The Door County Environmental Council News

September 2020

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

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Jordan/Hagen Limestone Quarry—

The Door County Environmental Council's Opposition Statement

The Door County Environmental Council is strongly opposed to the Conditional Use Permit approved for Tax Parcel #028-0432343033B in the Town of Washington, Washington Island, WI.

Allowing mining activities in this area would create a serious threat to the environment, including potential groundwater contamination, destruction of habitat for protected animal and native plant species, as well as a health risk to residents who live in the surrounding area through degraded air quality, noise, and potential water contamination.

Groundwater Contamination
All of Door County, including Washington Island, resides in a karst area. Karst topography has many unique characteristics: sinkholes, caves, and areas of rock fractures that form underground drainage areas. Mining in karst areas results in a disruption to natural aquifers or flows of underground water. Often, mining operations remove ground water to expose the quarrying site, which can lower the water table and change how water flows through the rock formations. Groundwater quality can be affected by quarrying limestone by increasing sediment and accidental spills directly into the aquifers. These contaminants can also include material like oil and gas from mining equipment. Because contaminants in ground water move faster through limestone than other types of rocks, quarries in karst areas must be especially careful. Quarrying also removes the entire subcutaneous zone, an important ground-water storage area. Pumping water out of underground mines changes the direction and the amount of groundwater flow. When the operation of a quarry or mine ends, the direct impacts on groundwater quality may be decreased, but the long-term contamination can persist.

Federally Protected Endangered Species: Hine's Emerald Dragonfly
The Hine's Emerald Dragonfly was listed as an endangered species by the federal government in 1995 and remains the only

dragonfly species included on the federal endangered species list. This dragonfly is currently known to exist in only four states (Illinois, Michigan, Missouri, and Wisconsin). Its habitat is largely restricted to groundwater-fed wetlands that are perched over limestone bedrock.

Little Marsh and Big Marsh, both located on Washington Island, are one of only ten areas in Door County that have been deemed "critical habitats" for the Hine's Emerald Dragonfly. The survival of the species is dependent on sustained groundwater quality and quantity, fed through karst bedrock into coastal wetland habitat.

This species has been threatened by continuous destruction, degradation, and fragmentation of its habitat. Development and disturbance in upgradient recharge areas has the potential to alter groundwater flow to the springs and wetlands that provide habitat for the Hine's Emerald Dragonfly. Understanding, maintaining, and protecting groundwater flow to these coastal areas is essential for the continued protection of this species.

The 2008 Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey Maps delineate Groundwater Contribution Areas or the "recharge zones" feeding the Hine's Emerald Dragonfly habitat sites. (See link; please refer to page 19, figure A3):
https://www.fws.gov/midwest/endangered/insects/hed/pdf/HEDBMPAppendixA.pdf

The CUP in question would grant permission for blasting, excavating, and mining activities on a land parcel contained within the Groundwater Contribution Area, as well as within the 1000-foot buffer zone that has been established. Such activities pose an imminent threat to the dragonfly through contamination of groundwater (contaminates from equipment), air quality (airborne dust), and vibrations from blasting, which can alter fractures/fissures in limestone up to several miles in both radius and depth.

I (LJ) have personally witnessed and photographed Hine's Emerald Dragonflies in many areas on Washington Island outside of the established 1000-foot buffer zone. I took this photo of the Hine's Emerald Dragonfly near the Mountain Tower on Mountain Rd., Washington Island.

Hine's Emerald Dragonfly
Photo by Lora Jorgensen

Health Impacts on Humans
Typical activity in a limestone quarry includes blasting, quarrying, and passage of heavy-duty vehicles. These processes typically cause high rates of particulate matter (PM) emissions.

Dust is one of the most visible impacts associated with limestone quarrying due to the drilling, crushing, and screening of the rock. Fugitive dust can escape from trucks traveling on excavation haul roads and from blasting. This airborne dust can travel long distances from mining sites and affect both urban and rural residential areas downwind.

Limestone quarrying produces dust that contains Crystalline Silica, which has been classified as a human lung carcinogen. Breathing crystalline silica dust can cause silicosis, which in severe cases can be disabling, or even fatal. The respirable silica dust enters the lungs and causes the formation of scar tissue, thus reducing the lungs' ability to take in oxygen. There is no cure for silicosis. Since silicosis affects lung function, it makes one more susceptible to lung infections.

Given the current pandemic situation and a lack of adequate health services on the island, how would local residents react to inhaling quarry dust, elevating their risk for more severe implications if they were to contract COVID-19 or other flu strains? Is the town or the business requesting the CUP prepared to accept liability for the elevated risk?

In Conclusion
There are many other reasons to disallow this type of activity to occur on this parcel such as decreased property values, added tax revenue to maintain roads/infrastructure that will be degraded prematurely from heavy equipment, and the aesthetics/serenity of the area. However, the impacts on the environment and the health of the residents will be, by far, the most important.

The Door County Environmental Council Board
Michael Bahrke, President
Lora Jorgensen, Administrator

See warnings on Material Safety Data Sheet for Limestone/Dolomite: https://gernatt.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/MSDS-Limestone.pdf

Stopping the Next Pandemic

How can we even begin thinking about the next pandemic to threaten the world, while we continue to struggle with the existing coronavirus pandemic that continues to devastate us? If we are effectively going to stop the next pandemic, like it or not, we need to start doing that now. Most experts agree that the COVID-19 virus likely originated in animals. Quite possibly the virus originated in bats, which then transmitted the disease to other animals, who eventually transmitted it to humans. Therefore, the next possible pandemic could very likely come from an animal to human virus transmission. It's important that we objectively and accurately evaluate the risks of the next virus potentially originating here.

As the new coronavirus, COVID-19, escalated into a pandemic, it became important to pinpoint its origin. Headlines circulated at the beginning of the outbreak, pointing to "wet markets" in China as the potential source of the outbreak. While attention turned abroad, a more sinister potential disease incubator remains right here at home: factory farms.

In today's factory farms, animals are being packed together so closely that there is a risk of sparking the next pandemic, according to experts in a new scientific paper that warns we have to rethink agriculture in America. "When we overcrowd animals by the thousands in cramped football field sized sheds to lie beak to beak or snout to snout, there is stress crippling their immune systems, and there is ammonia from the decomposing waste burning their lungs, and there's a lack of fresh air and sunlight. Put all these factors together and you have a perfect storm environment for

the emergence and spread of disease," says Michael Greger, the author of *Bird Flu: A Virus of Our Own Hatching*. Mr. Greger also authored *How Not To Die and How Not To Die*t.

Today, factory farming still accounts for an estimated 99 percent of the meat raised around the globe and 90 percent of the meat consumed in the United States. The Sentience Institute estimates that "around 31 billion land animals and 38.8 to 215.9 billion fish are being farmed globally at any given time." The devastating effects of factory farming include water and air pollution, deforestation, and methane gas emissions.

Beyond these highly detrimental environmental impacts, factory farms provide a hotbed for spreading the next animal to human disease, which unfortunately the COVID-19 pandemic has put front and center on our radar. We raise animals for food on a modern-day assembly line, but those conditions make them prime targets for the spread and incubation of disease. And when one animal in a factory farm gets sick, the pathogen can rapidly spread—killing hundreds or thousands of animals and potentially jumping to humans. This is exactly what it means when a disease is "zoonotic".

This COVID-19 crisis has illustrated just how vulnerable our world food system truly is. People are angry that "wet markets" are already reopening, but we cannot ignore that the way we raise animals in the U.S. also places us at a significant risk for future pandemics. What can we do to stop the next pandemic? One thing we could all do is to find out where the food we're consuming comes from and how the animals were raised. More expensive, milk, eggs, poultry, and meat coming from animals raised in an open-air environment, and fed less chemicals, are healthier for you and our environment. Sometimes meat, milk, eggs, etc. coming from these non-factory farm animals are labeled "cage free," "grass fed," "free range," or "organic." But, whenever possible, buying products from a local producer that you know is probably the best choice. Also, we could all stand to eat a little less red meat and chicken, and move to a more plant-based diet. I'm not suggesting that you become a vegetarian, just try to reduce your meat consumption a little. I enjoy a good steak as much as anyone, but I want to know where the meat I consume came from.

Here's the fact that no one wants to hear: CAFOs are indeed a REAL THREAT to start the next pandemic. As the COVID-19 outbreak forces us to significantly alter our daily lives, and as the current disease continues to spread, will we now finally muster the political will to evaluate and overhaul our own food system, including factory farms, to decrease the likelihood of the next pandemic? Our lives could depend on it.

by Steve Eatough

This article was taken and adapted from articles written by Mackenzie Aime and Stephanie McClain.

Black-eyed Susan *Photo by Mike Bahrke*

Regenerative Farming

Only 50 years ago Door County farmers were much more diversified in agriculture and livestock, minimizing fossil-fuel use, maximizing self-reliance, and preserving food nutrients. Farming was a sustainable practice, but somehow it has become an assembly line. The number of animals and field cultivation increased so that one farm is now the size of three smaller farms combined. In contrast, small regenerative farms work with the ecosystem, helping it to heal itself and allowing healthy regenerative food to grow. Regenerative farming needs to have three key elements: optimizing inputs, maximizing resources, and creating a renewable food cycle.

Most farmers use genetically modified plants and livestock, but hybrids and GMO seeds decrease plant variety so that less than half of the heirloom varieties remain today. Large equipment combined with modified seeds make farmers dependent on petroleum products like grease, fertilizer, and gasoline. Tractor technology maximizes efficiency, but it increases budget costs. Good equipment means replacement parts are costly and increases the need for fossil fuels, and yet growing crops has not changed.

Mono cropping and excessive tilling of fields destroy the natural ecosystem, and crop rotation does little to retain nutrient quality. Overuse of fertilizers, cutting/chopping, gathering, and finally storing create lots of waste. Crop yields using natural methods are produced efficiently and have higher nutrient quality. Experienced organic gardener Winowa LaDuke says, "Heirloom varieties are high in amino acids, antioxidants." A sustainable approach uses heirloom seeds and wild buffers. Buffers decrease tilling and protect microorganisms, maintaining nutrition and soil complexity. Hybrid seeds and specialized cattle breeding do not allow complexity and lower diversity. Rich soil needs biomass or microorganisms. Heather Flores, author of *Food Not Lawns,* believes, "Biodiversity = Biosecurity."

Encouraging sustainability includes allowing plants to reseed themselves and saving the seeds. Mature plants naturally produce seeds that regenerate the food cycle. Sheep, cows, goats, pigs, even chickens help enrich the soil. Chickens eat harmful bugs and leave small scattered amounts of manure to enrich the soil. Cattle can be raised more efficiently by grazing. Field scraps, such as corn stumps, can be used as straw for animals. Crop diversity leads to resilience and adaptability. Habitat variation in areas with perennials allows better rotation, foraging, and less tilling by working with the terrain already there.

Optimizing input means proper planning and adding organic matter that can increase soil fertility season to season. This results in a sustainable yield with minimal use of chemicals, equipment, and labor. In using regenerative agriculture, more nutrients remain and create rich soil. *Webster's Dictionary* defines soil as nutrient-rich matter with active living things to create a rich, fertile environment. Although some organisms are microscopic, they play a major role in soil fertility.

Renewable agriculture uses integrated pest management, allowing beneficial organisms to survive. A permaculture leader, Heather Flores says, "integrated pest management helps to lower budget costs instead of using synthetic pesticides and herbicides." The use of nets, scarecrows, reflectors, and noise makers scare away pests. Using plant based horticultural oils for insects can improve

plant and soil health. Berms provide good drainage for perennials, trees, and wild vegetation that supply natural remedies and food.

Industrialized farming creates lots of waste. The term “food rescue” means reducing waste by gathering produce from grocery stores, restaurants, markets, and dining facilities and getting it to people in need. Leftover food scraps or waste whey can be fed to animals. Sprouted potatoes or damaged onions can be replanted the next season. Fish scraps can be composted in the garden for fertilizer. Maximizing resources reduces waste and the need to purchase more.

Creating a renewable food cycle incorporates growing fruit trees in berms combined with berries and wild plants that can help to deter pests and create habitats for frogs, turtles, birds, rabbits, and other wild critters. Our meat consumption can include small wild animals. Mushrooms can also add a great source of protein and other nutrients to our diet. My grandparents ate from their backyard, harvesting hickory nuts and other wild edibles. They knew what they were consuming, and it lowered living expenses. Using available things around us helps economically and is eco-friendly. For example, salve was a common product that was made from native plants.

What is needed to shift to more regenerative farming practices are small practical steps using natural areas to help feed us. Start with one or two small changes like allowing plants to mature and make seed pods. Gather small amounts of different produce for a flavorful meal. One thing we should all remember is that we can’t grow all of our food ourselves; it does take a community. Renewable practices like consuming local produce and meat keep diversity alive. Consumers can make a change in their wallets and health. Every dollar we spend economically says something about ourselves.

by Renee McAllister

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Monarch Caterpillar Photo by Mike Bahrke

One Person's Awakening

For our entire lives, we depend on water for washing, drinking, swimming, boating, etc. For over 70 years, I've used it in every way. Like most, I've taken it for granted. While aware of pollution, raw sewage /chemical dumping, syringes, red tide, fish kills, odors, alewives, and farm waste, I remained in a "concerned" state of denial.

Over the past decade, the above events accelerated, coupled with oil spills, depletion of native fish, proliferation of foreign species, temperature rise, and political denial.

In addition, I was privileged to read *Gulf* by Jack Davis and *The Death and Life of the Great Lakes* by Dan Egan. Both authors were kind enough to speak with me at length.

These actions, coupled with subsequent discussions and personal observations, spurred me to participate. I watched my seven little grandkids skinny dip in Green Bay with mixed emotions, between their innocence and their wading through several feet of shore pollution to reach clear water. Those "feet" could become yards, miles—-. Time to do something!

What if these seven infants and their infants couldn't enjoy or depend upon our most valuable resource? WE have been the sole cause of destruction, be it chemical, agricultural, or foreign species. Our greed, ambition, and selfishness have caused a path, which only WE can reverse.

How?

1. Close the St Lawrence Seaway, or, at least, limit its use to domestic shipping. It is a white elephant.

2. Work with agriculture/industry to eliminate/refine/minimize phosphate/ chemical run off and oil spills.

3. Clean all boats during critical phases of their journeys. Mussels from Turkey have now reached America's west coast.

4. Develop toxins that, on an isolated basis, destroy foreign species, or barricade their entry.

5. Total public, private, and political awareness. We depend upon H_2O to exist!

Sounds easy. Idealistically, yes, but it's not. We are dealing with two nations, eight states, countless municipalities, organizations, and lobbies with conflicting interests. The solution(s) for you and me is to focus on specific issues on a grass roots basis, and build on those specific solutions. For example, phosphate run off into the Ahnapee River. Identify the problem, work with agriculture, government, and private experts toward a solution, estimate the cost of remediation, and jointly work together toward a solution.

It's not rocket science! AND this solution will probably apply to many similar issues.

Status quo and denial no longer apply. As serious as the pandemic is, clean water is just as serious or, in the long run, an even greater concern.

I'm committed, in some small way, to solve the problem on behalf of future generations.

Are you?

by Bill Hoag

Update on Camp Zion Variance Request

On July 7, 2020, the Door County Board of Adjustment voted unanimously 5-0 to deny the Christ Community Church's (Zion, IL and doing business as Camp Zion) petition for a variance from Section 3.06 of the Door County Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance. Camp Zion is a non-conforming use in an otherwise residentially zoned, single family (SF-30) neighborhood. The petitioner's variance was requested to construct a second story, 30 ft. long bridge that encroached into the setback area between a proposed 12,000 sq. ft. building and a private road and parking lot along the Niagara Escarpment. The requested variance failed to (1) meet the criteria set forth in Section 59.694(7) of the Wisconsin Statutes, (2) was not necessary to afford accessibility, and (3) the alleged burden was merely a matter of convenience or preference of the camp, among others. Camp Zion is currently exploring other options for proceeding with construction of the proposed building. We will keep you posted on any new developments.

by Mike Bahrke

Update on the Meyer-Krouth Marina Development

In the June issue of our DCEC newsletter we reported on our opposition to the marina development being proposed by Mr. John Meyer (8191 White Cliff Road, Egg Harbor) and his neighbor, Mr. John Krouth. Shortly after expressing our opposition, Meyer and Krouth withdrew their original proposal. However, only a few days later, a revised proposal for the marina development was submitted to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Once again, your DCEC has expressed continued opposition to this proposed development and our letter to the COE follows.

July 19, 2020
Ms. Jessica Kempke
Biologist-Project Manager
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Regulatory Branch, SE Section
211 North Broadway, Suite 221
Green Bay, Wisconsin 54303

Dear Ms. Kempke,
It has come to our attention that Mr. John Meyer (8191 White Cliff Road, Egg Harbor) and his neighbor, Mr. John Krouth, have submitted a revised proposal for their marina development to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and that the COE has instituted a 30-day public comment period that expires July 24, 2020. The Door County Environmental Council wishes to submit the following comments regarding this proposed development.

As it was only a little over 30 days ago that the original proposal was withdrawn, we are surprised at the short turn-around period in which Mr. Meyer and Mr. Krouth have submitted their revised proposal. Perhaps this haste explains why their revised proposal, save a minor alteration or two, is basically unchanged from the original proposal they submitted? Moreover, we are concerned that the COE is planning to issue a permit within days of the close of the 30-day public comment period. We believe a public hearing is in order.

In our previous letter regarding this development we pointed out that the wetland delineation completed by Mr.

Meyer described a wetland dominated by native wetland vegetation species. We remain concerned about the introduction of non-native species to the wetland and the potential impact to plant and animal species in the wetland area that this project presents. We are also concerned by the large number of trees that have been taken down on the site as well as the vagueness of the extent of the "timber boardwalk/future construction" over the wetland.

Although endangered and threatened species are again listed and discussed briefly in the revised application, at this time there really is no definitive statement as to their presence or lack thereof in the permit area. Apparently, this is because no DNR or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service agent has yet visited the proposed site following submission of the original proposal as well as the revised proposal? Surveys and maps are frequently general in nature and can quickly become outdated.

Sometimes there are alternatives to mitigate environmental impact. In this case, one is a reduction in the size of the boat slips—making them similar to those at Anchorage Cove Condominiums—as this would require less dredging. Another alternative is for Meyer and Krouth to install boat slips that parallel the waterfront, therefore reducing the degree of intrusion into the waterway and into the wetland.

Despite the few, limited revisions to the original proposal, we continue to believe this type of development disregards the surrounding wetlands environment; therefore the Door County Environmental Council remains opposed to the Meyer-Krouth Marina Project.

Respectfully,
The Door County Environmental Council

Bill Hoag

DCEC Welcomes a New Board Member

A new board member, William Hoag, was warmly welcomed aboard at DCEC's July board meeting. Bill is a resident of both Ephraim and Deerfield, Illinois. He is a well-known fellow in and around Ephraim and currently serves as a board member of the Ephraim Foundation. Bill previously served on the Ephraim Yacht Club Board and also has a strong interest in both surface and ground water quality. He has a Bachelor of Science degree in civil engineering, a Master of Business Administration degree from Denver University, and a good deal of life experience as well. Bill spent most of his career in the commercial real estate industry. We are very happy to have him join us!

DCEC Board Member Dr. John Beck Resigns

Owing to family commitments, Dr. John Beck recently resigned his position on the DCEC Board of Directors. We would like to thank Dr. Beck for his help in preserving and protecting our fragile Door County environment over the years and for his many contributions to the community and the DCEC. We wish John all of the very best. We'll miss you!

Letter from the Administrator

The DCEC has been working in conjunction with residents on Washington Island to revoke a Conditional Use Permit for a Non-Metallic Mine on the Island. This CUP is for a limestone quarry on a property that is located in a Groundwater Contribution Area (GCA) that feeds into Big Marsh and Little Marsh and also lies within the 1000 foot buffer zone for the federally protected Hine's Emerald Dragonfly. Big Marsh and Little Marsh, located on Washington Island are one of ten locations in Door County considered "critical habitats" for this species.

Concerns for this proposed limestone quarrying operation that affect the Hine's Emerald Dragonfly include: contamination of Groundwater Contribution Area which feeds into critical habitat areas, disruption/ loss of habitat from blasting vibrations, and dust produced from operations. Other concerns for the residents include: noise pollution from blasting and equipment, excessive road/infrastructure degradation from equipment hauling from the site, and toxicity of limestone dust which contains silica and can cause mild to severe respiratory illness.

Another area of concern that we have been closely monitoring is the drawdown at the Forestville Millpond/Dam. This dam is located on the Ahnapee river, which is a tributary to Lake Michigan and flows through Southern Door County, Northern Kewaunee County, and the City of Algoma.

In an effort to gain depth and water clarity, Door County Soil and Water and Parks Departments implemented a plan to draw down the upper millpond to expose and dry out the lake bed to promote decomposition and compaction of the contained sediment and contaminates.

The lower valve was opened on the dam on November 1, 2019 and is to stay opened for two years. Since the valve was opened, the water levels in the upper millpond continue to fluctuate greatly, up to 24 inches in a 24 hour period with spring melt and rain events.

In the past 6 months, the Ahnapee river below the dam has experienced an excessive amount of sediment displacement (flushing through from the upper millpond), increased phosphorus levels and greatly reduced water transparency. This has devastated fish spawning areas below the dam and recently promoted algae growth farther down the Ahnapee River, as documented by landowners along the river.

Mid July was the first time that the millpond above the dam finally started to draw down enough to reveal the lake-bed but has not dried out adequately to begin the decomposition and compaction process. The thick, wet muck that currently covers the lake-bed has proven dangerous for wildlife which have become entrapped, requiring rescue efforts from the DNR, local Fire Department, and local citizens.

The surrounding residents are also concerned about blastomycosis, a fungal infection of the lungs. The spores of this fungus are contained in lake beds and are harmful to wildlife and humans if they dry out when exposed to air and become air borne and enter the lungs, causing a range of respiratory illness from irritation to pneumonia.

Lora Jorgensen

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