



## Waukesha County Environmental Action League Protecting Waukesha County's Natural Resources since 1978 *E-Newsletter October 2019*

*“The Earth is a fine place and worth fighting for.”*

Earnest Hemingway

### **Annual Meeting Announcement**

At 7PM Thursday, November 14, WEAL will host its annual meeting at Retzer Nature Center. Featured at the meeting will be the award-winning documentary “Straws” followed by Q/A session/discussion

<http://www.strawsfilm.com>

Additionally, Zero Waste and the formation of the Zero Waste Waukesha County Coalition will be discussed.

Also learn about WEAL's “Skip the Straw” campaign and Sign the “Pledge” to receive Skip the Straw cards to give to servers at beverage serving establishments.

Everyone who renews their WEAL membership, and all new members, may choose either a silicone straw or stainless steel straw with a silicone tip (one straw per membership)

Refreshments will be available at this free and open-to-the-public event. Hope to see you there!

More info is available in the advertising flyer at the end of this newsletter.

### **Zero Waste Waukesha County Coalition Formed and Zero Waste Campaigns Launched**

Laurie Longtine

The Waukesha County Environmental Action League (WEAL) and Waukesha County Green Team announced their partnership in and formation of the Zero Waste Waukesha County Coalition.

The announcement was made August 24, 2019 at the Sustainability Fair at Retzer Nature Center.

The Coalition will focus on practices and policies to reduce waste, limit dependence on landfills and preserve valuable resources. Actions will focus on choosing products that can be reused, recycled or composted, curbing single-use plastics and educating county residents on best practices.

Coalition partners have adopted the only internationally accepted, peer-reviewed definition of Zero Waste from Zero Waste International Alliance:

*Zero Waste:*

*The conservation of all resources by means of responsible production, consumption, reuse, and recovery of products, packaging, and materials without burning and with no discharges to land, water, or air that threaten the environment or human health.*

While recycling is crucial to achieving Zero Waste, it is not the only means to get there. We must reduce waste at its source: use less, work with manufacturers to take back their products when no longer functional, cut down on over packaging, and find creative ways to reuse materials and turn resources into new products.

San Francisco, the gold standard for waste reduction, diverts approximately 80% of the City's



© Can Stock Photo



discarded materials from being landfilled and is working to get as close to zero as possible over the next decade. “By comparison, in 2018 Waukesha County reported a recycling rate of 27.3%,” says Charlene Lemoine, WEAL’s



Waste Issues Team Leader. “We can do better, so much better. That’s what motivated us to form Zero Waste Waukesha County.”

The Waukesha County Green Team is the first partner to join the Coalition. Debra Schneider, President of WCGT said, “Our first major effort at Zero Waste took place at the 2019 Sustainability Fair where a Zero Waste Trail educated fair goers on zero waste. Compost Crusaders composted waste generated at the fair and performed a waste audit at the end of the fair to determine how well event waste was kept out of the landfill.”

Results of the Sustainability Fair’s Zero Waste audit follow.

#### **Waste Audit, Sustainability Fair, August 24, 2019**

##### **Garbage: 48 lbs.**

Almost all of the garbage consisted of food packaging that was not compostable, hand towels from the rest room that were not compostable, and garbage from the kitchen that could have been composted. Very little garbage was generated from vendors and exhibitors. Significant areas for improvement remain for the next event.

##### **Diverted to recycling--non-cardboard: 15 lbs.**

Four bins/bags were at 25% full. Recyclables were removed from plastic bag to be recycled. Most recyclables were cups/bottles carried in by attendees (no beverages were sold in bottles at the fair), paper, cardboard, or larger recyclables from the kitchen and food vendors, such as a large juice container.

##### **Diverted to recycling--cardboard: 12 lbs.**

At the end of the day a food vendor unloaded their trucks of recyclable cardboard boxes. A few boxes were generated in the kitchen.

##### **Diverted to recycling--Compost: 34 lbs.**

One and a half 64-gallon bins were full. Material consisted of compostable cups, boats and food . . . There was ZERO % contamination! Volunteers did a great job on source separation at the stations. Total diversion (from landfill) rate: 55.9%.

For a full report, paste in your browser: [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1PY-xlV5eNWc\\_kKknpAiGiIbrruTYLor38UTDpSEZwmU/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1PY-xlV5eNWc_kKknpAiGiIbrruTYLor38UTDpSEZwmU/edit?usp=sharing)

#### ***Zero Waste Partners Welcome***

The Zero Waste Waukesha County Coalition invites organizations, businesses, schools and congregation partners to join these efforts. Each partner organization determines its own plan of action to educate and motivate people to reduce waste as well as to reduce waste in its own operations, activities and events. Coalition partners will share resources and information, cross-promote events, educate the public and together raise greater awareness in Waukesha County. To learn more, visit

<https://www.weal.org/zero-waste-waukesha-county>

To inquire about becoming a partner in the Zero Waste Waukesha County Coalition, please contact Laurie Longtine at: [longtine@wi.rr.com](mailto:longtine@wi.rr.com)

#### **WEAL launches Skip the Straw campaign**

As part of its action toward Zero Waste, WEAL has launched a Skip the Straw campaign to raise awareness and encourage change in choices. By skipping the straw, single-use plastic pollution in the planet’s oceans, lakes, rivers, streams and on roadways can be drastically reduced.

Plastic straws never biodegrade and cannot be recycled. Because the straws are relatively small and light, it is easy for them to escape the waste stream into real streams, lakes and oceans



where they wreak havoc on wildlife, fish and aquatic animals and water quality. It is estimated that 375 to 500 million plastic straws are discarded every day worldwide.

Laurie Longtine, WEAL Zero Waste Coordinator, suggests, “Simply ask your restaurant or bar server not to put a straw in your beverage. We hope to inspire Waukesha County residents to take the small, everyday actions that can make a big difference.”

Skip the Straw cards to give to servers and managers at food and beverage

establishments are available from WEAL.

If you

know of a Waukesha County venue/s that already practices Straw-Upon-Request-Only, please let WEAL know by contacting us at [www.WEAL.org](http://www.WEAL.org) or by posting on our Facebook page. WEAL will gladly promote these establishments on our website, Facebook page, and in newsletter articles.

E-mail Laurie Longtine at [longtine@wi.rr.com](mailto:longtine@wi.rr.com) to make arrangements to pick up cards.

Please put “Skip the Straw” in the subject line.

## Team Zero Waste—the Grass has Deep Roots

**What’s next?** Everyone’s excited about Zero Waste Waukesha County and ready to do something about the ever-increasing amount of waste ending up in landfills and escaping into our environment where it pollutes water, soil and air and endangers wildlife and threatens human health.

Team Zero Waste is forming to address the problem of excessive waste, and to take positive, creative and grassroots actions that will begin to

move Waukesha County toward the goal of Zero Waste.

If you have ideas, a desire to take action, or just want to hang around with like-minded folks, come to the meeting on October 23 or 24. (details will be provided on WEAL’s website: [www.WEAL.org](http://www.WEAL.org)).

This is the first such meeting, so plant your grassroots on the ground floor, if we can mix a metaphor . . . Bring your ideas, your sweet self and a reusable bottle/container for any liquids that may be provided.

The newsletter has to go to press before we’re able to finalize details of the October Team Zero Waste meeting. Send your e-mail address to the website or post your interest on WEAL’s Facebook page or call or text Laurie Longtine at 262-894-8443. We’ll reply with details as soon as we have them. We’re looking forward to meeting your and starting the Zero Waste conversation!

## Help the planet---reduce the use of plastics in your kitchen

Rose Reinders

Source Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

One person trying to kick plastic out of his life is Ken Leinbach, executive director of Milwaukee’s Urban Ecology Center----and he’ll tell you it isn’t easy.

“I was at the grocery store the other day looking for mayonnaise----and the one glass jar that I could find was twice the price, he said with a sign.” It’s practically impossible to lead a plastic free life. You can reduce, but not entirely eliminate, plastic. Even pasta in a cardboard box has a little plastic window.

Leinbach says that he, like many others, first began avoiding plastic because of bisphenol A, or BPA, which is an industrial chemical that can seep out of some plastic food containers and water bottles, creating potential health problems.



gg114336629 GoGraph.com



### Please serve straws only upon request

- Plastic straws don't biodegrade—EVER
- Share on your menu:  
Straws available upon request
- Let staff and customers know you support reducing single use plastics
- Paper or reusable straws are options for those who need them

For information:

[www.weal.org/zero-waste-waukesha-county](http://www.weal.org/zero-waste-waukesha-county)

Now, as evidence piles up about environmental devastation caused by plastic--and we've all seen images of huge floating islands of plastic waste in the oceans--activists, as well as those who might be a little less gung-ho, are feeling compelled to step up their efforts.

[\(Read the entire article which appeared in the Journal Sentinel food section on January 8, 2019\)](#)

### **Compost Crusaders work to divert organic materials from landfills**

**Source: Compost Crusaders website**  
Working in the metro Milwaukee area is Compost Crusaders, which was created in 2014. CC has created a culture around sustainability that empowers individuals and organizations to divert organic material from landfills in an economically and environmentally sustainable way. CC works with schools, businesses, restaurants, etc. Collected materials are turned into compost, which ultimately can be purchased for enriching the soil.



Heck Yeah Give Us Those Scraps!

- Fruits and Veggies
- Eggshells
- Cooked Meat
- Cheese/Dairy
- Breads or Baked Goods
- Pastas
- Grains (rice, cereal etc.)
- Legume Shells (peanuts, pistachios, etc.)
- Clam Shells etc.

- Fish and Chicken Bones
- Herbivore Manure and Bedding (rabbits, gerbils etc.)
- BPI Certified Compostable Products
- Brown Paper Bags or BPI Certified Compostable Bags
- Yard or Plant Debris (including backyard weeds)
- Non Glossy Paper like Newspaper
- Sauces/Condiments

(Google Compost Crusaders and read about their work to convert waste into healthy compost.)

### **Unilever vows to slash use of non-recycled plastic by 2025**

**Source Jsonline.com**  
**October 14, 2019**

Consumer products giant Unilever, whose brands include Dove soaps, Lipton teas, and Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream, said Monday it aims to halve its use of non-recycled plastics by 2015.

The move, which appears crafted to resonate with younger, more environmentally aware consumers, will require a "fundamental rethink" in the company's packaging policies said CEO Alan Jope.

The multinational previously pledged to make all its plastic packaging reusable, recyclable or compostable by 2025 and to use at least 23% recycled plastic in packaging by that year.

The company also said Monday it aims to collect and process more plastic packaging than it sells by 2025.

"Plastic has its place, but that place is not in the environment," Jope said. "We can only eliminate plastic waste by

**Plastic has its place, but that place is not in the environment.**

acting fast and taking radical action at all points in the plastic cycle.

He said meeting the new target will require “new and innovative packaging materials” and a rapid increase in packaging that can be reused or refilled.

Unilever has started selling products including toothbrushes made of bamboo, and cardboard deodorant sticks and refillable toothpaste tablets.

Even so, the Anglo-Dutch company said it produces some 7000,000 metric tons of plastic packaging annually.

Experts at analytics firm GlobalData said that surveys show young consumers are influenced by environmental considerations when they buy something, so Unilever’s move might be good for its business too.

“Unilever’s decision to cut its plastic production may seem like a contrived attempt to connect with a younger generation. However, it is a necessary move for a brand trying to maintain its relevance and reputation,” said Carmen Bryan, an analyst for the analytics firm GlobalData.

**Compact Implementation Coalition (CIC) and WEAL Comment on Waukesha’s Great Lakes Diversion Environmental Impact Study**

Laurie Longtine

*DNR Should Treat the August 2019 EIS as a Draft and Proceed Accordingly*

Wisconsin DNR released a draft Environmental Impact Study (EIS) for Waukesha’s proposed diversion of Great Lakes water in June 2015. In January 2016, DNR issued a preliminary final EIS including a summary and response to public comments received. After the Great Lakes Compact Council approved the diversion proposal in June 2016, Waukesha changed its water supplier from Oak Creek to Milwaukee in late 2017. On August 20, 2019, DNR held a public informational hearing on the latest version of the EIS, called a

preliminary final draft that had only been released two weeks prior.

However, the 2019 EIS identifies and analyzes three Milwaukee supply route alternatives that were not considered in the 2015 draft or the 2016 preliminary final EIS. These previously unidentified and unanalyzed Milwaukee supply route alternatives follow different routes than the alternative in the 2015 draft EIS and the 2016 preliminary final EIS, meaning different environmental impacts will occur. More importantly, it also means that an entirely different subset of the public and their properties will be impacted. As such, the most recent EIS has changed so significantly that it must be considered a draft EIS, and DNR should have started the public review portion of the process again. An EIS must contain, among other things:

A list of reasonable alternatives to the proposed project, particularly those that might avoid all or some of the adverse environmental effects of the proposed project, including a description of proposed preventive and mitigating measures and an explanation of the criteria used to discard certain alternatives from additional study.

**Wis. Admin. Code NR**

**§ 150.30(2)(e) (emphasis added).**

The 2019 EIS plainly fails to meet these requirements because it does not analyze any alternatives that would send return flow to Lake Michigan via the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD). Instead, it is limited to alternatives that send return flow to Lake Michigan via the Root River, including the so-called M-1 “preferred” route. (If DNR excluded alternatives from consideration, it must explain why.) Waukesha previously tried a “preferred alternative” ploy for its water supplier, an argument that is not based on science, has no legitimacy in the EIS or Compact Council’s approval process and was soundly rejected by both bodies.

Unless DNR prepares a final EIS that considers MMSD return flow alternatives and the environmental impacts of all alternatives, the department will have failed to comply with WEPA substantive requirements. Rather than undermining the EIS process and further delaying Waukesha's access to clean drinking water, DNR should prepare an EIS that complies with both the letter and spirit of the law, one that doesn't consider alternatives that were never previously presented.

Full comments are found at <https://midwestadvocates.org/assets/news/Waukesha-EIS-Comments.pdf>

### **House bill intends to transition U.S. economy to clean energy within 20 years**

Nancy Gloe

For those of you who have not heard, a bill has been introduced into the U.S. House of Representatives which would (largely) transition the U.S. economy to clean, renewable energy sources within

20 years. The bill would also "head off" the worst impacts of climate change due to the projected reductions in fossil fuel burning. The bill, known as H.R. 763, the Energy Innovation and

Carbon Dividend Act, currently has 66 cosponsors. The bill relies on a "market-based" approach to drive this change. Among others, many business leaders, national defense experts, and economists, have praised this approach.

Last July, constituents of Rep. Gwen Moore asked her to co-sponsor the bill. Staff from Rep. Moore's office expressed interest in the bill, however, they said that they would need additional letters of support from Wisconsin-based groups in order to show that there was sufficient local support for this bill.

Several groups were mentioned by name as desirable supporters, and WEAL was among them.

They didn't have to ask us twice. The full text of our letter can be found here:

<https://www.weal.org/climate-change>

To date, Rep. Moore for some reason, has still not signed on as a cosponsor of H.R. 763, but we are hopeful that she will soon. Of course, WEAL will continue to monitor the progress of this critically important bill and lobby for its passage. Stay tuned for more updates.

### **Update on Proposed Orchard Ridge/Boundary Road Superfund Site Expansion**

Charlene Lemoine

Waste Management of Wisconsin has been the responsible party for the Boundary Road Superfund Site (a.k.a. Lauer Landfill) in Menomonee Falls for decades. The 58-acre Superfund Site was active from 1954 --1972 and contains approximately 1.3 million cubic yards of waste with an average depth of 30 feet. An approved landfill cover, leachate collection system and a slurry cutoff wall were installed in 1980. In 1983, the DNR recommended the site be placed on the National Priorities List (NPL) also known as the Superfund program.

Boundary Road has undergone four Five-Year Reviews by the DNR and the EPA. The most recent review was conducted from 2.03.2017 to 8.31.2017. The report indicates the site was complying with maintenance and monitoring requirements as well as following a plan to achieve long-term goals. The next review is planned for 2022.

The DNR is currently reviewing Waste Management's plan to exhume the entire 58-acre site and distribute the waste within the Orchard Ridge Landfill. An Initial Site Report (ISR) was submitted to the DNR on 4.23.2019 and

**H.R. Bill 763 would "head off" the worst impacts of climate change due to the projected reductions in fossil fuel burning.**

describes the Eastern Expansion Southern Unit (SU) as being located on the southern side of the 44-acre East Expansion. The Eastern Expansion SU capacity request is for 92.6 acres and includes a 17.1-acre vertical expansion over a portion of the recently approved (2018) East Expansion.

On 7.23.2029, the DNR issued an ISR Opinion Letter for the proposed Eastern Expansion SU that states: “It is our opinion, based on the information presented in the ISR, that the expansion has limited potential for development as a landfill.”

The Opinion Letter cites a number of possible constraints on site feasibility which include:

- setback from a navigable pond;
- setback from a navigable stream;
- impacts to wetlands;
- possible detrimental effects to surface water;
- private wells within 1200 feet;
- a state highway within 1,000 feet;
- and bird hazards to aircraft from nearby airports.

The Opinion Letter also states that Waste Management will have to notify all affected municipalities and apply for all specified local approvals at least 120 days before a feasibility report can be submitted to the DNR. This requirement will not apply since affected

**The 58-acre Superfund Site was active from 1954 --1972 and contains approximately 1.3 million cubic yards of waste with an average depth of 30 feet.**

municipalities “pre-approved” exhuming the Boundary Road Superfund Site in the “Orchard Ridge Landfill Eastern Expansion Agreement” dated September 2017. (see - “Orchard Ridge landfill differs from DNR Feasibility Report” in WEAL’s April 2018 newsletter)

The plan may undergo revisions as the DNR review progresses. WEAL will continue to ask questions and raise issues to ensure protection of the environmental, health of the residents and opportunities for public participation.

### **Historical statistics on Orchard Ridge Landfill**

(Source WUWM + JSOnline)

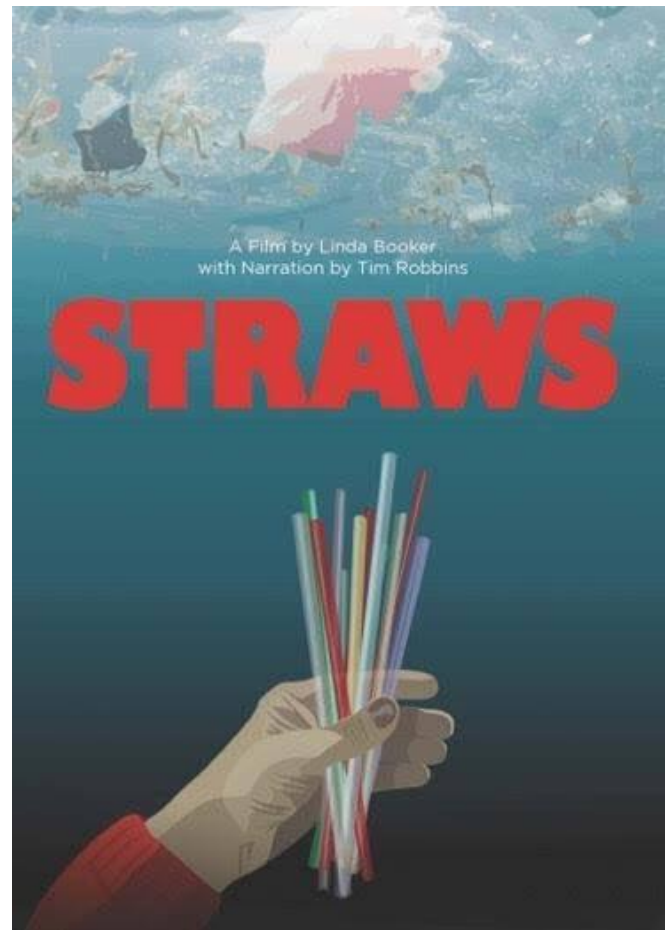
- 1.27 million tons of garbage was added to Orchard Ridge in 2016.
- On an average day, 400 to 600 trucks haul garbage from four counties---Ozaukee, Washington, Waukesha, Milwaukee.
- Of the 85 licensed operations in Wisconsin, Orchard Ridge is the largest.
- From top to bottom, the trash is a tad taller than a 10-story building.
- The decomposing waste produces methane, a flammable gas that can explode.
- Waste Management owns the landfill and monitors the methane and captures it to create power, A gas-to-energy plant on site produces power that goes out on the open grid for about 15,00 homes 24/7.



**Waukesha County  
Environmental Action League  
invites you to attend its  
**Annual Meeting**  
**Thursday November 14, 2019, 7pm**  
**Retzer Nature Center**  
28167 Madison St. Waukesha, WI**

## **Featured showing of documentary film: STRAWS**

- ✓ Straws is a documentary film that charts the history of straws and continues to present day issues that surround our current culture's obsession of single-use conveniences.
  - ✓ Used once and tossed, billions of non-recyclable plastic straws are used annually winding up in landfills, littering streets and finding their way to oceans.
  - ✓ Straws are the number five most popular collected item at beach cleanups behind bottle caps, wrappers, and cigarette butts.
- 
- This event is free and open to the public.
  - Q/A session will follow the 32- minute showing of the documentary
  - Refreshments served.
  - Please join us!



**All screenings aim to be as 'Waste Free' as possible.  
We appreciate your help to accomplish this.**

Check out WEAL @ [www.WEAL.org](http://www.WEAL.org)