



# It's Our Nature

Newsletter of the Fox Valley Sierra Group of the John Muir Chapter of the Sierra Club Vol. 16 Issue 1

## Fox Valley Sierra Group Programs

**Feb. 11, 2016 - 7:00**

Bubolz Nature Preserve

### Bees and Honey

Jay Breyer a local expert on bee-keeping will talk to us about honey bees: keeping bees, producing honey and about the honey bee collapse.

**March 10, 2016 - 7:00**

Bubolz Nature Preserve

### Looking to the Stars

Tom Eby a local astronomer, has traveled the nation in search of the many different skies over the US and will present to us the COSMOS. It is a most interesting presentation.

**April 14, 2016 - 7:00**

Bubolz Nature Preserve

### Turtles and Other Reptiles

Robert Hay, a Reptile and Amphibian Conservation Specialist and retired DNR Herpetologist will tell us about the "Turtles for Tomorrow" project in WI and about the state of turtles and other reptiles.

## From the Chair

February 2016, By Alan Lawrence

January began for our group by returning to Gordon Bubolz Nature Preserve for our monthly meetings, following a 13-month temporary move to Fox River Environmental Education Alliance (FREEA). It was appropriate that our January 14 meeting was exactly 34 years after our group first met on January 14, 1982. Our initial meetings were at the Appleton Public Library, but most of our meetings have been at Bubolz over the years. It is nice to be home again.

FREEA was an exciting year for us. They have a beautiful location along the Fox River, and that inspired the Fox River Earth Day Hike that we sponsored last year. It was a great event and we will do an encore by sponsoring the "2nd Annual" on April 16, again kicking off Earth Day Week. The route will be the same, and we will try to make some improvements. We're also starting earlier in the morning because we learned many people want to begin early. The extra hour means we can have two shifts of volunteers, which allows volunteers to also enjoy hiking the route.

Our group leaders met in November for strategic planning, to help focus our limited energies on the right issues. Not surprisingly we agreed that our focus needs to be on Climate Change and on Water Issues. We will still work with a broad range of issues, but the group will focus on these issues. The beauty of Sierra Club's thousands of members (the organization claims 2.4 million members and supporters) is that our collective interests are broad and we can make a difference in many areas.

Members of our group participated in the importance and excitement of the U.N. Paris Climate Summit that ran from November 30 to December 11 (extended to December 12). Specifically, we sponsored a climate rally at Lawrence University on October 14. It was a National Day of Action with approximately 200 climate events across the United States. These events were intended to energize the Climate Summit and the rallies immediately before and after it. Some of our members participated in marches and rallies in Milwaukee, Green Bay and Stevens Point the weekend before the Paris Summit, and some participated in the rally in Madison at the conclusion of the Summit.

Continued on page 2...

**Gordon Bubolz NATURE PRESERVE**  
Education. Recreation. Conservation.

**Our monthly meetings have returned to Bubolz Nature Preserve**

4815 N Lynndale Dr, Appleton, WI 54913  
www.bubolzpreserve.org

Map labels: W. Edgewood, W. Honeysuckle Ln., W. Grand Chute, W. Capitol Dr., W. Northland, N. Lynndale Dr., N. Richmond St., N. Blue mound, Mason, JJ, A, 47, 41, OO.

...from the Chair

Mega rallies had been planned for Paris, but terrorist attacks of November 13 changed things as a state of emergency banned public demonstrations. Nevertheless, the people of Paris found ways to demonstrate. Thousands of pairs of shoes were laid out in a major plaza to represent the 200,000 marchers who had been expected. Even Pope Francis and the U.N. Secretary General provided their own shoes for the display. Globally hundreds of thousands of people participated in thousands of rallies. These weeks were not ignored by the world. The stakes have never been higher. It was noticed by the media.

Indeed the conference was expected to attract close to 50,000 participants including 25,000 official delegates from government and governmental organizations. 195 countries participated. Never before had more heads of state gathered under one roof.

Leading up to the Summit countries worked on their own plans to slow climate change.

In August President Obama and EPA announced the Clean Power Plan, an important step in reducing carbon pollution from power plants. In November President Obama announced that he had rejected the controversial Keystone XL Pipeline that would carry dirty tar sands oil from Canada.

It is believed that the Climate Summit has achieved important agreement by the world's nations, and we can be hopeful that positive actions will be forthcoming.

In early December, despite several weeks remaining in the year, scientists had already declared that 2015 was the hottest year ever. The NOAA website has a headline saying "2015 is Earth's warmest year by widest margin on record." With the succession of years breaking previous records it is clear that the world must work together on the climate change problem.

It will still be challenging for our governments to actually follow through on pledges that were made in Paris, and it will be up to us to keep pushing.

Thanks for reading my comments. As leader of our group I welcome your feedback.

Alan Lawrence, 920-730-9515 or alan\_lawrence99@yahoo.com

**We need to keep the pressure on!  
Let your feelings be known!**



Rallying in Paris



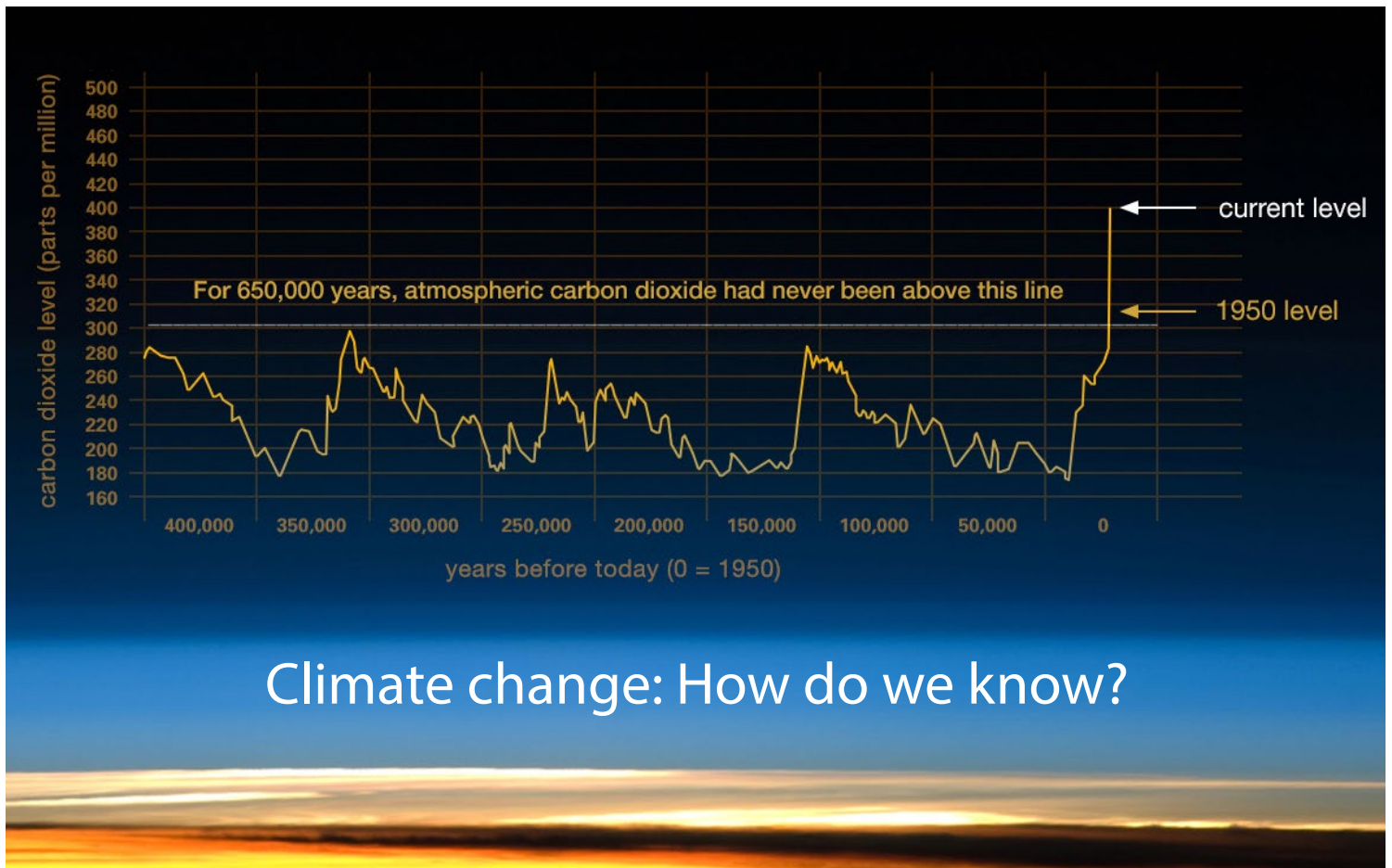
Rallying in Madison

## Water and Regulations

The disaster with lead-poisoned water in Flint, Michigan is heart-wrenching. The carelessness leading to it should give us all some concern. Cutting costs and ignoring science lead to seriously expensive mistakes.

Elected lawmakers sometimes repeal protective regulations for our water, ignoring the science behind the regulations.

Among the budget approaches being considered and enacted across the country is the privatization of public water systems. Assembly Bill 554/Senate Bill 432 in the Wisconsin legislature would allow Wisconsin communities to sell our water systems and infrastructure to private, out of state companies - and take away our control over how we get our water. That means we could be left paying higher prices for less control over the water we bathe in, cook with, and drink.



## Climate change: How do we know?

This graph, based on the comparison of atmospheric samples contained in ice cores and more recent direct measurements, provides evidence that atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> has increased since the Industrial Revolution. (Credit: Vostok ice core data/J.R. Petit et al.; NOAA Mauna Loa CO<sub>2</sub> record.)

### Sea level rise

Global sea level rose about 17 centimeters (6.7 inches) in the last century. The rate in the last decade, however, is nearly double that of the last century.

### Global temperature rise

All three major global surface temperature reconstructions show that Earth has warmed since 1880.5 Most of this warming has occurred since the 1970s, with the 20 warmest years having occurred since 1981 and with all 10 of the warmest years occurring in the past 12 years. Even though the 2000s witnessed a solar output decline resulting in an unusually deep solar minimum in 2007-2009, surface temperatures continue to increase.

### Warming oceans

The oceans have absorbed much of this increased heat, with the top 700 meters (about 2,300 feet) of ocean showing warming of 0.302 degrees Fahrenheit since 1969.

### Shrinking ice sheets

The Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets have decreased in mass. Data from NASA's Gravity Recovery and Climate Experiment show Greenland lost 150 to 250 cubic kilometers (36 to 60 cubic miles) of ice per year between 2002 and 2006, while Antarctica lost about 152 cubic kilometers (36 cubic miles) of ice between 2002 and 2005.

### Declining Arctic sea ice

Both the extent and thickness of Arctic sea ice has declined rapidly over the last several decades.

### Glacial retreat

Glaciers are retreating almost everywhere around the world — including in the Alps, Himalayas, Andes, Rockies, Alaska and Africa.

### Extreme events

The number of record high temperature events in the United States has been increasing, while the number of record low temperature events has been decreasing, since 1950. The U.S. has also witnessed increasing numbers of intense rainfall events.

### Ocean acidification

Since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, the acidity of surface ocean waters has increased by about 30 percent. This increase is the result of humans emitting more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere and hence more being absorbed into the oceans. The amount of carbon dioxide absorbed by the upper layer of the oceans is increasing by about 2 billion tons per year.

### Decreased snow cover

Satellite observations reveal that the amount of spring snow cover in the Northern Hemisphere has decreased over the past five decades and that the snow is melting earlier.

Credit: <http://climate.nasa.gov/evidence/>  
(References cited on web site)

For a wealth of information check out-  
<http://climate.nasa.gov>

## Fox Valley Sierra Group **OUTINGS**

### **April 2, Saturday**

#### **Hike the Ice Age Trail - Eau Claire Dells Segment**

This segment is located about 16 miles east of Wausau. We'll set off on our hike down the IAT in late morning. The trail follows the Eau Claire River and will lead us to a breathtaking waterfall. Carry a picnic lunch to enjoy along the trail as we learn why this area was designated a State Natural Area. Approx. 6 miles round trip. Contact: Kelly Ramstack, 920-540-9139.



### **April 16, Saturday**

#### **2nd Annual Fox River Earth Day Hike**

Our group is again organizing an Earth Day event for the community. It will take place April 16, kicking off the Earth Day week. Activities begin and end at FREEA, 1000m Ballard Ave., Appleton, home of the Fox River Environmental Education Alliance and The Refuge. The hike is planned along the Fox River right from FREEA and going to Peabody Park. We'll have refreshments and activities there. People can turn back and enjoy a short hike, or they can continue on for the 5.5 mile adventure. We'll continue to College Avenue, cross the bridge and hike along the southern shore on the Newberry Trail to Olde Oneida Street. Then cross back to the northern shore utilizing trails on the Eagle Flats. Rest rooms and food can be found at Stone Cellar Brewpub, Pullmans at Trolley Square, Warch Campus Center at Lawrence University, or at locations not far off the walk.



Details will be available in the next issue. Put this on your calendar and plan to be there either as a helper, a participant or both.

### **April 27 - June 15, Wed Evenings**

#### **Afterwork Paddle**

Weekly Sierra Club canoe and kayak outings are beginning this spring on Little Lake Butte des Morts. The put in and takeout will be at Fritse Park on the west side of the lake in the town of Menasha. We will be putting in at 6 PM starting April 27 for an evening paddle on the lake. The outing will provide an opportunity to unwind and allow participants to observe local waterfowl. The Pelican nesting sites on the east side of the lake are pretty neat to observe from a self-powered water craft. The outings will be led by John Engel. John has been canoeing and white water kayaking for over 40 years. John and his wife Sue have completed many wilderness canoe trips in Canada and in 1989 a 258 mile trip in Alaska finishing 100 miles from the Arctic Ocean at Umiat. John still is an avid kayaker and this summer will be paddling the Middle Fork of the Salmon River. Participants are encouraged to arrive at Fritse Park by 5:45 PM to unload boats and sign in. The outings will begin April 27 and end June 15 (the lake will turn green). All participants will be required to wear life jackets and provide their own canoes or kayaks. For additional information contact John Engel (920)475-1472



Snowshoe outing at Navarino Nature Center on Jan. 23rd and looking for Mr. Porcupine. Which they found.

**Outings:** *Get outside and join us on one of our outings! They are a great way to meet other outdoor enthusiasts. Outings are open to members and non-members alike. In order to participate, sign up at one of our general meetings or contact the outings leader directly. Time and meeting locations of outings can change. Some trips are weather dependent. Times are not listed in these descriptions to ensure participants will check with trip leaders before proceeding.*



Photo by Wisconsin DNR

## Needed: Someone To Take Over Fox Valley Sierra Group Garlic Mustard Pulling Project in 2016

This past May we have noticed a significant decrease in the amount of garlic mustard growing along the Indians Mounds Trail while pulling garlic mustard at High Cliff State Park. We have seen an increase in the amount of native wild flowers growing where garlic mustard once existed along the Indian Mounds Trail because of our work.

In addition, we have started pulling garlic mustard at Memorial Park in Combined Locks.

I am looking for someone to take over the FVSG Garlic Mustard Pulling Project so we don't lose what we have accomplished during the past 8-10 years.

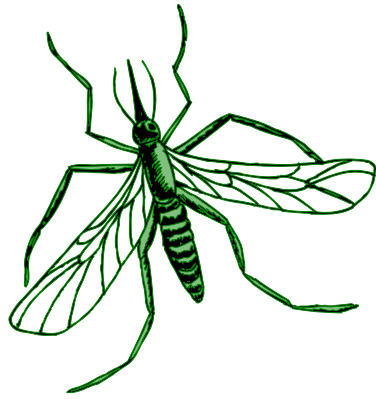
If you are interested, please contact me. I will work with you this coming spring in 2016. Contact me: 920-739-6041 or email: dschaber@athenet.net.

## Welcome New Members

Appleton	Raymond Eggers	Gayle Trzebiatowski	David Vanderloh
Jon Awe	Tom Kirchhoff	Kaukauna	Oneida
Julian Delfino	Jerry Lauby	Tim Heinzen	Norbert Skenandore
Mrs Bernie Draxler-laurich	John And Patricia Maurer	Germaine Kempen	Oshkosh
Tom Hartman	Bruce Meadows	Matt Lueck	Joe Carriveau
Jane Heegeman	Judith Michels	Kimberly	G Duarte and K Corneliw
Nancy Hennessy	Laurel M Nett	Kate Trnka	Rita Faust
A Jackson	Alexis Pegram-Piper	Larson	Laura J Giffin
Mr Mark Jennerjohn	Stephen & Barbara Romberger	Larry Johnson	Roxanne Hallock
Marcia Knapp	Jeffrey Siemers	Little Chute	Katherine Holliday
John A Lehto	Barbara J Surwillo	Joe & Leone Eiting	Suzanne and Merlin Lannbrecht
J. Levenhagen	Richard Whaley	Malone	Patricia Lapoint
Mr Steven Lockhart	Vicki Zydowicz	Keegan Denton	Brian and Sharen Lewellyn
Bonnie Nutting	Forest Junction	Marion	Ms Lynn Monroe
Stacey Otteson	Stephanie & Todd Davis	Michael Meyer	Nathalie Moore
Ann Palmer	Green Bay	Menasha	Lori Pierquet
Karn Peck	Lewis Anthony	Mark Damie	Callaghan Schellenger
Karl Puterbaugh	Mary Beardmore	JFaithe and Daiel L Daoust	Mr Carl Schroeder
Valerie Schilling	Darrel Bricco	Joanne Dietz	Elizabeth Schubert
Ronald Sell	Jean Brien	Mr Kristopher Schwartzbauer	M F Summerville
Victoria Bennett Veum	John Van Dalen	N. Fond du Lac	John Talin
Christopher Washburn	Tina Deck	Barbara Halsey	Pickett
Garth Zimmermann	Suzan Giesau	Neenah	Vicki Farley
Brillion	Ronald Goska	Charlotte Arendt	Ripon
David S & Kathrine Giese	Becky Gretz	M Bernier	Audrey M Conant
Grace Meetz	Karen Gustafson	Erik Christianson	Jerald Davidson
Butte Des Morts	Ms Barbara Juelich	Laurie Erickson	Richard Gauthier
Steven Demuth	Vickie Keigley	Dinny Grueneberg	Alan & Lisa Jorgenson
Campbellsport	Mr Jerry Kendall	Erika Heuel	Robin Woods
Jean Noeske	Mr Arnold Lelis	Ms Annette Hoffman	Scandinavia
Chilton	Alissa Lick	Lynn Koss	Kevin Hamm
James Christopherson	Sherrie Macco	Harry Long	Shiocton
Frederick Klaeser	Natalie A. Mancini	Angela Meier	Janelle Merry
DePere	Robert Mongin	Ms Brenda Nelson	Sturgeon Bay
Mildred Jacobson	Ms Patti Myers	Joyce Povolny	Clara Wendland
Robert and Barb Joswick	Lowell Rice	Laurie Heller-Sokolowski	Waupaca
Dorothy Ninham	Alex Roup	New Franklin	Benjamin Achten
Emily Owens	Jennifer Scott	Michael Baenen	Ms DeAnna Isham
Combined Locks	Chris Seidl	Ms Angela Speerschneider	Barbara Mehlberg
Tom Strover	Irma Smet	New Holstein	Moede
DePere	Patricia Rahikainen	Jan Mentink	Kevin Will
Mr John Calabrese	Nancy Sweetland	New London	Susan Young
Virginia Fleck	Darlene Ward	Darrell Dorschner	Waupun
Ms Susan Giesau	Karen Welhouse	Oakfield	Jeanne Dupuis
R Harrington,MD	Ms Mary Wochos	Ellen Garner	Cora & Brian Hemp
Kathleen Masse	Green Lake	Ogdensburg	Patricia Taylor-RomeroWautoma
Ms Jane Meredith	Penny Howell	Angela Pankratz	Nancy Lueddecke
Ms Judy Parins	Michelle Smick	Omro	Winnnebago
Mr Daniel Robinson	Greenville	Larry Hildebrand	Tia Krueger
Mr Randy Toellner	Catherine Kiesow		
Fond du Lac	Hilbert		
Lisa And Michael Drees	Linda Evans		
	Iola		
	Betty Hafemann		
	Nancy Morris		

# Mosquitoes

Most of us think of mosquitoes as the pesky insects inflicting painful and itchy bites, and creating annoying buzzing. They can make it unpleasant outdoors. Fortunately window screens and repellents generally keep them outdoors.



“World’s most dangerous animal”

Trying to look at the positive side we ponder how these insects fit into the ecosystem. We realize that their larvae are eaten by other aquatic life and that adult insects are food for bats and dragon flies. This knowledge makes their stings a bit easier to bear. But just barely.

Although we cannot know for sure, there are studies saying there is good evidence that half of all humans ever born have died because of mosquito bites. It isn't the sting, of course, but the diseases spread by the mosquito when it bites. Malaria is the worst of those diseases and is itself credited in some reports as the killer of half of all humans ever born.

Yellow fever, along with malaria, killed more than 36,000 workers trying to construct the Panama Canal. Walter Reed proved that mosquitoes spread these diseases. Yellow fever causes 200,000 infections and 30,000 deaths every year.

The latest scare with mosquitoes is the Zika virus they can spread that is causing birth defects. Brazil alone reports more than one million infected people, and the virus has been identified in another 20 countries including Mexico and the Caribbean Islands.

West Nile Virus, also spread by mosquitoes, hit the United States hard in 2012, sickening and killing many animals and killing 286 people. It remains a problem. No vaccine against WNV infection is available. The best method to reduce the rates of WNV infection is mosquito control to reduce breeding populations of mosquitoes.

That goal isn't met well with this recent headline news: Arctic mosquitoes will increase with climate change.

Mosquitoes will appear in much greater numbers in the Arctic as it warms because of climate change, with negative consequences for caribou and the indigenous people who live off them, researchers warn.

Arctic mosquito eggs develop in ponds and hatch with the ice melt around May. The study reveals that warming temperatures cause the mosquitoes to hatch earlier and shortens their development time when they are vulnerable to predators. This increases their chances of surviving until adulthood.

The survival rates for Arctic mosquitoes will increase by more than 50 percent with a 2°C temperature rise in the region, says a Dartmouth College study. And considering that Arctic temperatures are rising at twice the rate of the global average this is bad news.

# Natural Gas Leak in California

One of the biggest environmental disasters in US history is happening right now. Perhaps you haven't heard of it.

A massive natural gas leak about 25 miles north of Los Angeles has been spewing about 62 million standard cubic feet of methane per day into the air since a well casing suffered damage on Oct. 23.

At its height, the leak more than doubled the methane emissions of the entire Los Angeles Basin and surpassed what is released by all industrial activity in the state.

By the end of January it is estimated that the leak put out the equivalent of 2.1 million metric tons of carbon dioxide - more greenhouse gas than 440,000 cars emit in a year. That's as much as driving a car more than 5 billion miles or around the earth more than 200,000 times.

The Southern California Gas Company said that plugging the leak would take several months. The single leak accounts for a quarter of the state's entire methane emissions, and the leak has been called the worst environmental disaster since the BP oil spill in 2010.

Pound for pound, the comparative impact of methane on climate change is more than 25 times greater than carbon dioxide over a 100-year period. Methane is actually up to 100 times worse than carbon dioxide for global warming in its first five years, and 72 times worse over 20 years.

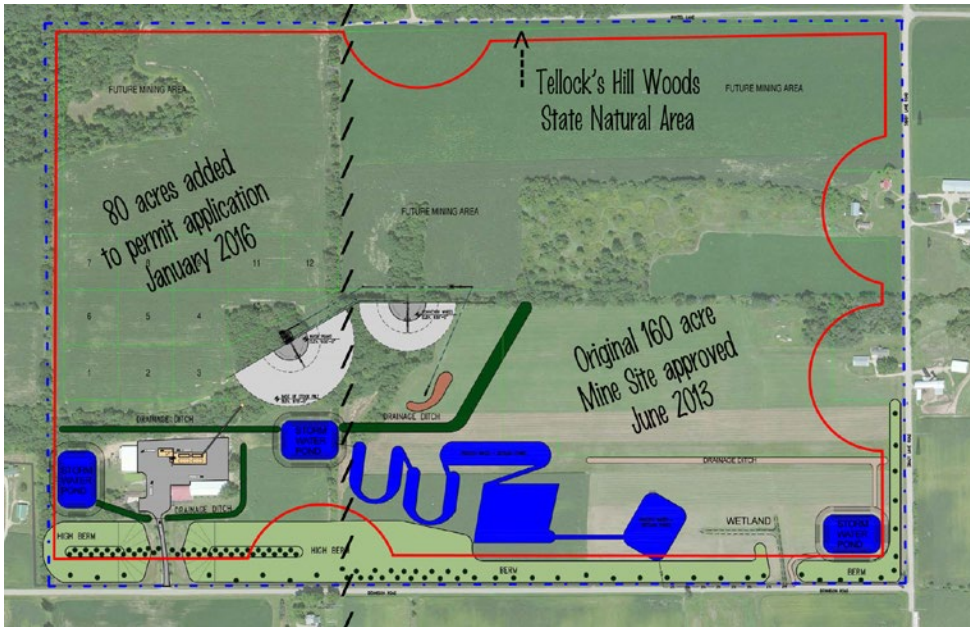


Photo from Environmental Defense Fund ([www.edf.org](http://www.edf.org))

# Single Mittens

It's that time of year where you might have mittens without mates or a single, lonely glove. Don't throw them out! Bring them to a FVSG meeting and they will have a happy new life when they get upcycled in a craft project I am doing with nursing home residents. I'm especially looking for kid's sizes. Clean and in good condition only, please. Thanks! Nancy Brown-Koeller.





## Union Sand Mine Plans to Expand Operation

by Kelly Ramstack

In June 2013, A.F. Gelhar Company, LLC of Markesan was granted a conditional use permit (CUP) by the Waupaca County Planning & Zoning Committee for an industrial sand mine. The proposed operation encompasses 160 acres in the Town of Union near Manawa. The land is zoned agricultural and sits adjacent to Tellock's Hill Woods State Natural Area. So far, no mining has begun perhaps because the company is now planning on extending their operation.

A new CUP application was filed by A.F. Gelhar in January 2016 to include an additional 80 acres to their mining operation. This land is to the west of the original permitted 160 acres. A.F. Gelhar has a contract to purchase the land should they be granted the permit. The land includes a local business called Dennison Building & Supply which is zoned commercial. Non-metallic mining is not a permitted activity on commercially zoned land so A.F. Gelhar has filed a request to rezone the land to agricultural enterprise. In order to rezone the land, the Town of Union must first amend their comprehensive plan to reflect the zoning change.

A public hearing on the Town of Union Comp Plan amendment will take place on Monday, March 7, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. at the Union Town Hall. Immediately following the hearing the town board will vote on making the change. If the amendment is approved, next they will vote on the zoning change followed by voting on the CUP application. A few weeks later the CUP application will go before the Waupaca County Planning & Zoning Committee. Even though the Town of Union board voted to deny A.F. Gelhar's original CUP application in 2012, the county went ahead and approved it anyways. I believe they will approve this CUP application as well, regardless of what our town recommends.

This battle is another example of how important it is to elect officials who care about protecting the environment as well as protecting the health and welfare of the people they serve. The laws should not be changed to benefit the few.

Questions/Comments?

Email Kelly Ramstack at [kjramstack@yahoo.com](mailto:kjramstack@yahoo.com) or call 920-540-9139.

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**Next Newsletter Deadline  
 for submitting materials  
 March 15th  
 for April thru August Issue.**



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet



## With your help we can protect the wolf

Sierra Club Water Sentinels are the first line of defense of America's waters. We live on the water planet. However, water is a finite resource with only about 1% of the world's water actually being available for human consumption. Water pollution & over-use are threatening both the quality & quantity of our water resources at an alarming rate.

**Lead the pack and JOIN Sierra Club.**

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Senior	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 35
Student	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 35
Limited Income	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 35

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Fox Valley Sierra Group  
*Of The John Muir Chapter Of The Sierra Club*

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[sierraclub.org/wisconsin/foxvalley](http://sierraclub.org/wisconsin/foxvalley)

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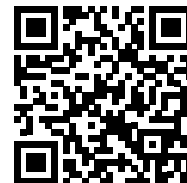
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