GREEN TIER LEGACY COMMUNITY COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA

Thursday, January 16, 2025 at 10:30 A.M.

This Meeting Will Be conducted Via Zoom Video Conferencing

To access the meeting electronically, click:
https://zoom.us/j/4439901723?pwd=yAVpi40M1OIqgNufcVUE8XWCUSkKaH.1&omn=97063638580
Meeting ID: 443 990 1723 Passcode: 304078
To connect by phone: 1-301-715-8592 - Meeting ID 443 990 1723#
For additional information check: www.sisterbaywi.gov

1	Chair – Kurt Harff		2	Paula Anschutz	
3	Mary Smythe		4	Lisa O'Hearn	
5	Sarah White		6	Lilly Orozco	
				Village Administrator – Julie Schmelzer	
	Public Works Supervisor – Erik Linczmaier			*Village Clerk – Heidi Teich*	

1. Roll Call
2. Approval of the Agenda
3. Approval of the Minutes – August 15, 2024 and November 16, 2025 Meeting Notes
4. Comments, correspondence, and concerns from the public
5. Discussion/Action Items:
   (a) Recycling Plan/Plastic Bag Update
   (b) Earth Day – April 22, 2025
6. Matters to be Placed on Future Agenda, Referred to a Committee, Official or Employee
7. Adjournment

Public Notice

Questions regarding the nature of the agenda items above or more detail on the agenda items scheduled to be considered by the governmental body can be directed to Julie Schmelzer, Village Administrator at julie.schmelzer@sisterbaywi.gov. It is possible that members of and possibly a quorum of members of other governmental bodies may attend the meeting to gather information; no action will be taken by any governmental body other than the body specifically referred to above in this notice. Upon reasonable notice, a good faith effort will be made to accommodate the needs of disabled individuals through sign language interpreters or other auxiliary aid at no cost to the individual. Due to the difficulty in finding interpreters, requests should be made as far in advance as possible, preferably a minimum of 48 hours. For additional information or to request this service, contact the Sister Bay Village Administration Office at 854-4118, (FAX) 854-9637, or by writing to the Village Administration Building, 2383 Maple Drive, PO Box 769, Sister Bay, WI 54234. Copies of reports and other supporting documentation are available for review at the Village Administration Building during operating hours. (8 a.m. – 4 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays, 8 a.m. to noon on Fridays).

The Village of Sister Bay is an Equal Opportunity Employer and Provider.

POSTED DATE/SIGNATURE _____

AD HOC GREEN TIER LEGACY COMMUNITY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, August 15, 2024
(Approval Pending)

Agenda Item No. 1. The August 15, 2024 meeting of the Green Tier Legacy Community Committee was called to order by Chairperson Kurt Harff at 10:01 A.M.

Present: Kurt Harff, Lisa O'Hearn, Paula Anschutz and Mary Smythe. Lilly Orozco and Sarah White were absent.

Staff: Village Administrator Julie Schmelzer and Clerk Heidi Teich

Others: Laurel Harff

Agenda Item No. 2. Approval of the Agenda

A motion was made by O'Hearn, seconded by Smythe that the Agenda for the August 15, 2024 meeting of the Ad Hoc Green Tier Legacy Community Committee be approved as presented. Motion carried – All ayes.

Agenda Item No. 3. Approval of the Minutes

A motion was made by Smythe, seconded by O'Hearn that the minutes of the July 11, 2024 meeting of the Ad Hoc Green Tier Legacy Community Committee be approved as presented. Motion carried – All ayes.

Agenda Item No. 4. Comments, correspondence, and concerns from the public

Correspondence for this meeting was received from Meg Ziegelmann, who alerted the committee to a Wisconsin law that prohibits bans on "single-use" plastics. This was put in place under former Gov. Scott Walker, so more research will need to be done regarding this law. This information was also included in the packet under Agenda Item No. 5c.

Agenda Item No. 5. Discussion/Action Items:

a) Battery Recycling Update

Since the last meeting, Harff conducted some research on the availability of battery recycling facilities in Door County. He learned that Door County Scrap Metal in Sturgeon Bay does not accept household batteries of any kind, but they do accept auto batteries. Going Garbage, Sister Bay, does accept household batteries but with a fee of at least $1.00 per 3-cup container. Automotive batteries are accepted for a fee of $10.

The committee discussed the possibility of posting the names and locations of facilities that do accept batteries, as they are discovered, on the website for the public's reference. They also discussed the possibility of asking residents to save their discarded batteries, especially hearing aid batteries which are not overly large and cumbersome, for the spring recycling event.

O'Hearn shared information on TerraCycle, a waste management company that offers recycling

options for communities. She indicated that 3.5 gallon bins could be purchased for a nominal fee ($151), placed around the village, and then shipped back to the company. Additional research is needed on the associated costs, particularly for shipping as the containers would be heavy, and potential drop-off locations.

Smythe noted that she is willing to share information with Sarah White, who is a member of Northern Door Activism, to see if their organization would be interested in promoting battery recycling as well.

Schmelzer asked the committee to begin thinking of an actionable plan that they could propose to the board before it is introduced to the public.

b) NexTrex Recycling Challenge
c) Discussion on Plastics Ban/Recycling Locations

The NexTrex company offers a plastic recycling challenge, and information on the event was included in the meeting packet. Once a community or organization commits to the challenge, they have one year to collect 1000 pounds of plastic and will receive a Trex bench for meeting the challenge. Harff found the challenge intriguing as the NexTrex company is actively searching out plastics for their production facilities. A list of plastic recycling drop-off sites in Wisconsin was also included in the meeting packet.

Also included in the meeting packet was information on Wisconsin Act 302, passed in 2023, which does not permit the banning of plastics. Schmelzer presented an idea to ask businesses to voluntarily stop using single-use plastics, such as shopping bags. However, the village desires to find a way to address other types of plastic, such as the wrap that comes on shipped goods. Currently, there is no place in northern Door to collect that type of waste. Schmelzer contacted Trex Company and learned that Sister Bay could become a plastic collection site. Trex would supply a baler for gathering plastics, and promotional materials to get started. They would also come to collect the bales of plastic. Schmelzer then spoke of the need to find a storage location for the baler and bales. Additionally, there would need to be staff to monitor the site and operate the baler. Schmelzer also questioned where the financial support to operate the site would come from, and if the Town of Liberty Grove or Door County would be willing to contribute to the costs as the site would be open to all northern door residents.

Smythe felt that this would be a good project for the Sister Bay Green Tier Legacy Community. She wondered if Going Garbage would be willing to supply a collection site on their property for the plastic baler, but it is unknown whether people will drive to Going Garbage to deliver their plastics.

Anschutz felt the recycling challenge included in the meeting packet would be worthwhile opportunity for the Green Tier Legacy Community to promote a move away from plastic use, especially if the committee is also exploring options to provide reuseable bags to the community members. She also agrees that a collection site is needed in northern Door. Schmelzer shared that she will need to bring this request to the Parks, Property & Streets Committee, but did not feel they would be opposed to being a collection site as the village is already collecting holiday lights for recycling within the community.

Schmelzer stated that it may be worth exploring grants through Destination Door County to offer the local businesses opportunities to come up with alternatives to plastic materials.

Anschutz reported that she did speak with members of the SBAA board regarding eliminating plastic bags in the village. She also spoke with an employee of On Deck, who shared the concern that they already have pallets of their trademark plastic shopping bags in stock. However, they would be open to making a change if reasonable alternatives are found. Paper is not necessarily the best alternative. The key will be to advertise and promote Sister Bay's efforts to be more green, and offer sustainable alternatives that are cost effective for the business community.

The committee transitioned to a conversation on offering reusable bags to the community, and O'Hearn provided a wealth of information which was included in the meeting packet. Anschutz reported that the bags she investigated, recycled sails make into canvas bags, would cost no less than $25.00/each, which is cost prohibitive for this committee.

The committee noted that there is a wide variety of reusable bag options, and Schmelzer asked for an action plan to begin a program to circulate bags to the community. Decisions that need to be made include the type of material to use, how many to order (5000), the cost of production, and design. A budget will need to be developed, and then the committee can apply for grant funding. Later decisions will be on methods of distribution (give away at elections or village festivals) and whether or not to charge for the bags (sell them at the Piggly Wiggly). Schmelzer clarified that distribution may depend on where the funding for the bags came from as you would not charge individuals for bags that were obtained with public grant funds. O'Hearn is open to designing the bag, or the village could host a contest for a design. Ultimately, they want to make sure that the bag is attractive enough that people will want it.

d) Blue Zone Update

Schmelzer reported that she did draft a press release as planned at the last meeting but decided against sending it. Sister Bay needs a team of individuals who can focus solely on Blue Zones and ensure that efforts to transform into a Blue Zone community continue. We are not at that point yet, and investing money now to bring in speakers to conduct an assessment and educate the public without that core group to advance the mission is a gamble.

Anschutz agreed that Green Tier needs a greater presence in the community before taking on something as broad as Blue Zones. The committee can advocate now for healthy living and sustainable practices as they grow.

Agenda Item No. 6. Matters to be placed on a future agenda or referred to a committee, official, or employee

It was the consensus of the committee that the following topics be discussed at a future meeting:

- Discussion on recycling options for future Fall Fest events

The next meeting of the Sister Bay GTLC Committee will take place Thursday, September 19, 2024 at

10:30 A.M. via ZOOM.

Adjournment: *A motion was made by Smythe, seconded by O'Hearn to adjourn the August 15, 2024 at 11:00 A.M. Motion carried – all ayes.*

Respectfully submitted,

Heidi Teich

Heidi Teich,
Village Clerk

AD HOC GREEN TIER LEGACY COMMUNITY COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES
Thursday, November 14, 2024

The November 14, 2024 meeting of the Green Tier Legacy Community Committee did not have a quorum and therefore could not conduct a formal meeting. Those present included committee members Kurt Harff and Mary Smythe, Village Administrator Julie Schmelzer and Clerk Heidi Teich, and guest Laurel Harff.

The committee has been working on the need for plastic bag recycling in Northern Door. Schmelzer contacted Jeff Johnson, Going Garbage, about the possibility of opening a plastics baling facility in Sister Bay. Johnson toured a similar facility in Minnesota and concluded that his company does not have the space to house the necessary equipment, nor would the northern Door area produce enough plastic material to make this a practical investment for his company.

Schmelzer also toured Merrick, Inc., a curative rehab facility in Parkland, WI, which has a plastics recycling facility. She subsequently reached out to Patrick Voight, one of Sister Bay's County Board Supervisors who serves on the Land and Water Commission, to ask if the County would be willing to explore a plastics recycling facility County-wide. This partnership could involve the Sunshine House, whose clients could serve as the workforce, and Josh Van Lieshout, owner of the Sturgeon Bay Industrial Park, who could be asked to donate land if a facility were to be built. Finally, she contacted the Door County Economic Development Corporation who works with the businesses in the industrial park to explore whether anyone would have available space in an existing facility that could be utilized.

More updates will come as Schmelzer hears back from her contacts. Smythe noted that GTLC of Door County and the Climate Change Coalition would also be advocates for this type of program.

Respectfully submitted,

Heidi Teich

Heidi Teich,
Village Clerk

GREEN TIER

Green Tier Legacy Communities
Quarterly Member Meeting
Monday, January 27, 2025
Member Meeting: 1 p.m. – 4 p.m.

Zoom Link
Meeting ID: 853 9749 3520

Agenda

1:00 p.m. Welcome

1:05 p.m. Branching Out: The Hidden Benefits of Trees for a Sustainable Future
Brian Wahl, Urban Forestry Regional Coordinator – Wisconsin DNR
Brian will be speaking on the important role trees play in our communities and some of the surprising co-benefits trees provide beyond aesthetics. He will touch on the importance of incorporating trees, early and often, in project discussions. Finally, from low tech to high tech, he will provide examples of how communities can support sustainable tree plantings.

1:50 p.m. GTLC Member Updates, Round 1
We will work out a batting order based on the registrations we receive and post it on the screen. After your update, we will ask you to call on the next community. Please come prepared to share one-minute updates, including:

- Your name and role
- What community/county/organization you represent
- Updates on recent sustainability initiatives
- Highlights of your community's 2025 priorities

2:10 p.m. Managing Leaves for Better Water Quality Outcomes
Amy Minser, Stormwater Engineer, Wisconsin DNR
Trees are a vital part of our urban environment, but in the fall many trees drop leaves into the streets. These leaves can reduce traction, clog inlets, and contribute nutrients to lakes and streams. Common citizen actions and municipal services can be leveraged to prevent these impacts and provide quantifiable reductions that can aid in storm water permit compliance.

2:25 p.m. Break

2:35 p.m. How You Can Be a Part of the Trillion Trees Pledge
Carmen Hardin, Forest Management Bureau Director, Wisconsin DNR
Learn about Wisconsin's Trillion Trees Pledge and how your community can contribute to Wisconsin's goal of planting 100 million trees by 2030.

2:45 p.m. **Using Data to Effectively Manage Your Trees**
Dan Buckler, Urban Forester, Wisconsin DNR
Many Wisconsin communities use tree inventories and tree canopy data to improve their management of local trees or to understand gaps where trees are needed most. This presentation will discuss tree inventories and general ways to improve their usefulness. Additionally, tree canopy data will be shared which can illuminate the extent of tree cover in your community across public and private spaces.

3:30 p.m. **GTLC Member Updates, Round 2**

3:50 p.m. **GTLC Program Updates**

4:00 p.m. **Adjourn**

About the Speakers

Dan Buckler coordinates urban forestry data collection and analysis projects for the Wisconsin DNR. These projects help local communities improve the management of their local trees.

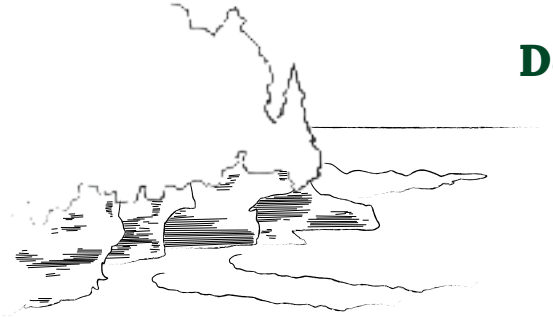
Carmen Hardin is the Applied Forestry Bureau Director in the Division of Forestry at WDNR. She has been employed at the Department for over 25 years. In her current position, she focuses on Urban Forestry, Forest Health, Reforestation and Tree Planting, Forestry Products and Forest Economics and Ecology. Carmen works out of the Rhinelander Service Center. In her free time, she enjoys fly fishing and travelling with her 2 dogs.

Amy Minser, P.E. is a Storm Water Engineer for the Wisconsin DNR in Madison. She developed a guidance document based on USGS research that municipalities can use to quantify the benefits of leaf management for the purposes of improved water quality and storm water permit compliance.

Brian Wahl is the WDNR Urban Forestry Coordinator for the South Central region based out of Fitchburg. As a connector of people, he works to share, promote and advance urban forestry management solutions with communities, non-profits and industry. Brian has been in his current position since 2014. His experience includes work in the commercial, utility and municipal arboriculture sectors.

The Door County Environmental Council News

December 2024



"Fostering the preservation of Door County's rich heritage of natural resources for the health, welfare, and spiritual uplift not only of its inhabitants, but of generations to come, through advocacy, education, and action."

The Illusion of Water

Water: it evokes feelings, memories, emotions, and inspiration.

At a very young age I learned to swim. It was our family's culture to acquire this skill and to respect what water brings to us—the dangers, the beauties, the nourishment, and LIFE. We would travel across the country camping in the State and National Parks, from Acadia to Superior to the Gulf Coast. There was always a body of water to play in, fish in, and contemplate in. But every year from the time I was a preteen until today, we would camp in Peninsula State Park. This tradition my husband and I carried on with our four daughters, and it continues today as our children and their children come back each summer to this wonderful peninsula of Door County. What started as our yearly vacations have become our permanent home now on the waters of Green Bay, here in Southern Door County. My husband likes to call it the "End Game."

The changing of the seasons on the lakefront has a unique beauty to it. Each day is different in what you see, feel and smell. I walk to the shoreline every morning, and I breathe in the air, warm or cold, and say, "Thank You." The water balances me and brings me peace. Each summer our children and grandchildren come to stay with us at "the Lake House" for a week or two and this past summer was no different. Our grandchildren play in the water and explore the nearby Sugar Creek County Park looking for crayfish, frogs, and salamanders. It is the vision of what childhood should be like for all—exploration in nature, seeking what's under the next rock, and experiencing the joy of adventure. We do "Papa Camp" activities with the grandkids: we swim, fish, hike, kayak, and have campfires. So many memories and life learning experiences we gain together; this is sacred time.

Living on the water, you notice changes. I began to feel ripples of concern when I noticed torrents of brown water flow from Sugar Creek following heavy rains during the springtime and early summers. At times the runoff was so great that the shoreline water would stay brown for many days, or until a strong north wind would change the current. As summers passed into July and August, I would notice the trend of regularly seeing Cladophora accumulate in the shallow waters, sometimes changing the color of the water to pea green soup until a strong north wind came along for a few days. As I saw the trends continue year after year I began to have doubts of the safety of the water for swimming and exploring in.

Our time together with family was winding down this past July as each of our daughters' families had

to return home to work and to commitments. Our oldest daughter, who resides in California, stayed a few extra days before traveling to Ohio to spend a week with her husband's family. Two days into her drive to Ohio, within hours of each other, she and her husband and their two sons all became suddenly ill with gastrointestinal symptoms. When symptoms did not let up and the youngest son, who is 4, became dehydrated, they all went to the emergency room. Testing was completed and it was confirmed that they were all positive for cryptosporidium, and the youngest son was positive for E. coli as well. My biggest fears hit me like a wave. This is from the lake water!

Recovery was more complex for the youngest grandson, since he needed a second ER visit for recurrent dehydration. The rest of the family recovered within two weeks. The impact of this was an extreme physical, emotional, and financial burden for them all. Their illness impacted our entire family; fears about the safety of the water and what we needed to do to keep ourselves safe were pervasive.

Green Bay at the mouth of Sugar Creek
Photo by Patricia Pratapas

So many questions revolved in my head. Can my grandkids play safely in the lake water? Can I swim in the water? Can they safely explore the creeks? Can their dogs play in the water? What does this mean, and where do I go for the answers?

I called our local health department here in Door County to report this case as the ER in Ohio would be sending the report to Los Angeles since that is the home address of my daughter. I also called Door County Parks for answers to my many questions and for some directions. I was given resources to the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh which works in conjunction with the Wisconsin DNR to monitor the beaches in Door County. I learned that there is a beach monitoring system in place, but the miles and miles of shoreline that I live along in Southern Door County has little representation. From north to south, Haines Beach to Red River Park, there is no current beach monitoring. I searched for any informational speakers on the environment and clean water, and that led me to the Door County Environmental Council (DCEC). Here I found a wealth of information about the environmental impact of climate change, rural farming practices, and the negative impact it has on our water and health. I also found compassionate voices of support. Sadly, I learned that Sugar Creek County Park is on Door County's 'Impaired Waters List' contaminated with phosphorus. With each answer I got, I had several more questions,. So what do I do now?

I Get Involved!

I am advocating to have more beach testing in Southern Door County, particularly in areas open to the public such as parks and boat launches. I am volunteering as a water action volunteer at Crossroads at Big Creek, and I am joining the DCEC to continue my journey in knowledge acquisition and advocacy for clean water for all. I invite you to join me on this quest, there is so much to learn.

"When the well's dry we know the worth of water"
Benjamin Franklin

By Patricia Pratapas, Director

Protecting Door County's Waterways: A Guide to the EPA's 9 Key Elements for Watershed Health

In Door County, Wisconsin, water isn't just a resource; it's central to the County's unique identity and way of life. From the stunning coastlines along Lake Michigan and Green Bay to cherished inland lakes and wetlands, Door County's waterways support local economies, recreation, and biodiversity. However, pollution threats—from agricultural runoff to sediment erosion—are increasingly impacting water quality. To address these challenges, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) developed a framework of "9 Key Elements" to guide communities in creating effective watershed-based plans. Here's how these elements can support cleaner, healthier waters in Door County.

The 9 Key Elements for Watershed-Based Plans in Door County

Each element is designed to tackle pollution at its source, encourage community participation, and set clear benchmarks for watershed health. Here's how they apply to the unique waters of Door County.

1. Identifying Pollution Sources for Targeted Action

The journey to cleaner waters begins with understanding where pollutants are coming from. In Door County, agricultural runoff, faulty septic systems, and urban storm water contribute excess nutrients and bacteria, impacting beaches, aquatic life, and drinking water.

Door County Impact: By identifying key sources, such as specific farm fields or residential areas, Door County can prioritize pollution control measures where they're needed most, improving water quality in targeted zones.

2. Setting Pollution Reduction Goals

Estimating pollution reduction goals allows Door County to set measurable targets for improving water quality. Reducing nutrient and sediment loads helps prevent harmful algal blooms in lakes and protects the clarity of waters that attract visitors and support local wildlife.

Door County Impact: These targets are crucial for safeguarding local beaches, protecting habitat for fish species, and ensuring that residents and tourists alike can enjoy clean, safe water.

3. Implementing Sustainable Management Practices

This step calls for sustainable solutions that address nonpoint source pollution. In Door County, this might mean introducing practices like cover cropping to reduce nutrient runoff from farms, creating green areas around waterways to manage nutrition runoff, or protecting shoreline vegetation to prevent erosion.

Door County Impact: Sustainable practices not only reduce pollutants but also protect valuable coastal areas from erosion, maintaining Door County's natural beauty and improving resilience against storm impacts.

4. Mobilizing Technical and Financial Resources

Achieving watershed health requires both technical expertise and financial investment. Door County needs resources to implement projects, monitor water quality, and maintain best practices. This element encourages the county to seek federal grants, local funding, and partnerships with environmental organizations such as DCEC which remains on the frontlines of environmental education.

Door County Impact: Access to resources is vital for funding initiatives like wetland restoration or shoreline stabilization, ensuring long-term protection for Door County's natural assets.

5. Building Public Awareness and Involvement

Public awareness is essential in Door County, where tourism and outdoor recreation connect people deeply to water. By educating residents, farmers, and visitors about the impact of runoff and the importance of protective practices, the county can foster a community-wide commitment to preserving water quality.

6. Creating an Actionable Timeline

A clear, actionable timeline keeps watershed initiatives on track, setting dates for beginning and completing restoration projects. With Door County's seasonal cycles and influx of tourists in mind, a structured plan ensures efforts that align with periods of high recreational water use.

Door County Impact: An effective timeline means that measures like beach monitoring or algae control happen before peak tourist season, ensuring safe, enjoyable water access for all.

7. Setting Interim Milestones for Progress

This step establishes measurable milestones to track the success of pollution reduction actions. In Door County, milestones could include benchmarks for installing rain gardens in urban areas or specific goals for reducing phosphorus levels in targeted watersheds.

Door County Impact: Milestones offer a way to monitor ongoing progress, helping ensure water quality is improving in places like Green Bay, Sturgeon Bay, and other crucial waterways.

8. Defining Success Criteria

Establishing success criteria, such as specific nutrient reductions or visible improvements in water clarity, allows Door County to assess whether watershed plans are working. Clear criteria also provide accountability and motivation to keep programs on track.

Door County Impact: Success criteria may include reduced beach closures due to bacteria, fewer algal blooms, or improved water clarity—benefits that boost both public health and the local economy.

9. Monitoring and Adapting for Long-Term Resilience

Monitoring water quality over time is essential to sustaining watershed health. Door County's unique water systems face fluctuating pressures from agricultural cycles, tourist season, and climate impacts. Regular monitoring allows the community to adapt and refine management practices as conditions change.

Door County Impact: Ongoing monitoring ensures that improvements are sustained, helping Door County remain resilient to future challenges like extreme weather, rising temperatures, and development pressures.

Moving Forward: Door County as a Model for Watershed Health

Implementing the EPA's 9 Key Elements offers Door County a pathway to protect its waters in a sustainable, adaptive way. These elements support clean water by targeting pollution sources, engaging the community, and setting clear benchmarks for progress. For Door County, protecting watersheds means preserving local culture, supporting recreation, and boosting economic resilience.

From the rocky shores of Lake Michigan to the tranquil inland streams, Door County's waters are precious. By taking a proactive, science-based approach, the community can protect its waterways for future generations, ensuring a lasting legacy of clean water and natural beauty that defines life in Door County.

By Emeil Marks, Vice President

Source:
https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Nonpoint/9keyElement

Enbridge Renewable Natural Gas: Greenwashing?

Renewable natural gas (RNG) is produced by capturing methane emissions from organic waste. Key sources of RNG include landfills, wastewater treatment plants, livestock manure, and food waste from agricultural and industrial operations. At each source, organic materials decompose and release biogas—a mix of methane and carbon dioxide—into the atmosphere. RNG facilities capture this biogas, treating and refining it to reach the quality of conventional natural gas.

Natural gas is mostly methane, and methane is a very potent greenhouse gas that's 30 to 90 times as bad as carbon dioxide. Further, our entire natural gas system from cradle to use leaks.

Renewable natural gas has a place. Capturing as much of the unavoidable anthropogenic emissions from our economic processes that are biomass-based as possible is eminently sensible. Displacing fossil gas feedstock from industrial processes that will persist with RNG is eminently sensible. There's possibly a place for RNG in long duration strategic energy stores.

But replacing natural gas for energy in day to day use? That's just silly, and is greenwashing by firms like Enbridge, the biggest natural gas distributor by volume in North America. It enables them to pretend that they are decarbonizing without doing much of anything regarding decarbonization, giving them the social license to operate longer and lobby hard for more gas hookups instead of strategic shut down of gas utilities to avoid the utility death spiral that's looming for them.

Also, manufacturing a lot more methane with anaerobic digesters is a bad idea because intentionally making high global warming-potential gases in a leaky supply chain guarantees higher emissions, not reduced emissions. The biomass, if aerated, would decompose aerobically to create carbon dioxide, with 30 to 90 times lower climate change impacts.

Let's step through several use cases for natural gas today to see if there are clear alternatives to a high global warming potential gas, as well as ratios of RNG availability to fossil gas consumption.

SECTOR	PERCENTAGE
Electric power	33%
Industrial	27%
Export LNG	18%
Residential	11%
Commercial	8%
Transportation	3%

Table of natural gas end use by the author from US Energy Information Administration (EIA) data.

While these are US statistics, they are apt when it comes to discussing Enbridge as about 55% of its revenue comes from US operations including supplying liquified natural gas (LNG) export terminals. It's also a 30% owner of British Columbia's LNG export terminal.

While the USA is the world's leading producer, consumer, and exporter of natural gas, it's only a fifth of global use.

Further, there's no way to capture 100% of anthropogenic emissions of methane to make RNG. A tremendous amount of methane emissions comes from agricultural and forestry waste in piles that have internal anaerobic decomposition. A huge amount is from rice fields. Neither is remotely susceptible to capturing the methane.

Only reasonably big point sources of anthropogenic biomethane can see partial capture. Industrial dairy barns where cow burps can see methane filtered out use cryogenic or membrane filtration. Landfills can

be covered with plastic seals and the methane from decomposing food waste, paper, and chopsticks can be captured and is in many landfills today. Wastewater treatment plants are existing sources of methane in enclosed spaces suitable for capture.

The first thing to do with those sources, of course, is to reduce emissions as much as possible. For dairy cows, seaweed-derived supplements can reduce enteric emissions by up to 80%. For landfills, diversion of biomass waste into more productive uses makes sense. Not much we can do about wastewater treatment plants. (Supplements for all ruminants and variable fill agriculture for rice reduce emissions there substantially, but that's outside of capturable emissions.)

Generously, about 1% of total anthropogenic biomethane emissions could be captured, turning the percentage of fossil natural gas that could be displaced to one 1,600th of current global demand. The sheer scale of the fossil fuel industry vs the difficulty of capturing anthropogenic biomethane is missing from all discussions of it by many organizations like Enbridge and other fossil fuel firms with full knowledge and intent.

There are anaerobic biodigesters too. They are sealed chambers with the biomass added and oxygen removed. That means all of the biomass decomposes anaerobically into methane instead of into carbon dioxide. They leak. Studies find up to 15% of methane escapes from them. Intentionally turning biomass into methane in a leaky system and distributing it widely for more leakage is counterproductive from a climate perspective. Allowing it to decompose aerobically into carbon dioxide is much more sensible.

Enbridge has managed to source around 1.5% of their LNG export customer deliveries from RNG after 13 years of effort. That's indicative of what's going on. LNG shipments are higher margin than domestic delivery because North America's natural gas is dirt cheap. That's because 70% of it comes as a waste by product of shale oil and they are giving it away for the price of distribution. The spike in LNG shipments has caused the domestic market for natural gas to increase prices while at the same time governments are demanding and paying a premium for RNG.

The combination means that Enbridge makes money by selling more fossil natural gas internationally at higher global prices, getting higher domestic prices for RNG, downplaying completely the inability of RNG to scale to be a solution, and pretending the RNG is anything other than the pea in a shell game. What was that word again? Oh, yeah, greenwashing.

The only place for methane, whether fossil or renewable, is in increasingly constrained capacity factor peaker plants. That demand is heading down because renewables and storage are climbing rapidly. That's why capacity factors at fossil fuel plants have been in decline in North America, Europe and China for years.

The only potential use case in the long run for RNG is in long-duration, strategic energy reserves for continent-scale lulls in wind combined with low solar input. This is a tiny amount, in the range of 0.01% to 0.1% of current annual demand, and within the range of capturing existing anthropogenic biomethane emissions.

Industrial heat is going to electrify. 45% of it is under 200° Celsius, and we have heat pumps that do that now. Heat pumps are about three times as efficient as burning gas, so the economics strongly favor them. Further, wind turbines or solar panels to heat pumps have vastly lower emissions than burning methane gas from any source for heat, at a lower cost than RNG. Higher heat levels are also all going to electrify, with varying speeds in different geographies.

About two-thirds of industrial demand for natural gas is for heat. The third that's for industrial feedstocks, for example methanol manufacturing, is going to be a market for RNG. Making methanol from anthropogenic biomethane, for example,

is a good pathway. Methanol is a key industrial feedstock with a range of vital applications. Approximately 30-40% of methanol is used to produce formaldehyde, essential for making resins, adhesives, and construction materials like plywood. Another significant portion goes into acetic acid production, a building block for paints, adhesives, and textiles. Methanol also fuels the creation of olefins, such as ethylene and propylene, which form the basis of plastics and synthetic fibers. Additionally, it's a component in biodiesel production and is commonly found in solvents and antifreeze.

If we stopped emitting methane today, the excess we've shoved into the atmosphere would be gone in a generation, significantly reducing the heat increases in the near term.

Are there any alternatives to RNG in transportation? You know, like battery electric trucks and battery electric and biodiesel hybrid ships? Yes, yes there are, and they are all lower greenhouse gas emissions than burning RNG.

And so, the end of this deep dive on why renewable natural gas only has a couple of use cases that make sense. Capturing as much of the anthropogenic biomethane we can't avoid as possible makes sense. Likely using anaerobic digesters in carefully controlled industrial settings where the methane is used directly as an industrial feedstock, exactly as 85% of hydrogen today is manufactured and used, also makes sense.

This article was taken from an article by Michael Barnard called "Enbridge Renewable Natural Gas- A 1% Greenwashing Rounding Error" from cleantechnica.com and adapted by Robert Sijgers, Director. To read the entire article, visit https://cleantechnica.com/2024/11/02/enbridge-renewable-natural-gas-a-1-greenwashing-rounding-error/

Paradise Saved—At Least for Now

The Liberty Grove Town Board has, for the second time in two years, requested that Door County amend HL-10 zoning to allow any trade contractors, car repair, or boat repair businesses to start or expand their commercial enterprises in the HL-10 zoning district. The Town Board argues that area contractors just can't find adequate commercially zoned property on which to expand or start a business. Since Liberty Grove has adopted Door County Comprehensive Zoning, County approval is necessary to enact this significant change. HL-10 zoned property is intended to have parcels with a minimum lot size of 10 acres that, per the ordinance, "provides for residential development at low densities, agricultural uses, and other nonresidential uses that require relatively large land areas and/or which are compatible with the surrounding rural character." Currently, a Liberty Grove business owner can have a business on HL-10 zoned property—if they already also live on the same site. This change then would only impact contractors who don't want to live on the same site as their business.

The proposed zoning change would potentially affect over 5,000 acres of property, almost all of it in Liberty Grove. I don't think anyone wants to see commercial buildings sprawling across our beautiful northern Door County and Liberty Grove landscape. This past August, I approached the Liberty Grove Town Board with an alternative solution to potentially meet local contractor needs. I suggested a light industrial park on Town-owned property adjacent to the Town Hall as an alternative to the requested zoning change. The Town of Liberty Grove currently owns 47 acres adjoining the Town Hall on Old Stage Road. The Town now uses only approximately 13 acres of this property for Town purposes. The vacant balance of 34 acres has frontage on two roads, has been unused for decades, and in my opinion, would make a great light commercial park.

I was told by a Liberty Grove Board member that they had considered a light commercial park as an option to meet contractor needs two years ago,

but the County would not allow the industrial park at that location. This just didn't sound right to me. So, I contacted the director of the Door County Land Use Services Department, Mariah Goode. She informed me that a light commercial park was indeed possible at that site, providing the Town did one of two things: 1) The Town needed to either change its long-term comprehensive plan to identify the subject property as a future industrial park, or 2) have a documented vote by the voters in Liberty Grove, indicating that the majority favored changing the zoning of the property to light commercial zoning. Light commercial zoning would allow lots as small as 20,000 square feet or slightly less than a half-acre in size.

If a generous 14 acres of the remaining 34 acres were used as buffer and screening, the remaining 20 acres utilized as an industrial park could optimally accommodate as many as 40 businesses. Businesses that require larger lots could also be located there. I provided all this information to a member of the Liberty Grove Town Board and made sure that a direct conversation between the Town and the County was had so there were no misunderstandings. However, the Town, without ever holding a vote of the Liberty Grove voters, pressed on with the proposed amendment. On October 17 the proposed Liberty Grove HL-10 Amendment was presented to the Resource Planning Committee at the County for consideration. With a 4-1 vote, the Committee recommended denial of the text amendment petition for the following reasons:

- The proposed amendment is not in keeping with the general reasons a text amendment should be adopted.
- The amendment will not correct an inconsistency or loophole within the ordinance.
- The amendment is not consistent with the goals of the comprehensive plan as the existing text.
- The amendment is contrary to the stated goals of the ordinance itself.

The proposed amendment went to the County Board on November 12, where it was denied on a vote of 20-1.

I believe that there is a need for more commercially zoned property in Liberty Grove and that the industrial park concept should be considered to meet that demand. We want, and need, our local contractors to have the required space to operate and expand their businesses. I encourage the Town to pursue this alternative and I believe residents would enthusiastically support this solution.

By Steve Eatough, President

Rose-breasted nuthatch *Photo by Mike Bahrke*

Remembering Carol Bleackley Sills

June 11, 1935 – October 11, 2024

Carol Bleackley Sills
Photo submitted by the Sills family

The Door County Environmental Council holds tremendous gratitude and appreciation for Carol Sills who was a Founding Board Member until 2011 and Lifetime Honorary Board Member. Carol first became involved with the DCEC in the late 60s. At that time, the DCEC was a grassroots group of concerned citizens wanting to stop the building of a nuclear power plant and then a coal-fired power plant on Lake Michigan at the mouth of the Sturgeon Bay Ship Canal, neither of which has ever appeared on Door County's shorelines!

Carol was on board when the DCEC was working to stop the overdevelopment of condominiums in natural areas too sensitive for this type of environmental trauma. She was there with the Environmental Council for the protection of Door County's (and the world's) rare Hine's Emerald Dragonfly and its induction to the 1973 Endangered Species List. She was also there when the Environmental Council decided that the best way to slow the over-development of Door County's fragile environment was to buy up and protect its most sensitive landscapes from being subdivided, thus launching the formation of the Door County Land Trust in 1986—one of the great successes of environmental preservation on this peninsula!

Carol was an active member of the DCEC until 2011, when at that point she tapped me to take her place on the board so she could fully commit to continuing the important work that she and her husband, Paul Sills, had been doing in story theatre since the 60s. Paul passed away in 2008.

Carol's husband, Paul Sills, was one of the co-founders of the Chicago theater, The Second City. Second City started a movement of improvisational theater and entertainment that has spread throughout the world and has created hundreds if not thousands of improvisational actors—celebrity names like Ed Asner, Valerie Harper, John Belushi, Dan Aykroyd, Alan Arkin, and Bill Murray, to name a few. Saturday Night Live is a spin-off of the work by the Sills group.

Paul and Carol Sills purchased a 40 acre farm in Door County in the 70s and remodeled a 150-year-old farmhouse and barns into their summer home and future improvisational summer school theater. During the winters they worked in Los Angeles, New York City, and Chicago.

When Paul Sills passed away in 2008, Carol retired to the farm and hired me as a handyman to help keep things running. Our friendship grew and I feel honored to have known Carol and her amazing family. Carol was a brilliant artist and teacher. She continued offering improv classes in the summer with the help of her daughters and friends. On the farm, she would tell me stories of the people she knew and worked with like Valerie Harper and Bob Dylan. The farm was a beautiful place to be, with lovely untilled grass fields, a pond, forest and a mowed walking path for connecting with Mother Nature. One day, Carol told her daughter, Rachel, and me, while looking out of her barnyard at the naturalness of the farm, "I have an open immigration policy to wildlife." Carol Sills had an open heart to all, and her insightful wisdom and warm friendship will be greatly missed, but never forgotten.

The DCEC and I would like to thank you, Carol, for your friendship and dedication to the preservation of our peninsula's natural environment.

By Paul Leline, Secretary

DCEC Welcomes Two New Board Members

Nate Boutross

Nathaniel (Nate) Boutross is a 23-year-old student from Princeton, NJ. In May, 2018, his love and passion for nature and animals led him to volunteer with The Watershed Institute, an organization dedicated to keeping water clean, safe, and healthy through education, stewardship, and research. Throughout his time at the organization, Nate participated in the StreamWatch Bacterial Action Team (BACT), collecting water samples to determine the presence of harmful algal blooms (HABs) and E. coli, and contributed to the maintenance of public reserve trails, among many other opportunities.

Nate attended Eckerd College in St. Petersburg, FL and graduated in May 2023 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Environmental Studies. After relocating to his parent's condo in Sturgeon Bay, he applied and was accepted into the Northeast Wisconsin Technical College's "Environmental Engineering Technology" program.

Nate also made an effort to become involved with several environmental organizations in Door County, which led him to the Door County Environmental Council (DCEC).

In addition to serving on the DCEC board, Nate currently works as a residential and short-term vacation rental house cleaner for Door County Clean and volunteers with the "Big Brothers Big Sisters of America" organization.

Patty Pratapas

Patty Pratapas grew up spending summers camping in Door County and continued this tradition with her husband and four daughters. These family adventures instilled a deep respect for nature, which is a core value for her family.

Patty began her career as a Critical Care Nurse in Chicago and transitioned into Public Health Nursing during the second half of her career. The wealth of knowledge Patty gained in critical care nursing she transferred to serving the public through School Nursing. She worked in primary and secondary education, but found the high school level particularly fulfilling, coordinating the delivery of health services for all students with need. She served on the Board of the Illinois Association of School Nurses for ten years in varying capacities, completing this tenure as Board President in 2016. Patty retired from nursing in 2018 after 38 years of service to the promotion of health and wellness.

Patty and her husband reside in Brussels WI, adjacent to Sugar Creek County Park and are avid for outdoor activities. She is currently seeking to learn more about the water quality and the environmental impact of business in Door County. With her background and knowledge in public health and critical care she is looking forward to further exploring a positive role in supporting clean water for all.

DCEC Leadership

PRESIDENT: Steve Eatough, Sister Bay
VICE-PRESIDENT: Emeil Marks, Sister Bay
SECRETARY: Paul Leline, Baileys Harbor
TREASURER: Steve Eatough, Sister Bay

DIRECTORS:
Nate Boutross, Sturgeon Bay
Patty Pratapas, Brussels
Robert Sijgers, Forestville
Mark Villers, Nasewaupee
Elizabeth Warner, Ellison Bay

HONORARY DIRECTORS:
Tony Haswell
James Ingwersen
Flora Langlois
Bob Merline
Karen Wilson
Libby Zimmerman

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: Mike Bahrke, Ellison Bay
BOOKKEEPER: Karen McCarthy, Ellison Bay
COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR:
Kaethe Gutierrez, Sturgeon Bay

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DCEC MEMBERSHIP FORM -- JOIN TODAY!!

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Please mail with payment to: DCEC, 10579 Country Walk Dr., Unit #24, Sister Bay, WI 54234

DOOR COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL EST. 1971

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Sister Bay, WI 54234

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Visit us on the web at *www.dcec-wi.org*, email at *contact@dcec-wi.org,*
and on Facebook at *https://www.facebook.com/DCwiEnvironmentalcouncil/*

Tuesday, April 22, 2025 is the 55th anniversary of Earth Day. We invite everyone to support Earth Day's 2025 theme: **OUR POWER, OUR PLANET™.**

https://www.earthday.org/earth-day-2025/

Simple Ways To Celebrate Earth Day

Here are some simple yet impactful ways to celebrate:

1. Plant a tree or start a pollinator garden: Get your hands dirty and give back to nature by planting trees or creating a haven for bees, butterflies, and other vital pollinators.
2. Reduce your plastic consumption and properly recycle: Take a hard look at your plastic footprint and find ways to cut back, like switching to reusable bags and water bottles. And when you do use plastic, make sure to recycle it correctly!
3. Participate in a local cleanup or environmental event: Join forces with your community to clean up a beach, park, or neighborhood. It's a great way to make a tangible difference and connect with like-minded eco-warriors.
4. Advocate for renewable energy policies in your community: Use your voice to push for clean energy initiatives in your city or town. Attend town hall meetings, write to your representatives, and spread the word about the benefits of renewables.

Engaging Ideas For Earth Day Activities

Check out these inspiring activity ideas:

1. Organize a renewable energy fair or workshop: Educate your community about the power of clean energy by hosting a fair featuring solar panels, wind turbines, and electric vehicles. Invite experts to lead workshops on energy efficiency and green living.
2. Host a sustainable fashion swap or upcycling event: Fight fast fashion by organizing a clothing swap or upcycling workshop. Encourage participants to bring gently used items to trade or repurpose into new, stylish pieces.
3. Plan a green transportation challenge: Dare your friends and family to ditch their cars for a day (or a week!) and opt for eco-friendly transportation like biking, walking, or carpooling. Make it a fun competition with prizes for the most miles logged or creative commutes.
4. Create eco-friendly art installations or murals: Harness the power of art to raise environmental awareness. Collaborate with local artists to create stunning, thought-provoking pieces that spark conversations about climate change, pollution, and conservation.

Let's Make Every Day Earth Day

Here are some ways to weave sustainability into your daily life:

1. Incorporate sustainable practices into your daily routine, like composting, using eco-friendly cleaning products, and reducing your meat consumption.
2. Support businesses and policies that prioritize renewable energy and green practices. Vote with your wallet and your ballot!
3. Educate others about the importance of environmental stewardship. Share your knowledge, experiences, and passion with friends, family, and your wider community.

Remember, together we have the power to create a cleaner, greener planet. Every small action counts, and by making every day Earth Day, we can build a sustainable future that we're proud to pass on to future generations.

https://forestnation.com/blog/when-is-earth-day/#:~:text=Drumroll%2C%20please%E2%80%A6,and%20creating%20a%20sustainable%20future.