

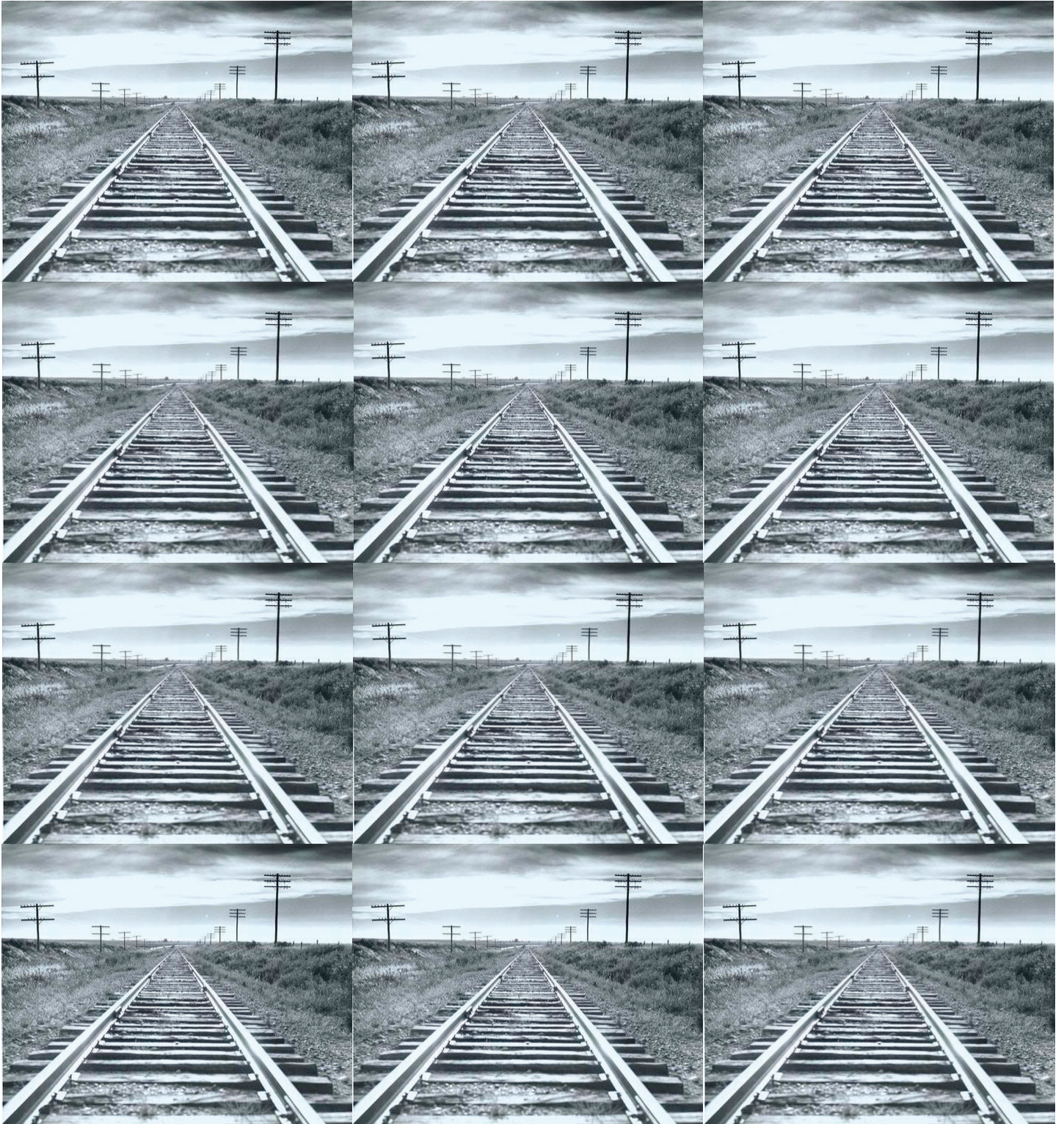
Celebrating 15 Years

1000 FRIENDS OF WISCONSIN

LANDSCAPES

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They started with the trains...

The Director's Desk

1000 Friends of Wisconsin

Created to advocate and promote uses of land, water and air that shape healthy communities where people want to live, work, and play.

Our work focuses on helping people make the connection between our land use and transportation decisions and our state's economic, environmental and cultural health.

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Our website has a new look.
www.1kfriends.org

Check it out!

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A few years ago we coined the term Anecdocracy for the practice of a government that developed legislation based on anecdotes. We were appalled by the number of bills that were justified by relying on various inaccurate stories and anecdotes.

Sadly, that term is outdated and now even seems a little quaint. We no longer have legislators that make up laws based on anecdotes. Now they simply make up their own facts to justify legislation. This practice deserves its own term: **Fauxtocracy**.

Fauxtocracy: (Fōh-tock'-ră-see) Government based on falsehoods, literally "false government". The practice of making up facts to justify wide ranging policy decisions based on stories, falsehoods or lies. From the French "faux," meaning false and "acracy" meaning system of government. Antonym: Democracy

Our once proud tradition of seeking innovative policies to protect our natural resources has gone the way of bipartisanship. The majority party is dismantling successful environmental programs based on blatantly false premises. They claim that we can't have a good environment and a good economy. (What a faux pas!)

For example, two northern legislators (one is the Assembly Majority Leader) want to get rid of the state's comprehensive planning law (Smart Growth.) In order to appeal to colleagues, they maintain that Smart Growth takes away local control (actually, it guarantees local control by requiring local development decisions to include local input.) They claim that Smart Growth tells people where to live and what industry a community can have (completely false.)

After those false statements they ignore any testimony that disagrees with their predetermined conclusion. They then use their majority status to pass the legislation with no minority support.

Another example is a "jobs creation" bill to allow waterfront property owners the ability to remove several dump trucks worth of dredged material from the lake every year without a permit. (How will this create jobs? They don't say.) The legislators claim that this will have no adverse affect on the lake. That's not what the fish think. This legislation would also limit the ability of the public to request a hearing on a permit application and it would require automatic approval of permit applications that take "too long" to issue. (20 days is too long?)

These same legislators always proclaim at the beginning of hearings that they are interested in protecting the environment and that they, themselves are environmentalists.

Let's just say that these so-called "environmentalists" are unlikely to find themselves voted into the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame in Stevens Point.

Steve Hiniker

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Steve Hiniker

It was a memorable year for the disruption, the chaos and the savage attacks on environmental programs.

Nothing about 2011 was normal.



TRANSPORTATION

Regional Passenger Rail System

The siege on environmental priorities actually began in December of 2010 when Governor-elect Scott Walker famously turned down \$810 million of federal aid to re-establish regional passenger rail to Wisconsin. The first leg of the system would have linked Madison to Chicago via Milwaukee. The next leg would have linked those cities to Minneapolis and St. Paul.

Passenger rail had long been a bipartisan priority for the state (former Republican Governor Tommy Thompson had championed the system for more than a decade and so did Democratic Governor Jim Doyle.) Walker claimed that the money would go back to Washington for debt relief. It didn't - it was reallocated to Michigan and other states that today are putting thousands to work building a regional rail system that will help bring more jobs to those states.



More jobs in Michigan - but not in Wisconsin.

Transit

Despite record increases in transit ridership and the loss of federal funds for at least one major transit system in Wisconsin, Governor Walker proposed cuts that threaten the ability of several systems to continue. The Governor proposed taking transit funding out of the Transportation Fund which would have made transit systems compete for general funds with schools systems and social programs. He also cut operating assistance by 10% starting in 2012. While the legislature stopped the funds from moving from the Transportation Fund, they approved his cuts.



Where's the bus?

Representative Robin Vos - a staunch opponent of transit systems - used his position as co-chair of the Joint Finance Committee to repeal Wisconsin Regional Transit Authority legislation - leaving transit systems with state cuts and no way of using local funds to replace those state cuts.

Highways

While state funds for schools, local government, local roads, transit, environmental programs, University of Wisconsin, and health care programs for the poor and elderly were all being cut in Walker's budget, highway spending was increased by 14%. While Walker was the darling of the roadbuilders in the governor's campaign both the roadbuilders and the governor denied those campaign contributions had anything to do with increase in highway spending.



Big spenders - at whose cost?

Local Roads

Get ready for a bumpy ride - more potholes in urban areas and more dirt roads in rural areas in 2012. While spending is up for the 11,000 miles of highways in Wisconsin, the 111,000 miles of local roads will get less money in 2012 and beyond. That means less road repairs and some rural roads that revert from asphalt to gravel. Interestingly, the road building lobby doesn't work on local roads as a rule. They specialize in building the major highways that received an increase in funding in the state budget.



A bumpy road ahead.

FARMLAND PROTECTION

Rod Nilsestuen, the late Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) led representatives of environmental groups, Realtors, farmers, municipal organizations, builders and regulators through a two year process of creating a vision for the future of farming in Wisconsin. Called the Working Lands Initiative, the group came up with dozens of policies that won unanimous support that would assure that agriculture would continue to grow in Wisconsin.



Field of dreams?

Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easement Program:

The state will honor commitments to farmers that had been jeopardized by Walker's budget, but no future funding for this program that keeps agricultural land in production will be made available.

Tax Incremental Financing

Over the years, TIF has undergone a slow metamorphosis from a tool to encourage redevelopment of blighted areas in urban areas to a sprawl fueling menace. Lawmakers took that one step further in the most recent session by allowing the town Brookfield to use TIF to pay for retail development.



- just another strip mall.

SMART GROWTH

It's not law yet, but the state assembly passed a bill that would make planning optional in Wisconsin. That's right - after eleven years of Comprehensive Planning as the law in Wisconsin - the paranoid fringe succeeded in doing away with Wisconsin's mandatory planning requirement. More than 90% of Wisconsin's communities have adopted locally generated comprehensive plans. In the vast majority of those communities, residents have pride in their plans and the fact that they were an integral part of the process of preparing their communities for the future.

However, a small and active group of anti-planners have been claiming that our planning law takes away local control (the law actually requires that locals be allowed to participate in planning) and it's part of a larger effort that is tied to the United Nations to take away our property rights. At least all of the testimony in support of the legislation made that case. The bill is awaiting its fate in the state senate.

WATER QUALITY

In 2010, environmentalists, municipalities, farmers, Realtors and regulators worked overtime to create a plan to control phosphorous runoff (the leading cause of algal blooms in lakes and streams.) That compromise was undone by Governor Walker's budget which proposed weaker standards and then was amended to delay the implementation of the rule until further negotiations could take place. Walker's budget also weakened stormwater runoff rules.



Why not control phosphorous?

Still to come...

The same folks who ran roughshod over decades of environmental policies aren't done yet. They want to rewrite the state's mining laws to make it easier to destroy wetlands and pollute streams to accommodate metallic mining in Wisconsin. They are also working on a slew of proposals that would make it easier to build large piers and to remove lakebed in front of lakefront homes. They also

have a proposal to limit the time the Department of Natural Resources can work on a permit application. Their proposal would automatically approve permit applications that took more than a specified time period (usually around 20 days.) Their proposals would also limit the time period for a public hearing on a permit application to alter lakes, rivers and streams.



Coming to Wisconsin lakes soon?

New Intern

Sonja Reichertz

As a Wisconsin native, our state's diverse landscapes, cultures, and politics are near to my heart. I grew-up in Watertown, tagging-along to Jefferson County Environmental Network meetings and Town Hall gatherings while playing on farms, in creeks, and becoming familiar with our state's rural and urban treasures. Having completed my Bachelors Degree in Geography, History, and Environmental Studies, I am currently enrolled in the UW-Madison Urban and Regional Planning graduate department. In addition to graduate work, I work as a part-time intern for the City of Monona Planning Department and at the UW Map Library.



My curiosities are based in the interconnected issues of the systems in which we live. 1000 Friends of Wisconsin, therefore, is an organization that sparks my interests and recognizes the wonderful intricacies of our environments, both built and natural.

Who pays for roads in Wisconsin?

Transportation is one of the biggest-ticket items for state and local government. The cost is high, and so is misunderstanding of who pays for what.

Taxpayers cover costs that should be borne by road users. Road subsidies push up tax rates, squeeze government services, and skew the market for transportation.



Who Pays for Roads in Wisconsin?

MYTH: Roads in Wisconsin “pay for themselves” through user fees: gas tax and licensing.

The Wisconsin highway lobby likes to pretend that users pay the costs of roads in Wisconsin: “Wisconsin has a history of funding the transportation system by charging users of that system,” the highway lobby’s Finding Forward collation declares.

FACT: Roads in Wisconsin are heavily subsidized by taxpayers.

What the lobby and others espousing this view don’t understand is that this statement only applies to the 10 percent of roads that make up the state-owned highways. The 111,000 miles of local roads rely heavily on property taxes for maintenance. Between 2004 and 2006, roads in the state cost an average of \$4.24 billion annually. Of this, \$1.74 billion came from revenue sources unrelated to road use - primarily property and sales taxes - while another \$500 million was borrowed.

So, even counting federal aid as user-based - not always true - between 41 and 55 percent of road money comes from non-user fees. The fact is, roads constitute one of the biggest tax burdens we face.

**Research by State Smart Transportation Initiative, University of Wisconsin-Madison,
for 1000 Friends of Wisconsin.**

WISDOT AGREES TO RE-EXAMINE HIGHWAY 23 OPTIONS

A \$149 million pork barrel highway project between Fond du Lac and Plymouth Wisconsin hit a speed bump when 1000 Friends of Wisconsin sued to stop the Wisconsin Department of Transportation from constructing the project. We filed the lawsuit on June 6th in Federal District Court in Milwaukee.

Back in 1999, two state legislators (one Democrat and one Republican) managed to bypass the normal review process for new highway projects and slipped an amendment in the 1999-2000 state budget that called for widening U.S. Highway 23 between Fond du Lac and Plymouth to a 4 lane divided highway.

They had to resort to the budget amendment because the project would never have made it through the normal review process (WisDOT has said that the project wouldn't meet criteria for widening until 2035.)

Since the budget ordered WisDOT to build the project, the agency had little choice but to plod ahead. In June, 1000 Friends of Wisconsin filed a lawsuit to stop the project, alleging that WisDOT didn't adequately consider less costly and less destructive alternatives and it didn't allow the public to voice their concerns over the project at public hearings.

In November, WisDOT reached an agreement with 1000 Friends of Wisconsin that calls for the agency to re-examine alternatives to the four lane project, to re-examine the environmental impacts of the project and to conduct new public hearings that allow concerned citizens to voice their opinions and recommendations in a public setting.



A "busy" stretch of Highway 23.

We appreciate the willingness of WisDOT to meet with us and to re-open the record. While this does not kill the four-lane highway, it does give opponents a fair opportunity to make the case that this road is a costly and unnecessary project.



Green Tier Legacy Community Charter Opens for New Members

The Green Tier Legacy Community Charter (a sustainability project initiated by 1000 Friends of Wisconsin) is celebrating its first anniversary by opening the Charter to new municipal members.

The Charter was launched on December 1, 2010, with participation limited to five communities: Appleton, Bayfield, Fitchburg, Middleton and the Village of Weston. At their October 13 meeting in Appleton, the communities voted unanimously to open the charter to new communities interested in pursuing sustainable development policies and practices. Benefits of participation include technical assistance from the Department of Natural Resources and other non-governmental partners as well as networking with other communities and learning cutting edge policies from speakers and presenters invited to quarterly meetings.

For more information on how your community could benefit from the program and for more information about how to be considered for membership please contact Steve Hiniker at (608) 259-1000.



**1000 FRIENDS
OF WISCONSIN**

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Welcome New Board Member

Carla Wright

Carla had a career in state government concluding with work in the Wisconsin Dept of Natural Resources Green Tier program. Since leaving the DNR she has been consulting on agricultural land use options at Taliesin, Spring Green, and in 2012 will begin working full time as the Executive Director of the newly formed Institute for Local Organic Food Systems Education, Inc. She is President of the Natural Heritage Land Trust and is also on the board of MOSES - Midwest Organic & Sustainable Education Services; she is past President of the Midwest Organic Services Association - MOSA. She makes her home on 76 acres in the Town of Berry (NW Dane County), part of which she permanently protected with a conservation easement.



Brent Nicastro



Thank you for your service

Board members Patrick Gallagher, Mark Huber and Rob Cramer have completed their terms on the 1000 Friends board of directors. We thank them for their commitment and thoughtful input and leadership.