the Wisconsin Dells. He was on the camp staff and I was very fortunate to be exposed to him. I knew Governor Gaylord Nelson and since we are celebrating Earth Day, we should remember that it was he who started the promotion of Earth Day. Another thing he started was the Wisconsin Ice Age Trail, which begins here in Door County along the

Ahnapee Trail. And on that trail is a rock with a plaque, placed there by the Door County Historical Society and the Wisconsin Ice Age Trail Foundation that was taken from my property and commemorates the beginning of a great ice age history."

These environmental giants were asked two questions. 1) *What trends or issues most concern you about the environment?* 2) *What is your favorite place in Door County?* They responded with the following:

George stated, "I am most concerned about how our state government is losing interest in the things that we are talking about tonight. I think that we need leaders and I think the government could provide those leaders if they wanted to." *Favorite place:* The view from on top of the rocks on Martin Hill on Dunn Road.

Jerry explained, by a series of examples, how important it is for the people to stand up for what is environmentally right and not let private interests control our natural resources without regard for the health our communities and society. *Favorite place:* The Hungry Settlement Marsh along the Ahnapee Trail in the town of Nasewaupee.

Carl agreed with George that our state government is losing interest in environmental things. He felt that this is evident in the fact that the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Magazine is going to be discontinued by decree of Governor Walker and DNR Secretary Cathy Stepp. He asked that we contact our legislators and urge them to continue the publication of the magazine. *Favorite place:* Whitefish Dunes State Park because it is a flagship of the state parks and has a geology like none other.

Charlotte felt that big money in our government was a major problem. She also felt that we need citizen scientists, stream monitors, inventory takers, and more personal involvement and support for our local groups such as the Land Trust and other environmental groups. We should also write our congressmen about both the good and bad things that are happening in the State Legislature. *Favorite place:* Whitefish Dunes State Park because of its unique characteristics *and* its 244 different species of mushrooms!

The evening ended with Carl Scholz leading us in a moment of silence for our now passed Champion for Nature, Roy Lukes. It was a beautiful evening with Giants. Thank you, Charlotte, Carl, George and Jerry for being.

By Paul Leline

We would like to thank the following people and sponsors:

- *Laddie Chapman for videotaping and broadcasting the event*
- *Wayne Kudick for his tireless efforts conceiving of and coordinating the countless events of Door County's "Celebrate Earth Week"*
- *Mike Madden for a great job moderating the forum and his bad jokes*
- *The Door County Environmental Council for setting up the event*
- *The Town of Sevastopol for providing the town hall*
- *The Door County Historical Society for the refreshments*
- *The Heritage Alliance of Door County*
- *Celebrate Earth Week volunteers*
- *Climate Change Coalition of Door County*

Emerald Ash Borer Update

According to the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection, the Emerald Ash Borer continues to spread throughout the state of Wisconsin. Here is a list of five new communities in previously quarantined counties that have been added since the last update:

- Brown -- Village of Bellevue
- Door County -- Village of Egg Harbor
- Fond du Lac County -- Village of Rosendale and Town of Springvale
- Vernon County -- Town of Franklin

The complete list and an interactive map are available at emeraldashborer.wi.gov. It is expected there will be new locations within the quarantined counties. News releases will be issued when new counties are quarantined.

By Michael Bahrke



Ash tree in Fish Creek damaged by Emerald Ash Borer Photo by Paul Leline

National Trails Day

Saturday, June 3, 2017

This is the American Hiking Society's signature trail awareness program. Hike your favorite trail today!

Spring Wisconsin Conservation Congress

Door County Environmental Council was represented at the annual Spring Wisconsin Conservation Congress held April 10 in Door County. The following resolution was presented. There were several supportive comments and no opposed comments, although a DNR official reminded us that once a CAFO application is in order, the DNR has no legal authority to deny it. The resolution passed 84 to 1 and was referred to the Environmental Committee. Although no immediate effect is anticipated, DCEC is on record with this resolution.

Resolution to Designate Door County and All of Karstic Wisconsin as Special Groundwater Management Areas

Whereas the presence of karst topography entails well studied and documented risks to groundwater. Typical rates of groundwater flow are measured in inches to a few feet per day, but in karstic terrain, underground waters can flow hundreds of feet per day, placing our groundwater at inordinate risk of contamination;

Whereas once an aquifer such as ours is polluted, it remains polluted forever;

Whereas impoundment of any sort of waste or even water over karst structure is unwise because of unknown underlying geological complexities causing potential collapse and failure;

Whereas this bedrock complexity requires study to fully understand the area at large, and detailed studies should be performed at any specific proposed sites of waste spreading or storage;

Whereas current uniform state-wide regulatory structures do not allow counties and municipalities to implement regulations to protect the health and welfare of their citizens and visitors based on these special regional considerations;

Be it resolved, that the Conservation Congress at its annual meeting in Door County on April 10, 2017, recommended that the Conservation Congress call upon the Natural Resources Board and the Department of Natural Resources to designate Door County and the entire karstic area of Western, Southern, and Eastern Wisconsin as special groundwater management areas.

*Respectfully submitted,
Door County Environmental Council*

Signed for Door County Environmental Council by John J. Beck, board member

Aldo Leopold Weekend

In celebration of Aldo Leopold Weekend, Write On Door County again arranged a progressive marathon reading of Leopold's "A Sand County Almanac" and DCEC was invited to participate. Readings started at The Clearing on Saturday, March 4 and continued at the Ridges, Crossroads at Big Creek, and finally the Maritime Museum on Sunday, March 5. Each participant read one chapter. John Beck read one chapter representing DCEC.

Why in the World Are We Not Doing This?

With Northeast Wisconsin under siege from liquidified cow manure being spread, spilled, and overly applied upon the surface of our karst topography, why in the world are we not taking advantage of a process that would keep our waters clean and healthy, produce a very needed resource, create jobs, and make money?

With our administration and legislators looking for “the science” that will be the solution, why are they not finding the solution in this science: the proven age-old science that addresses all of the difficult issues satisfactorily?

What science is that? The science of *composting*.

What is compost?

According to the U.S. Composting Council Factsheet: “Compost and Its Benefits”, compost is the product resulting from the controlled biological decomposition of organic material that has been sanitized through the generation of heat and stabilized to the point that it is beneficial to plant growth. Compost bears little physical resemblance to the raw material from which it originated. Compost is an organic matter resource that has the unique ability to improve the chemical, physical, and biological characteristics of soil or growing media. It contains plant nutrients but is typically not characterized as a fertilizer.

How is compost produced?

Unlike the anaerobic decomposition found

in mega farm cesspools where liquefied cow manure sits for months festering and fostering a pathogenic payload of antibiotic resistant microorganisms, composting works in a different direction. Compost is produced through the activity of aerobic (oxygen loving) microorganisms above ground. These microbes require oxygen, moisture, and food in order to grow and multiply. When these factors are maintained at optimal levels, the natural decomposition process is greatly accelerated. The microbes generate heat, water vapor, and carbon dioxide as they transform raw materials into



Industrial Composting

a stable soil conditioner.

Active composting is typically characterized by a high-temperature phase that sanitizes the product and allows a high rate of decomposition. This is followed by a lower-temperature phase that allows the product to stabilize while still

decomposing at a lower rate. Compost can be produced from many “feedstocks” (the raw organic materials, such as leaves, manures or food scraps). State and federal regulations exist to ensure that only safe and environmentally beneficial composts are marketed.

What are the benefits of using compost?

1. Improves the soil structure, porosity, and density, thus creating a better plant root environment
2. Increases infiltration and permeability of heavy soils, thus reducing erosion and run off
3. Improves water holding capacity, thus reducing water loss and leaching in sandy soils
4. Supplies a variety of macro and

- micronutrients
5. May control or suppress certain soil-borne plant pathogens
 6. Supplies significant quantities of organic matter
 7. Improves cation exchange capacity (CEC) of soils and growing media, thus improving their ability to hold nutrients for plant use
 8. Supplies beneficial microorganisms to soils and growing media
 9. Improves and stabilizes soil pH
 10. Can bind and degrade specific pollutants

Other Benefits of Compost

Wetland restoration

Compost has also been used for the restoration of native wetlands. Rich in organic matter and microbial populations, compost and soil/compost blends can closely simulate the characteristics of wetland soils, thereby encouraging the reestablishment of native plant species.

Erosion control

Coarser composts have been used with great success as a mulch for erosion control and have been successfully used on sites where conventional erosion control methods have not performed well. In Europe, fine compost has been mixed with water and sprayed onto slopes to control erosion.

Weed control

Immature composts or ones which process substances detrimental to plant growth (phytotoxins) are also being tested as an alternative to plastic mulches for vegetable and fruit production. While aiding in moisture conservation and moderating soil temperatures, immature composts can also act as mild herbicides.

A bright future

With these many benefits and its myriad of

applications, from the traditional growing of plants to novel uses in storm water management and climate change mitigation, the production and use of compost has a bright future indeed!

It seems to me that the use of composting processes in Northeast Wisconsin, either on private commercial farms or in centralized composting areas, could produce a valuable resource that could safely be applied to our karst topography while protecting our precious freshwater supplies from wells, streams, and lakes. The compost could be returned to our farm fields or sold as a product to gardeners, golf courses, construction roadside areas and many other applications.

This is not a new concept and it is being used throughout the United States. I believe it is definitely a better solution to the current methods now being applied to our beautiful and fragile peninsula.

By Paul Leline

Keep the Waters Pure

High Capacity Wells

You have probably been reading or hearing a lot about high capacity wells in Wisconsin lately. Large-scale vegetable farmers and factory farm owners love and depend on high capacity wells as a reliable source of large amounts of water. On the other hand, environmentalists detest them, believing the exploding number of **high capacity wells** is drawing down our ground and surface water. Both supporters and opponents of high capacity wells are concerned over changes currently being considered in the state legislature.

What is a high capacity well?

A high capacity well system in Wisconsin

is one or more wells, drill holes, or mine shafts on a property that has a combined approved pump capacity of 70 or more gallons of water per minute, with the ability to withdraw as much as 100,000 gallons per minute. (Property being defined as contiguous or adjacent land having the same owner.)

Who approves high capacity wells?

In Wisconsin, Department of Natural Resources approval is necessary prior to the construction, reconstruction, or operation of a high capacity well system. Owners of high capacity wells are required by law to report the volume of water withdrawn from their wells on an annual frequency and the DNR maintains a capacity well database with information supplied by well owners.

Why have high capacity wells become so controversial in recent years?

In May 2016 Wisconsin’s Attorney General issued a formal opinion on the DNR’s review authority of high capacity well applications. Two key conclusions from the AG’s opinion were:

- the DNR may impose conditions or requirements on high capacity well approvals only if the agency has explicit permission or an explicit requirement to do so in statute or rule; and
- the DNR does not have explicit authority to consider cumulative impacts or to impose monitoring requirements on high capacity well approvals.

As a result of the AG’s opinion, in addition to determining whether the proposed well meets well construction requirements, the DNR reviews each high capacity well application

to determine whether the proposed high capacity well:

- is within a groundwater protection area;
- may impact springs;
- will result in water loss;
- will result in 10 or more feet of water level drawdown in the public utility well; and/or
- will degrade safe drinking water and the groundwater resource or impact public safety.

Applications that meet the criteria listed above are subject to an environmental review process and any approval includes conditions to ensure the well does not result in significant adverse environmental impacts and may require preparation of an environmental impact statement. In addition, if any of these conditions are met, the DNR may include specific conditions in the high capacity well approval, which may include conditions as to location, depth, pumping capacity, rate of flow, and ultimate use. Furthermore, if a high capacity well or system is located in the Great Lakes Basin, a Water Use Permit is needed to withdraw water as required by Wisconsin Statutes implementing the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact.

What is the current status of legislative changes to high capacity wells?

As of May 3rd, a bill (Senate Bill 76, Assembly Bill 105) amending the statutes addressing replacement, reconstruction, and transfer of an approved high capacity well; recommendation of special groundwater measures by the DNR; and metering requirements and grants for certain high capacity wells, is currently working its way through

National Rivers Month
June 1-30, 2017

Boat, fish, or paddle on your local rivers. Or organize a river clean-up.

the Wisconsin legislature towards approval and signing by Governor Walker. Those who oppose the measure say it essentially locks in rights for a high capacity well owner by removing routine permit review by the DNR and that an existing permit would not expire at any point and could allow well owners to pull water from the ground in perpetuity, with few options for recourse for those who own property surrounding the well. In addition to support for the measure from farmers, other businesses across a variety of sectors, including food products manufacturing, construction, mining, and power generation companies, who depend on high capacity wells, also support the changes because, as they say, they need assurances they can repair or reconstruct high capacity wells without disruption to their operations.

Is there a middle ground?

At least one state legislator has suggested giving growers and farmers certainty, while at the same time moving forward with environmental protection, that is, by metering and taxing high capacity wells. The open market would then protect water use by forcing growers and farmers to include the cost of water that is now taken for free from streams, lakes, and aquifers.

By Michael Bahrke

Where Does All That Water Go?

Why all of the concern lately over high capacity wells and their effect on our environment? (See *High Capacity Wells*, page 7.) While

Global Wind Day
Thursday, June 15, 2017

Discover wind—its power and possibilities! Visit a wind farm, meet experts, attend events.

Wisconsin’s large-scale vegetable farmers say they need streamlined regulations to reliably water vast fields of crops, environmental conservationists are worried about the toll that watering takes on the state’s lakes and aquifers.

Have you ever stopped to think about how much water is needed to produce some of the foods we eat?

A food’s water footprint is the number of liters (about a quart) of water it takes to produce one kilogram (a kilogram is roughly equal to 2.2 lbs.) of food. For animals, it’s not just the water they drink, but also the water it takes to grow all of the food they will eat over their lifetime.

- 1 kg of beef takes.....15,000 liters (3,750 gallons) of water
- 1 kg of cheese takes.....5,000 liters (1,250 gallons) of water
- 1 kg of pork takes.....4,800 liters (1,200 gallons) of water
- 1 kg of chicken takes.....3,900 liters (975 gallons) of water
- 1 kg of rice takes.....3,400 liters (850 gallons) of water
- 1 kg of bread takes.....1,300 liters (325 gallons) of water
- 1 kg of corn takes.....900 liters (225 gallons) of water
- 1 kg of banana takes.....860 liters (215 gallons) of water
- 1 cup of milk takes.....250 liters (62.5 gallons) of water
- 1 kg of tomatoes takes.....180 liters (45 gallons) of water
- 1 kg lettuce takes.....130 liters (32.5 gallons) of water

How can you conserve water in and around your home?

- Check faucets and pipes for leaks
- Don't use the toilet as a wastebasket
- Check your toilets for leaks
- Install water-saving shower heads and low-flow faucet aerators
- Insulate your water pipes
- Take shorter showers
- Use your dishwasher and clothes washer for only full loads
- Put a layer of mulch around trees and plants
- Water your lawn only when it needs it
- Don't run the hose while washing your car

By Michael Bahrke

Finally Some Good News!

On May 1, the United States Senate and House agreed on a 2017 budget to fund the federal government until September 30, 2017. The core funding for Great Lakes funding was temporarily maintained. The Trump Administration's threats to cut funding for the Great Lakes program this year and eliminate them in 2018 did not, at least for now, materialize.

Specifically, then, the recent budget deal will include \$330 million for Great Lakes restoration that will go to support the cleanup of toxic pollution, restoration of fish and wildlife habitats, invasive species management, and the prevention of runoff from cities and farms. In addition, there will be \$1.39 billion to support the Clean Water State Revolving Fund to help communities fix, repair and update their wastewater infrastructure. Lastly, the budget deal

National Pollinator Week

June 19-25, 2017

Bees, moths, butterflies, beetles, flies, birds, mammals, and reptiles are all pollinators. Learn about pollinators' place and purpose in the ecosystem.

provides \$863 million for the Drinking Water Revolving Fund to help communities fix, repair and update their drinking water infrastructure. These are all the same amounts that were funded for these programs in 2016.

This is indeed a victory for those of us that realize what a vital resource clean water is. Please keep in mind, however, that this is just a six month reprieve. Public efforts to support Great Lakes funding must be ongoing. There is no guarantee that these programs will be funded for 2018.

Todd Ambs, Campaign Director for the Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition said this about the budget deal, "This budget keeps federal Great Lakes efforts on track and sends a strong signal that protecting the drinking water for more than 30 million people needs to be a long term national priority. We're pleased that public officials stood up to support Great Lakes investments that are producing results for our environment and economy and resisted cuts that would only make projects more difficult and expensive to tackle. Serious threats remain, and our work is not done until we've put an end to beach closures, fish consumption advisories, and unsafe drinking water. We look forward to working with Republicans and Democrats in congress who have consistently voiced strong bi-partisan support for Great Lakes restoration programs that protect our drinking water, jobs, and way of life and rejected cuts and ensure that these priorities are funded in 2018."

I strongly believe that clean water will become more precious and valuable in the future. In Door County this is especially important. Our main industry is tourism, and Door County tourism is heavily reliant on clean water in our lake and bay. So let's stay vigilant and involved to preserve clean water for all future generations.

By Steve Eatough

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