

DCEC Newsletter

Environmental News for Door County



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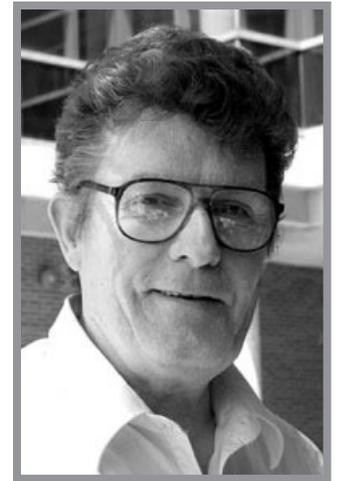
Summer 2013

Polar Ice and Climate Change Expert At DCEC Summer Program

“The world is waiting for our leadership to return on conservation issues that were lost in the last three decades! We can’t wait for top/down inspiration, that will never happen, it has to come from the bottom/up,” says Professor George Allan Stone. George Stone, the instructor of Natural Science at the Milwaukee Area Technical College recently returned from a three-week cruise on a former Russian spy vessel now engaged in research, exploring the islands of Antarctica and the Antarctic Peninsula. During that cruise he and colleagues were able to spend time on many of the small islands, using small inflatable “Kodiak” boats to see first-hand the icebergs forming by calving as the glaciers move toward the sea, the action increased by global warming.

Stone has organized and presented sessions at several national and international conferences on climate change. In 2008, he participated in two seven-day excursions in **Iceland** and **Norway**, where he viewed first hand the accelerating meltdown of icecaps and outlet glaciers. Dr. Stone has led the charge in many ambitious energy initiatives at MATC, including co-chairing the annual **Wisconsin Renewable Energy Summit**, which drew 2,500 people last March.

His writing career began with a book called, ***A Legend of Wolf Song***, which was about free expression in the form of a howling wolf - a combination of natural history and political fable. A second book, ***Blizzard***, plunged him into science fiction with a cautionary tale about a weather warfare experiment gone horribly awry. Combined, the two novels were published in 20 editions in 11 countries. Dr. Stone did three national book tours and landed a contract to write four more books.



The self-described “nature freak” earned his bachelor’s degree from the University of Miami and a doctorate from the University of Colorado at Boulder. His first teaching job was in the **School of Geology and Geophysics** at the University of Oklahoma, where he was a tenured associate professor and director of graduate studies. The National Science Foundation awarded him a post-doctoral fellowship at the University of Cambridge. He later was a visiting investigator at the **Geophysical Laboratory of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, D.C.**

When offered a full-time position at MATC eight years ago, Stone grabbed the opportunity. Since then he has developed several new courses, including **“Climate Change Fundamentals”** and an online class called **“Weather Fundamentals.”** He and colleagues also developed a course called **“Energy in Nature, Technology and Society,”** aimed at giving students a basic understanding of energy and how it affects the planet, the economy and their careers. Dr. Stone is a “regular” on Wisconsin Public Radio as he relates the stories of his many research travels.

DCEC is proud to bring Dr. George Stone to Door County as our annual free summer program presenter, where he will address your concerns about: glacial ice loss, global warming, climate and weather changes, and how our Great Lakes are affected by these natural and human-caused transitions.

Don’t miss this great presentation!

Bailey’s Harbor Town Hall • Wednesday, September 11th • 7:00 p.m. • Come early, seating is limited • Bring your friends

A Full Season of D.C.E.C. Seminars

This has been another really successful season of seminar presentations at Crossroads At Big Creek, Collins Learning Center which began in **April** with the powerful documentary, ***Last Call At The Oasis***, by Jessica Wu. This is an in-depth examination of the crises threatening the world water supply and make no mistake, as the film depicts, water is about to become more valuable than oil.

The **May program** brought Andrew Werthmann, Wisconsin organizer for the PEW Campaign on Human Health, from Eau Claire, Wisconsin, speaking on the ***“Antibiotics Increasing in Our Groundwater Supply.”*** The overuse of antibiotics for healthy farm animals to stimulate growth and production is causing serious detrimental residue in our water supply.

In response to requests and interest in the trend toward the practice of fracking for natural gas and oil, the featured the true story of people who were affected by fracking operations on their property. ***“GASLAND” Can you light your water on fire?***, is another forceful documentary during which filmmaker Josh Fox's cross-country odyssey investigates the actual process of hydraulic fracking. Interviewing families, Josh found things had gone horribly wrong, from illness to hair loss to flammable water, and he found a web of secrets, lies, conspiracy and contamination all tied to gag orders.

In July, DCEC in cooperation with Kewaunee Cares and Clean Water Action Council sponsored a presentation by Prof. Angela Bauer, Professor of Human Biology at UW/GB, at the Farm Market Kitchen facility in Algoma. Dr. Bauer addressed the concerns over the presence of endocrine-disrupting chemicals in aquifers supplying our drinking water. These chemicals produce adverse developmental, reproductive neurological and immune effects in humans and wildlife. The following is a brief summary of her presentation:

We should be concerned about endocrine disruptors because they:

- Influence reproductive process
- Are hormone mimickers similar to environmental pollutants
- Commonly target normal sex hormone pathways
- Are implicated in increased incidents of breast cancer, infertility, prostate and reproductive abnormalities, social behavior and intelligence
- Dominate natural steroid pathways where artificial steroids are synthesized
- Can antagonize normal hormone action by interfering with synthesis

Examples of endocrine disrupting chemicals in:

- Plastics of all kinds – baby bottles - packaging – Butylated hydroxyanisole (food anti-oxidants)
- PCB's, PBB's, Pentachlorophenol (PCP)
- Pesticides – Amitrol, Atrazine, Chlordane, DDT, Dieldrin, Heptachlor, Lindane, Malathion, Methoxychlor, Toxaphene,
- Assorted phthalate compounds.
- They all affect endocrine or thyroid functions.
- Low levels of endocrine disruptors are difficult to detect and most dangerous

How can they get in my water source?

- Animal waste – natural leaching into groundwater and over application
- Human septic waste – improper system or lack of treatment
- Improper disposition of medication or exceeding dosages

2009 Study area – Kewaunee, Brown, Calumet and Fond du Lac counties
Shallow soil, karst carbonate and high agricultural usage
high bacteria, (coliform and e-coli) and nitrate levels

Who Said This?

"...short-sighted men who in their greed and selfishness will, if permitted, rob our country of half its charm by their reckless extermination of all useful and beautiful wild things..."

Town Roads, Trees and Traditional Aesthetic Values

The “2012 Traveler Motivation Study” commissioned by the Door County Tourism Board is worthy of some consideration when making town road decisions. According to this study, the second most important characteristic in choosing Door County as a leisure destination is its **“scenic beauty and visual appeal.”** You have been made aware of the long controversies occurring in Liberty Grove and Gibraltar Towns over the expansion of “clear zones” on both sides of the more scenic roads in both towns, where safety has become a focal point to justify straightening, widening, and general character assassination of these precious county assets.

When safety for motorists doesn't seem sufficient to justify tree removal, the argument has been given that some of the trees will fall on power lines in the event of a big storm or that there needs to be room to shove the snow during winter. I suppose someone has tried to convince those in authority that the motoring public would like to have a better view of the roadside bluffs, so that would also justify removing the vegetation. The long-term effect of exposing the bluff areas to the forces of nature does ultimately result in further fragmentation of the soft dolostone. Ancient cedar trees have a nasty habit of living for several hundred years in the crevices, helping to retain the bluff as they have for centuries past, so obvious on Cottage Row in Gibraltar and other pristine county locations.

Isle View Road in Liberty Grove has been a little-traveled wonder for all the years as we watched the various Europe Lake water level control efforts at the standpipe culvert at the north end of the Lake, when “parties unknown” sought to raise the water level. This little town road soon evolved into a short-cut between the ferry dock at Northport and Highway 42, eliminating Gills Rock and the infamous curves and became a preferred route for trucks. Now it has been improved and the character of Isle View has evolved into a wider and straighter, faster and flatter road. Like so many others, now it has been “improved” and the road's character has vanished.



The Heritage Road program that was initiated in Liberty Grove by concerned road residents and property owners is unique in promoting the designation of less-traveled and scenic roads within the Town, as roads that deserve special consideration. This proposal was met with mixed reactions by the Town officials, indicating initial support of the Heritage concept, then not as much as various unsupportive personal interests came into play.

Fortunately, many of the leaders in the protection efforts come from areas of our country that are already blessed with roads that are wider and straighter, faster and flatter and can appreciate the pastoral ambiance and solitude sought after by Jens Jensen, Norbert Blei, George Vukelich, and a host of others. Unfortunately, it also seems that often the thrust for changing our appreciated visual assets begins with local people, perhaps not realizing what is happening, ever so gradually.

Maybe, if we are dedicated and persistent enough, the coming generations will somehow become endowed with a new-borne appreciation of these precious assets that we all have inherited, and will develop a new sense of preservation and living with all things natural. It has to happen here, it will not and cannot come from Washington or Madison.

(JMV)

DCEC Joined Green Groups Urge President Obama to Toughen CAFO Regs

Federal regulators have taken a “catch me if you can” mentality toward addressing water pollution issues stemming from concentrated animal feeding operations, more than 230 environmental groups told President Obama in late July.

The organizations warned in their letter that CAFOs generate millions of tons of waste each year containing nutrients, pathogens, antibiotics and metals that can wash into waterways. U.S. EPA, they said, has failed to adequately permit and enforce violations at operations.

“As a candidate for President and during the transition, you promised to control pollution from industrial livestock operations,” the groups wrote. “Now, four and a half years later, these facilities are still poorly understood and their pollution is inadequately controlled.”

The Sierra Club, Pew Charitable Trusts, Consumers Union, American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and Food and Water Watch were among the national organizations signing the letter. Local groups from

30 states also joined including DCEC.

EPA has been lax in handing out permits to restrict discharges, the environmental groups charged. Almost 60 percent of CAFOs do not operate under National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits that are required for point sources of pollution under the Clean Water Act.

“Permits are critical to ensuring careful review of local water resource vulnerabilities near CAFOs and the adequacy of facilities’ manure management practices,” the organizations said. “Unfortunately, however, the current regulations have not functioned as anticipated.” The groups are urging the president to direct EPA to strengthen its rule by narrowing its definition of “agricultural storm water,” an area that is exempted from regulation. They are also asking EPA to lower the size thresholds that determine what constitutes a large CAFO, to increase oversight of manure that’s transported and applied offsite, to increase its oversight of companies that use contract growers and to make permit records more transparent.

Quick Response Actions to Take when Violation is Suspected involving Runoff or Spill Issues

1. Immediately call the DNR 24-hour, toll free hotline: 1-800-TIP-WDNR (1-800-943-0003) and request a conservation warden come to both document your call and sample the area suspicious for contamination-ditch, creek, wetland, etc. There are about 200 conservation and field wardens throughout the state. A good relationship with your local warden might make the difference between getting a quick response and getting his machine. If you know your county warden’s name, find contact information using the websites listed below, or check the directory of field offices for your county.

- To find a warden: http://dnr.wi.gov/staffdir/_newsearch/ContactSearchExt.aspx
- Directory of field offices: <http://dnr.wi.gov/Contact/fieldlocations.html>

2. In addition to the above, report the same via the electronic hotline. Be very specific about location, date & time, details of your observations. The hotline can be found at: le.hotline@wisconsin.gov

3. Document area suspicious for contamination with your own photos and use date on camera or sign in foreground with date. If you have a Smart Phone, use this to capture a photo.

4. Contact the Ag Runoff Management Specialist for your region. Include precise details of your hotline call, your talk with the warden (or no answer), your photos. Always copy that email to the Coordinator of Ag Runoff Programs around the state, he is; Tom Bauman and can be reached at: Thomas.bauman@wisconsin.gov

5. After that is completed, write an email that briefly expresses your observations and your concerns related to above. Send this to the following individuals for maximum exposure to the issue you are respectfully addressing, and request a response. Ask what level of action they are taking to evidence of toxic air, contaminated wells, and possible violation of public health standards.

WDNR Secretary Cathy Stepp at: cathy.stepp@wisconsin.gov

WDNR Deputy Secretary Matt Maroney at: matt.maroney@wisconsin.gov

Your Senator and your Assembly Representative at: <http://legis.wisconsin.gov/Pages/default.aspx>

Keep copies of every email you send and keep them all together in a single folder.

A New Menace To Our Great Lakes

As if toxic algae, invasive mussels and industrial pollution isn't enough, the Great Lakes now have another potential threat that few had even imagined until recently: untold millions of plastic litter bits, some visible only through a microscope.

Scientists who have studied gigantic masses of floating plastic in the world's oceans are now reporting similar discoveries in the lakes that make up one-fifth of the world's fresh water. They retrieved the particles from Lakes Superior, Huron and Erie last year. This summer, they're widening the search to Lakes Michigan and Ontario, skimming the surface with finely meshed netting dragged behind sailing vessels.

Researchers aboard the *Niagara*, one of the tall ships touring the Great Lakes, surveyed Lakes Ontario, Erie and Huron. Currently the effort involves Lake Michigan, where they expect to find increased high levels of microplastics because of the large cities located on the lake. Another reason is that the exchange rate of Lake Michigan is much slower than the other Great Lakes, making it likely that "beads" will remain longer because the complete exchange rate is estimated at 99 years.

Experts say it's unclear how long "microplastic" pollution has been in the lakes or how it is affecting the environment. Studies are under way to determine whether fish are eating the particles.

The newly identified hazard is the latest of many for a Great Lakes fish population that has been hammered by natural enemies like the parasitic sea lamprey, which nearly wiped out lake trout, and man-made contamination. Until the research is completed, it won't be clear whether the pollution will affect fishing guidelines, the use of certain plastics or cities that discharge treated wastewater into the lakes.

Scientists have already made a couple startling finds. The sheer number of plastic specks in some samples hauled from Lake Erie, the

shallowest and smallest by volume, were higher than in comparable samples taken in the oceans.

Also, while it's unknown where the ocean plastic came from, microscopic examination of Great Lakes samples has produced a smoking gun: many particles are perfectly round pellets. The scientists suspect they are abrasive "micro beads" used in personal care products such as facial and body washes and toothpaste.

They're so minuscule that they flow through screens at waste treatment plants and wind up in the lakes. At the urging of scientists and advocates, some big companies have agreed to phase them out. A research team collected up to 1.7 million tiny particles last year in Lake Erie, which acts as something of a "sink" because it receives the outflow from the three lakes to the north – Superior, Michigan and Huron, and preliminary samples indicate Lake Ontario is as contaminated as Lake Erie, if not more so.



Most beads are microscopic

The Great Lakes are no stranger to ecological calamity. Zebra and quagga mussels have destabilized food chains, and ravenous Asian carp are poised to invade. Runaway algae blooms that had been stamped out a generation ago have returned. Dozens

of harbors and river mouths are fouled with toxic waste.

A more complicated question is whether the particles are soaking up toxins in the water, potentially contaminating fish that eat them – and sending them up the food chain.

Lab examination had detected two potentially harmful compounds in the Lake Erie plastic debris: PAHs, which are created during incineration of coal or oil products; and PCBs, which were used in electrical transformers and hydraulic systems before they were banned in 1979. Both are capable of causing cancer and birth defects.

Voluntary GMO Labeling Now Permitted by USDA

The USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) recently approved a label for meat and liquid egg products that would inform consumers about whether the product contains *genetically modified ingredients*. The approval marks the first time the department has approved a non-GMO label from a third party.

The verification seal comes from the *Non-GMO Project*, a non-profit organization “committed to preserving and building sources of non-GMO products, educating consumers and providing verified non-GMO choices.” The seal allows consumers to know if the animal product they’re about to consume was fed genetically engineered crops like soy, corn and alfalfa. The FDA has not approved any genetically modified animals for the food supply, but some animals do eat GMO feed.

Genetically modified foods were approved for human consumption in the United States in 1995, but the FDA never required them to be labeled as such.

The FDA responded to the Non-GMO Project’s labeling efforts in April: “The FDA supports voluntary labeling for food derived from genetic engineering. Currently, food manufacturers may indicate through voluntary labeling whether foods have or have not been developed through genetic engineering provided that such labeling is truthful and not misleading.”

The USDA adopted the Non-GMO Project’s requirements, auditing process and standard. The USDA also must approve all labels before the product is delivered. According to the Non-GMO Project website, label verification is also offered to entire restaurants and delis for select dishes and individual ingredients.



(Condensed from CNN)

Created Wetlands Remain A Wastewater Treatment Option

For a number of years, DCEC has been promoting the use of created wetlands as a viable option to mounds and conventional wastewater treatment systems. The advantages remain the same; much more effective and thorough removal of nutrients and pathogens before the cleansed wastewater becomes a part of our groundwater supply. This is especially true in areas where the underlying dolostone prevents proper ground filtration and wetland use becomes a viable option to mounds.

The cost will be equal to or somewhat higher than a mound system, but the advantages outweigh the extra cost. Once the complete cycle through a wetland system is completed the water is suitable for irrigation or similar uses. An outstanding example of wetland purification use is in the Fiji Islands where the resorts use wetland systems to treat their wastewater and the outflow is used for irrigation of the ornamentals and decorative ponds

with floating lily pads. One of these ecological resorts is the legacy of Jacques Cousteau, world-famous ocean explorer.

The city of Petaluma, California, has built a created wetland system financed by a bond issue and designed to treat the entire flow of municipal waste in that large city. The system is functioning as planned and is a successful option to the usual methods used by most conventional cities. In Wisconsin, the Riverbend Ecological Center at West Bend, and the Kettle Moraine Lutheran School, have both been operating on created wetland systems for at least a decade. Visit our website, www.dcec-wi.org for a brochure on created wetland systems and the Stephen John Wastewater Manual for Homeowners, both downloadable.

(JMV)

Why not become a part of the oldest environmental organization in northeast Wisconsin?

You can become a member, quickly and easily, by filling out the included membership blank.

You can even become a member of the Board of Directors and have a direct influence on issues affecting this great, beautiful county.

door county environmental council

() \$ 25 Individual () \$ 35 Family () \$ 50 Sustaining
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This amount would really help! Thanks!

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

DCEC Endowment Fund

The DCEC Endowment Fund exists so that the future of Door County's open spaces and family farms can be protected far into the future.

Every year the fund grows as contributions are made and the interest accumulates. You can help this important fund grow even faster by remembering DCEC in your estate plans. Each bequest, through your will and estate funding helps bring us one step closer to financial independence, allowing us to take tough, sometimes unpopular positions that protect our county for future generations.

Whether you can contribute now or later please make a point of supporting the DCEC ENDOWMENT FUND.

Legacies, memorials, and direct gifts are deeply appreciated. Please call or have your advisor contact Jerry Viste at: (920) 743-6003 or dcec@itol.com for further information.



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Homeowner Well Testing Program Continues

The DCEC initiated well water-testing program has been extremely successful with Liberty Grove and Gibraltar towns completed last season. Currently Egg Harbor Village and Town and the Town of Bailey's Harbor are cooperating in a jointly conducted private well water-testing program that will be completed in August of this year. In this testing program conducted under the supervision of Kevin Masarik, water specialist at UW/Stevens Point, the three units of government combined to make an efficient operation handled by the Egg Harbor Village office.

DCEC has been contributing up to \$500 for each town to utilize in promoting and advertising the testing program as an incentive for homeowners to examine the purity of their family's water source. The ultimate goal is to have the rest of the towns respond to this offer, with Sevastopol and Jacksonport remaining in northern Door. The results of the test remain confidential and a review of the results will be made by Kevin Masarik after the testing is completed and all the samples are analyzed. No one will require that you make any changes as the results are for your own information only.

The three test options available are:

Homeowners Package: Tests for coliform bacteria, nitrate, chlorine, hardness, alkalinity, and PH (acidity) for a cost of \$49.

Metals Package: tests for arsenic, lead, copper, iron, zinc, cadmium, magnesium, manganese, sodium, potassium, and sulphate for a cost of \$42.

DACT Screen Package: tests for a breakdown component of atrophine type pesticides costs \$27.

Choose all Packages: the total cost is \$110.

Residents that are interested in a program like this for your town should contact the town officers and express your wishes to participate in 2014. The only cost to the town is administering the program and getting the samples to Stevens Point for processing. The sample bottles are shipped to the town by the University prior to sampling and returned after the samples are drawn and recorded.

DCEC is proud to provide this service to ensure that your family can have reliable water now and into their future.

(JMV)

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



DCEC Incorporated in 1970 under the laws of Wisconsin as a nonprofit, tax-exempt corporation