
1000 FRIENDS OF WISCONSIN

LANDSCAPES

December 2018



“1000 Friends of Wisconsin was born and began its life as an advocate for the intelligent use of our land, water and air resources.”

Arlen Christenson

1000 Friends of Wisconsin

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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Hello Friends,

It's been a very busy year and thanks to all of you we've been able to make a difference. We've introduced new publications, continued to build strong coalitions around the state, developed a leadership role on Climate Change Committees, joined equity and inclusiveness workshops, led transportation forums, and started new programs in urban forestry and green infrastructure. Of course we have continued our leadership in the Green Tier Legacy Communities program and we have also expanded our staff with new Community Project Coordinator Abe Lenoch.

In 2019 - We're looking forward to working with the new governor to protect our natural resources, build a transportation system that works for all Wisconsinites and to acknowledge the effects of climate change. We will band together with people across the state to make sure our voices are heard. While we have a new governor, the leadership in the legislature has not changed and that leadership has made it clear that they intend to fight with the new governor instead of cooperate.

We hope you will join us in our fight with the worn out anti-environmental forces in the legislature and help make progress with a new governor and attorney general to move Wisconsin forward. We have so much to do. We need to fix local roads, broken transit systems and be advocates for non-motorized transportation. We need to slow down greenhouse gas emissions from automobiles. We need to continue to grow sustainable efforts at the local level and promote healthy communities while protecting our natural resources.

There simply is not another organization in the state that promotes better land use and sustainable transportation options.

Please continue your support - we have a lot of work to do and we need your help!

Deb



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1000 Friends

Making connections since 1996

1000 Friends of Wisconsin is not your typical environmental organization. After all, who else would preserve farmland by advocating for a Regional Transportation Authority? Or improve water quality by working on a green infrastructure project at a Madison community school? Or curb greenhouse gas emissions through form-based zoning codes?

We do things differently. We are focused on connections and making the link between good community design and protection of the natural environment. We know that when we make substantial improvements to our communities, we are having a bigger impact on the world we live in. Everything that we do on the land touches something else. We address policies in communities that are too frequently underestimated in their importance to protecting the natural environment. We have never strayed from our objective to curb sprawl through better use of our lands, but we have taken steps that many others tend to overlook – achieving benefits that go far beyond any one community's borders.

Our natural landscape has been transformed by our highways. Hills flattened, farms removed and wetlands drained are direct results of the highway construction that has extended the reach of the modern commute. Consequently, new housing developments and shopping malls have been created atop former farm fields dismantling many existing communities.

1000 Friends is working to rebuild communities. By focusing on the relationship between community design and transportation, we can help build better places to live. Our plans help residents build neighborhoods that foster economic development that builds great places. With an emphasis on developing transit connections, we can also help residents save money by reducing their dependence on cars and gasoline. A walkable/bikeable neighborhood supports

local retail and improves the quality of life. It also means reduced emissions from cars that increase air pollution and contribute to climate change.

We helped create the Green Tier Legacy Communities Charter program over 10 years ago to assist communities in developing and implementing sustainability measures leading to an improvement in the economy, environment and quality of life in the charter communities.

When communities sign the Green Tier Legacy Communities Charter, they agree to take actions and share information to move continuously toward a sustainable future through initiatives that promote environmental stewardship, economic growth, public health, and social equity. Currently we have 23 Green Tier Legacy Communities and counties across the state! Just this past year we've added a Health in All Policy component to the GTLC Charter.

We work on Green Infrastructure (GI) projects to protect watersheds and to encourage community members to become involved and understand the impact of runoff and how we can use it to our advantage. We mimic natural processes to capture, filter and infiltrate storm water on site. GI practices include green roofs, rain gardens, native plants and tree planting, and porous and permeable pavements. This is a natural extension of our work because land use and water quality are inextricably bound together.

So now when people ask us what we do – we still say we make connections between good land use planning and natural resources protection. We work to bring people together, build collaborations, and find the best ways to do it.

It's what we've always done.



A Cloud over the Capitol

We hoped the election of a new governor would mean a change in the direction of Wisconsin's natural resources policy after eight years of anti-environmental and lax regulatory policies under Governor Walker. Governor-elect Evers promised to give more power back to a diminished Department of Natural Resources in order to enforce environmental laws and give priority to critical issues like water pollution and climate change. Attorney General-elect Josh Kaul also was elected as a sharp contrast to Brad Schmigel who often sided with polluters.

And then – late on Friday, November 30th, Republican legislators released extraordinary session bills to greatly diminish the power of the new Governor and Attorney General's offices. The hearing before Joint Finance took place on Monday, December 3 and they voted to approve the bills - in the dead of night - less than 24 hours later. The public had just a few hours to read the bills and raise concerns. This unprecedented move captured headlines across the country. While hundreds raised specific objections to the legislation, no changes were made in response to those objections.

Republican leaders who moved the plan insisted that they were simply trying to level the playing field between the executive, judicial and legislative branches of government. In reality, they are consolidating power to thwart the will of the people and the ability of the new administration to carry out its mandate.

Just a few key pieces include:

- Throwing out worker protections and environmental safeguards on the vast majority of highway projects in the state.
- Limiting the governor's authority to develop rules to safeguard the environment.
- Weakened the Attorney General's ability to manage lawsuits, including environmental lawsuits to stop polluters.



We will be watching closely and keeping you informed as we enter uncharted territory in the days and months ahead. Make your voices heard as we head into the regular session in January.

Foxconn - BAD DEAL for the environment and human health

- no environmental impact statement required
- diverts millions of gallons of water each day from Lake Michigan
- will emit pollutants including nitrogen oxides, VOCs, particulates, carbon dioxide and greenhouse gases
- rural location requires expanded highways and increased emissions
- pollutants contributing to lung and cardiovascular disease.

Foxconn could have addressed its huge release of greenhouse gases with on-site investment in renewable energy generation. It was not required - it did not happen. This is only the beginning of the story.

*We have a lot of work to do.
We need your help.*

Please make an end of the year gift so we can work together to help move Wisconsin in the right direction. We have no time to waste - we have to protect our natural areas and working lands. We must continue to fight for a transportation system that works for everyone - not just a few. Helping build healthy communities by making them accessible strengthens our economy while protecting our cherished natural resources

Watch your mailbox for our 'end of the year' appeal or click DONATE NOW on our website.

We appreciate your support!

New Initiatives

Urban Forestry Role in Protecting Great Lakes

1000 Friends proposal to plant 350 trees in urban landscapes across Wisconsin was accepted through the U.S. Forest Service's Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI). GLRI was recently created to provide support for projects that address significant environmental issues across the Great Lakes Basin. Our proposal allows four Green Tier Legacy Communities (GTLC) to plant trees in their community to help reduce urban storm-water runoff into the Great Lakes. The 350 newly planted trees will take up roughly 20,650 gallons of runoff, while simultaneously helping to reduce excessive nutrient and sediment loading.

- Ashland: Plant 30 trees in Bayview Park, which is on the shore of Lake Superior.
- Bayside: Plant 100 trees throughout their community as part of their Adopt a Tree program. The village is just north of Milwaukee and borders Lake Michigan.
- Oshkosh: Plant 120 trees on degraded sites and recently improved streets throughout the city. Oshkosh storm-water runoff drains into Lake Winnebago, which ultimately flows down the Fox River and into Lake Michigan.
- Sheboygan: Replace 100 ash trees that were recently removed due to EAB. Three sites have been identified that help meet goals of Sheboygan's Storm Water Plan.

Urban forests are vital resources that have benefits beyond improved storm-water management. They provide shade on hot summer days, make cities feel safer and more alive, raise property values, improve air quality and help reduce CO2 levels in our atmosphere. 1000 Friends is excited to lead this project that promotes smart land use and provides economic and environmental benefits to GTLC's in Wisconsin.

Technical assistance and support will be provided by Wisconsin DNR's Urban Forest program.



Green Infrastructure Schoolyard Project

Aldo Leopold Elementary School is the largest elementary school in the Madison Metropolitan School District and one of four Community Schools. Abe is leading a community project there to address flooding issues and help the school develop spaces for outdoor education and creative play. Research compiled by the Children and Nature Network shows that when kids are exposed to nature and green schoolyards they have improved academic and health outcomes. This project will also address watershed protection issues in the area since Leopold School sits in two watersheds - Lake Wingra and Lake Monona. 1000 Friends hopes to build a green schoolyard initiative to positively influence both the health of kids and the health of the environment across the state.

For updates and a broader summary of the project go to our website: <http://www.1kfriends.org/green-infrastructure/>.

Meet Abe Lench

Abe came to 1000 Friends as a volunteer over a year ago. We knew almost immediately we had to find a way to hire him. He got involved in the Green Infrastructure Project, went to evening meetings, helped build a coalition, wrote grants - all as a volunteer! He's been on staff for a couple months and is now the project leader for both of the above projects, manages our social media, writes grants and enthusiastically tackles new challenges.

Abe Lench signing up Green Team volunteers at Leopold School



Around the State

GREEN TIER LEGACY COMMUNITIES



Mayor Mike Wiza and the city of Stevens Point hosted the Green Tier Legacy Communities Annual Meeting in Stevens Point this year. Representatives from the Green Tier partners and members from Green Tier cities across the state gathered to share success stories, learn how to better leverage the network and hear presentations on TIF, PACE, Legacy Communities Alliance for Health, HealthTIDE's Wisconsin Active Together and much more! Deb Nemeth, a member of the GTLC Executive Committee, helped plan and facilitate the meeting.



LEGACY COMMUNITIES ALLIANCE FOR HEALTH

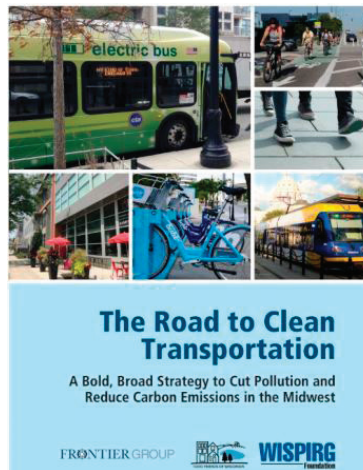


Ashwat Narayanan led a forum to discuss healthy communities through better transportation options sponsored by the Legacy Communities Alliance for Health. GTLC members from Fitchburg, Monona, and Middleton participated.

New Publications



ARRIVE TOGETHER: *Transportation Access and Equity in Wisconsin* is a report providing profiles of nine cities in Wisconsin that have public transit systems, the challenges that are faced by users of these systems and offers solutions on how we can get better.



The Road To Clean Transportation: A Bold, Broad Strategy to Cut Pollution and Reduce Carbon Emissions in the Midwest details key strategies and benchmarks communities must target to reduce transportation emissions.

Both of these reports are available on our website: 1kfriends.org

Staff Bird Nerds

Robin Wagner

I am a bird-nerd. Over a decade ago I looked through a pair of binoculars at a Cedar Waxwing, and that was it -I have been birding ever since. In fact, birds are what really got me thinking about environmental conservation, eventually leading me to 1000 Friends first as a volunteer and then as staff.

This year is the Year of the Bird. 2018 marks the centennial of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, the most powerful and important bird-protection law ever passed. In honor of this milestone, nature lovers around the world are joining forces to commit to protecting birds today and for the next hundred years.

In honor of the Year of the Bird, I wanted to do something big for birds. So, in April, I gathered up a group of my friends and we set out to raise money for bird conservation. Each spring the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin and the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative host the Great Wisconsin Birdathon. The birdathon is a walkathon-style fundraiser in which teams set out to find as many bird species as possible in a single day, while raising funds to support priority bird conservation projects in Wisconsin.

After a long, cold day at Pheasant Branch, Tiedeman's and Stricker's Pond in Middleton, and Lake Wingra, Nine Springs and Lake Farm Park in Madison, we had seen 61 species and raised over \$2,300 for birds - not bad for a cold, pre-peak migration day in April!



Crane-Spotting Nuthatchers - Anna, Sherry, Ali, Dottie, Sarah, Jenny, Robin and Lisa.

Abe Lench

“What is that robin going on about at 5:30 in the morning? Did its parents not teach it any manners?”

It turns out the seemingly bothersome robin outside your window is not attempting to ruin your morning, but instead is attempting to get in touch with the bird world. Identifying vocalizations that birds like American Robins use to stay in the know are often more valuable than visual cues when attempting to identify a species. Birding is as much about observing with your ears as it is with your eyes. A Madison Audubon Society (MAS) volunteer, Kerry Wilcox, recognized this and approached MAS and the Wisconsin Council for the Blind and Visually Impaired about hosting an educational event to teach folks how to use their ears to identify bird songs and calls. The “Birding By Ear” event, part of the MAS Audubon Naturalist Series, occurred this past Summer.+

The two-part series included techniques and tips for “Birding by Ear” and a field trip. Kerry and I led two groups through the many beautiful and accessible paths of Pheasant Branch Conservancy in Middleton to listen for birds and learn how to identify their songs and calls. Participants, beginners and amateurs, were both visually impaired and not visually impaired. As we wandered, my group practiced their newly learned skills and started to develop an ear for bird identification. Some highlights we heard were Wood Thrush, Indigo Bunting, Baltimore Oriole, Belted Kingfisher, Rose-breasted Grosbeak.



Photo Credit: Madison Audubon Society

I'm fortunate to lead various intro-to-birding courses around the Madison area through MAS. My favorite part of these classes is how excited new birders get when they realize the daily bird commotion they've never noticed before. So whether you're an expert, amateur, or novice birder I encourage you to get out in your community and observe our fascinatingly weird feathered friends!

Many thanks to Denise Jess, Jean Kalscheur and Jim Denham from the Wisconsin Council for the Blind and Visually Impaired and Kerry Wilcox and Brenna Marsicek at Madison Audubon Society for making this event happen.



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Promoting Healthy Communities

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What people are saying...

1000 Friends of Wisconsin began when a small group of individuals, concerned about growing threats to Wisconsin's natural resources, decided to act upon a well known principle: an organized group can be far more effective than the same number acting individually. Thus 1000 Friends of Wisconsin was born and began its life as an advocate for the intelligent use of our land, water and air resources. It's advocacy continues and grows.

Thank you 1000 Friends!

Founding Member

Arlen Christenson
Member since 1996
Founding Board Member
and former Board Chair



Partner

Will Erikson
Sustainability and Business Support
Green Tier
Wisconsin DNR



1000 Friends of Wisconsin has been a strong and trusted Green Tier Legacy Communities Charter member. They are generous with providing support and technical expertise to municipalities and counties statewide. In addition they are serving the critical role of grant administrator to allow for partner communities to benefit from a green infrastructure initiative, which will have on-the-ground stormwater mitigation benefits throughout the Great Lakes basin.