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1000 FRIENDS OF WISCONSIN

# LANDSCAPES

December 2019



**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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Cover Photo: "Up North" - Steve Hiniker

Hello Friends,

Glaciers are melting, oceans are rising and weather patterns are changing across the world. Right here in Wisconsin we're experiencing more flooding, heat waves, historic cold streaks, and devastating tornadoes. This is the new norm.

This is climate change. Time is running out - there is no planet B.

1000 Friends has been working for many years to lower emissions, protect watersheds, promote green infrastructure and now we're determined to do even more. We understand that the next few years are essential to slowing the progress of climate change. We must all play a solutions based role in reducing our state's carbon footprint.

We're excited to see the creation of Governor Ever's Task Force on Climate Change and will be watching closely and helping in any way we can to make sure there is progress - not just meetings and goals. Back in 2010, 1Kfriends proposed Green Tier Legacy Communities as a result of Governor Doyle's Global Warming Task Force. Hopefully, more great solutions based programs like this will be created by the new task force.

Non-profits and grassroots organizations are the heroes that we need to creative positive change. Government moves slowly and argues too much - it's time for action so let's work together to do our part and demand climate action - NOW! Check out our website for more ideas on what you can do to help.

We have a busy 2020 ahead of us. Thank you for your support!



# Climate Crisis

**“I want you to act as if your house is on fire. When your house is on fire you don’t promise results in a decade or a year or a week. You grab a bucket and find some water. Immediately.”**

**Greta Thunberg**

Climate change is having an undeniable impact on our environment and our health. We know that the impacts of climate change are happening far faster than we previously realized. Weather patterns have changed over the past 30 years due to climate change. In that time flooding has become much more severe and frequent. Places like Spring Green have persistent flooding even during dry weather because of rising groundwater levels, which has had significant adverse impacts on agriculture in the area.

Far removed from Spring Green, northern Wisconsin has been experiencing disruptions in traditional winter snow seasons, disrupting snow related tourism events. The 10,000 skiers who boost the economy of the Cable-Hayward area with the Birkebeiner ski race have seen the race cancelled due to lack of snow.

Unfortunately, this is only the beginning of the change we will see with global warming. Long range projections call for warmer winters, more flooding and possible disruption in bird migrations. While warmer winters may sound inviting to some, the implications for our ecosystem are quite alarming.

We also know that the changes will become more disruptive and devastating if we delay doing the things we already know how to do. This underscores the need for action now.

Right now we have the resources necessary to reduce the most drastic impacts of a changing climate and the resources to adapt to the changes we cannot avoid. But every second of delay makes the challenge more expensive and more difficult. Minimizing climate change through mitigation is much cheaper than paying for damages and adapting as we go.

In other words, while our house may be figuratively on fire, we still have the ability to extinguish the fire.

It’s a source of great frustration that our current president has taken steps to actually make the situation worse. The U.S. has pulled out of the Paris Climate Accord. The President is loosening automobile efficiency standards. He has undertaken a campaign to undermine alternative energy development and instead tried to make it easier to burn coal for energy – the dirtiest source of energy currently available.

The state hasn’t provide much help either. Both houses of the legislature continue to completely avoid any serious discussion of measures that could reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Wisconsin.

## WHERE ARE OUR FIREFIGHTERS?

We must be the firefighters. We can advocate for needed policy changes at the state and federal level but we can also be a part of the solution in our communities today. Many of the needed strategies are accomplished at the local level. Many of the strategies are things that we can do as individuals. But, **none of the strategies will work if we are passive observers.**

**Watch our website over the next months for strategies on the personal level, local level and beyond!**



Madison Climate March

# Capitol Update

## Good News for Climate Action in Wisconsin Now it's time to be bold and take action!

Governor Evers has created, by Executive Order, the **Governor's Task Force on Climate Change** to advise and assist him in developing a strategy to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change in Wisconsin.

It is critically important to make transportation a large part of this discussion! We will be watching closely and providing transportation data and strategies.

Earlier this summer, there was another Executive Order creating the **Office of Sustainability and Clean Energy** to ensure Wisconsin fulfills the carbon reduction goals of the Paris Climate Accord to ensure all electricity consumed in the state is 100% carbon-free by 2050. This office will work closely with other departments and state agencies, as well as Native Nations, businesses, local governments, utilities, and stakeholders to develop and implement a clean energy plan.

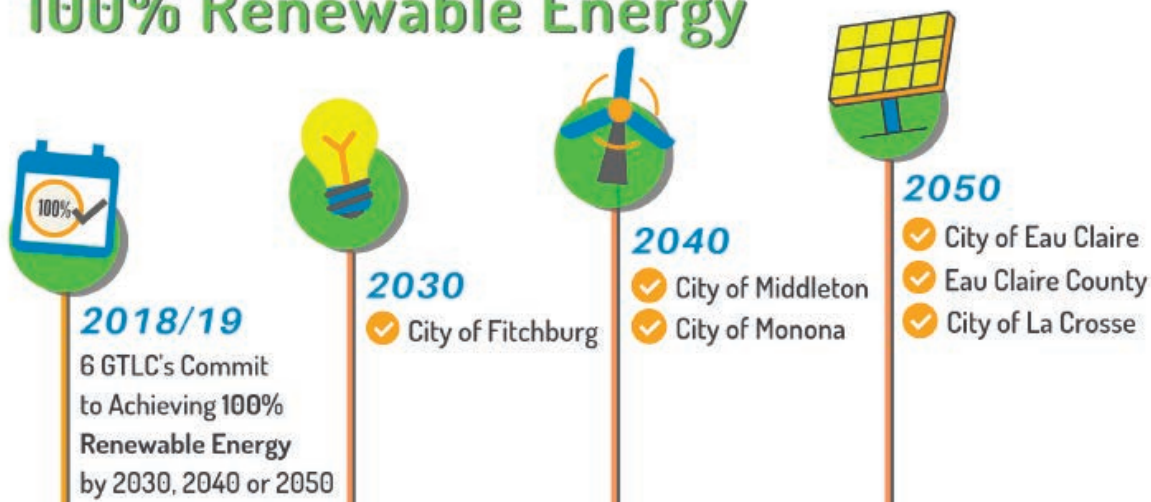
The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources also reaffirmed its commitment to addressing the impacts of climate change on Wisconsin's natural resources. In a memo to DNR staff, Secretary-designee Preston Cole outlined the department's role in addressing climate change and clean energy through adaptation and mitigation.

*“Climate change is one of the defining issues of our time. From shifting weather patterns, increases in average temperature, higher frequency and intensity of rainfall to heavier snowfalls, the impacts of climate change directly impact Wisconsin,”* Cole said. *“The DNR is entrusted to protect the people's resources, and as a result, we need to recognize the factors that drive change and must plan accordingly.”*

The climate crisis is a grave threat to the health, safety, and economic well being of our citizens and our communities. For far too long the elected officials in Wisconsin have ignored the threats. When will the state legislature get on board and help protect their constituencies? The Governor has laid the foundation - now we want to see some statewide action.



## Combating Climate Change at the Local Level Green Tier Legacy Communities 100% Renewable Energy



Six Green Tier Legacy Community Members have adopted 100% Renewable Energy Commitments. These commitments further the energy strategies that conserve energy, preserve the environment, and decrease greenhouse gas emissions, strategies that all Legacy Communities strive to implement.

# Transportation and the Climate Crisis

Transportation has overtaken the electricity generation sector to become the largest emitter and fastest growing sector of carbon emissions. In order to avoid catastrophic global climate change we need to reduce emissions from transportation drastically. These reductions are needed to protect us from the worst impacts of climate change.

A survey of research suggests that while this is a complex and unprecedented undertaking we know what we have to do. We have the tools – they are the same tools that we have advocated for over the last 20 years. We know how to plan better and new technology is available and rapidly improving. There are multiple pathways to the two main solutions: electrifying vehicles and reducing driving.

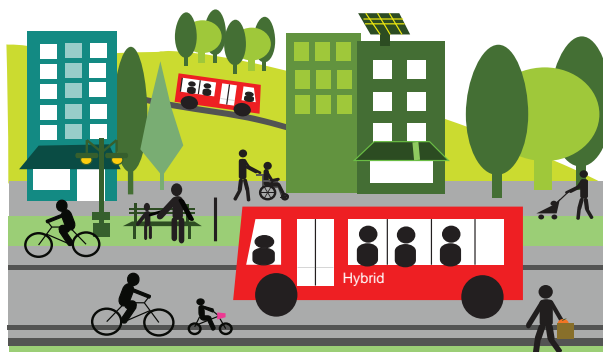
In order for these strategies to be successful, they must be implemented together and on a wide scale. For these tools to be successful we need to use them now. We have transit, we have better community design, we have all of the things we need. We don't need to wait – we can start using transit today. We can walk and bike to work today. We can buy an electric vehicle today. We have the information we need. We just have to do it.

A report from the US Deep Decarbonization Project shows that over 40% of all new cars sold in the US must be electric by 2035 for our carbon goals to remain on track. While this is ambitious, many major auto manufacturers are investing significantly into EV research and production and it is likely that some challenges, like range-anxiety that prevent consumers from buying electric today, may be a non-factor in the near future.

Achieving the land use and modal shifts needed to reduce driving on a large scale may be more difficult and take longer. New population growth in cities will have to be accommodated with more infill development and investments will need to be made in public transit on corridors where more people live.

In preparing for changes like this, it is useful to remember our land-use and transportation planning history—it is only in the last 50 years that we completely redesigned our cities, towns and villages to be built around the automobile. It is not a complete stretch of the imagination to envision a future in which destinations are close to each other and can be accessed through a variety of clean transportation options.

A zero-emission transportation future cannot be accomplished without new technologies being open and accessible to everyone in the community, housing being affordable and in close proximity to reliable and safe transit and non-motorized modes such as walking and biking being adopted widely as legitimate transportation options.



1000 Friends has been at the forefront of fighting for an equitable carbon-neutral transportation future. We work to improve health and reduce GHG emissions through sustainable, active modes of transportation including public transit, biking and walking. We promote smart land use practices to increase density, and develop compact mixed use and transit supportive development.

We don't need more meetings, more data – we have it. Now let's use it!

## Welcome Gregg May: Transportation Policy Analyst

Gregg is an urban planner with experience in long-range comprehensive planning for communities across several states. He has worked on robust public engagement projects ranging from parks and recreation plans to bus-rapid transit studies. He has prepared materials for and participated in public meetings, workshops, and focus groups that have engaged a diverse range of stakeholders. Gregg received his M.S. in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Michigan in 2015, and has since engaged with non-profit, public, and private clients in Wisconsin, Michigan and Illinois.

Gregg was an intern in our office as an undergrad and we're pleased to welcome him back! He stepped in and has taken the lead on new transportation projects, writing reports and developing toolkits, and participating in and leading several transportation working groups.



# Reducing Stormwater Runoff in the Great Lakes Basin Using Urban Forestry

A report from Abe Lench, Community Project Coordinator

Earlier this year 1000 Friends received a U.S. Forest Service grant through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) to reduce runoff and improve water quality through street tree plantings in the Great Lakes Basin. In mid-September I visited Bill Sturm in Oshkosh and Tim Bull in Sheboygan to check on trees that both communities planted with the help of the GLRI grant. I was able to see the trees that I was hearing so much about and happy to put up signs recognizing our GLRI grant partners.

I arrived in Sheboygan on a Tuesday afternoon (after some time on a quiet stretch of Highway 23) just as the skies were clearing after a lunchtime rainfall. Tim Bull, City of Sheboygan Forester, drove us to three different clumps of tree plantings. Like many Wisconsin communities, Sheboygan was hit hard by the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB). That's why Tim decided to focus a diversity of GLRI tree species in areas that were hardest hit by EAB.

Twelve different species of young trees now fill contiguous blocks that lost large tree canopies from EAB. The increased diversity of species that were planted provides more protection against future pest and disease outbreaks. And as the trees continue to grow and mature their impact on stormwater runoff reduction will only expand.

After a nice September night camping in the teepee at Mauthe Lake Recreation Area in the Northern Kettle Moraine State Forest I moseyed over to Oshkosh to meet with their City Forester, Bill Sturm. A brief but intense rain came to a halt just as Bill and I pulled up to one of the sites that the City of Oshkosh chose for a set of street tree plantings. With the leaves still wet, Bill and I got a real-time look at the rainfall capture techniques of the young redbud trees. They were doing exactly what they were paid to do, reduce runoff.



Sheboygan Forester Tim Bull



Abe Lench in Sheboygan



Oshkosh Forester Bill Sturm

Bill has been with the City of Oshkosh for about 15 years as the City Forester and Landscape Operations Manager- and he is a household name when it comes to Oshkosh community projects. Bill took me around Oshkosh in his work truck to show me where the GLRI trees had been planted and gave me a separate tour of all the work he and his Parks & Forestry Department crew are doing.

Oshkosh is unique in that it has a public-private partnered tree endowment fund (that Bill helped start) called Taking Root. Neighborhood associations and other large scale beautification projects can request trees through the fund, but the requests often need complimentary funding to make it happen. Bill usually has projects on the back burner that can come center stove when grant opportunities like GLRI come along. We continued to hop in and out of Bill's truck to visit the other plantings at Washington Elementary School and on Court Street near the Oshkosh Fire Department.

Because our GLRI project was focused on the reduction of stormwater runoff into the Great Lakes Basin, I asked both Tim and Bill whether some trees are better than others at mitigation. They both answered the same, "any tree is better than no tree." They also pointed out that larger trees are better because they need more water to survive and prevent more water from reaching the surface.

Their identical answers prove that Wisconsin communities really need street trees. Trees are a critical tool for the environmental and human health of all Wisconsin communities.

## Around the State

### West Point Tuesday Talks Series

Abe Lenocho visited West Point Town Hall for the Tuesday Talks series put on by the Town of West Point. 1000 Friends has been attending small and rural community events to listen and better understand the problems that they're facing due to climate change.

Abe is pictured here talking with West Point Town Chair, Ashley Nedeau-Owen.



### Coalition for More Responsible Transportation

Budget season is always an exciting time for the Coalition. Our group of non-profits, faith-based organizations, and volunteers meets every two weeks by phone or across the state in-person. The most recent budget included several items worth fighting for including; Regional Transit Authorities (RTA's) and increased transit funding. The Coalition made its voice heard through call-in days, media work, and meetings with legislators.



Gregg May & the Coalition partners



### Green Tier



1000 Friends attends Green Tier Legacy Community (GTLC) meetings around the state to promote our work, offer technical assistance and to learn about GTLC sustainability projects. The latest meeting was in Racine at the Wastewater Treatment plant. Both Abe Lenocho, Community Project Coordinator, and John Stolzenburg, 1KFriends Volunteer, participated.



The day included a walk in Samuel Myers Park to check out the shoreline restoration.

### REAMP – Sustainable Transportation Campaign

REAMP held its annual meeting in June at Milwaukee's Discovery World. The meeting was an excellent networking opportunity for climate change activists across the Midwest. As a result of this meeting, 1000 Friends' Gregg May is leading a new local sustainable transportation campaign. This campaign will develop a toolkit for transportation advocates and policy-makers to implement climate-friendly transportation policies in communities across the Midwest. After the toolkit is developed, our campaign will be reaching out to Wisconsin communities with policy suggestions tailored to promote walking, biking and transit regardless of community size.



### Wisconsin Climate Table

The Wisconsin Climate Table has been working statewide to support policy that combats greenhouse gas emissions. As a result of the productive annual meeting in Spring Green, 1000 Friends is spearheading an effort to get sustainable transportation policies to Governor Evers' new Office of Sustainability and Clean Energy. We hope the Wisconsin Climate Plan will include support for electric vehicles, walking, biking, and transit infrastructure. We are also a member of the Climate Table's Clean Energy Community Commitments campaign to help Wisconsin communities meet their 100% renewable energy goals.



Milwaukee River Boat Tour



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## Thank you Kine Torinus!

“Having tramped and explored swamps, fields and farms around our home growing up, I never lost the love of the land I had as a child. I love the smells of every season and eagerly await the emerging plant life and returning migrating birds each spring, look forward to fall and winter and suffer hot summers when we have them. Living in Wisconsin is an adventure and certainly keeps us on our toes.

After watching the changing landscape due to development in the wrong places in the later years, it was a natural for me to join the board of the Ozaukee Washington Land Trust in 1998. Then I met Dave Cieslewicz, Executive Director of 1000 Friends of Wisconsin, and Andrea Dearlove, co-director, at Riveredge Nature Center in Newburg when they hosted a show of photographs taken by people from all over Wisconsin. I loved it and said so. Then they put the full court press on me to join the board of directors of the organization. I said, “Yes,” because it was the only organization that understood the need for statewide land use planning and was doing something about it. Key players in getting the Wisconsin Comprehensive Plan into law in 1999, I thought this is the place for me.

It’s been a great experience being a part of 1000 Friends, meeting and working with professionals who put their expertise into the very things I care for: land protection and smart growth. Achieving those goals lead to better communities, better water and better lands for recreation, growing food and scenic pleasure.

I will continue to support 1000 Friends even though I have stepped down as an active director. Eighteen years of service on the board, including president for 4 years, is a good run. I’ve loved every minute of it.”



Kine Torinus is a biker, skier, dog trainer, traveler, teacher, businesswoman, and environmentalist. We are so grateful to her for sharing her experiences and wisdom with 1000 Friends staff and board.

We’re saying thank you - but not goodbye. Kine has agreed to stay on with us as an advisor so we’ll be in touch!