



# CONSERVATION SCORECARD 2013-2014

*for the Wisconsin Legislature*



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LEW BLANK, Tiedeman Pond

## YOUR AIR, YOUR LAND, YOUR WATER - AND YOUR VOTE.

WE KNOW HOW IMPORTANT THEY ARE TO YOU AND A HEALTHY WISCONSIN.

*Your generous contribution to Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters today helps us protect your public health and natural resources, elect strong conservation leaders to the State Capitol, and hold them accountable.*



***Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to electing conservation leaders, holding decision makers accountable, and encouraging lawmakers to champion conservation policies that effectively protect Wisconsin's natural resources and public health.***

**JOIN US. BECOME A MEMBER OF OUR POWERFUL GRASSROOTS MOVEMENT THAT PROTECTS YOUR AIR, LAND, AND WATER.**

NANCY ATEN, Mequon



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# CONSERVATION HONOR ROLL

*Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters understands that the “black and white” nature of a Scorecard sometimes makes it difficult to recognize those instances where legislators went the extra mile for natural resources. The Conservation Honor Roll recognizes the following legislators for the extra effort they put forth to conserve Wisconsin’s natural resources.*

## REPRESENTATIVE SCOTT KRUG

Finding solutions to Wisconsin’s groundwater problems is a challenging undertaking. In the midst of attempts in the Senate to make it even more difficult, Representative Krug was meeting with local stakeholders in his area about how to proactively address water shortages in the state’s most troubled groundwater area, the Central Sands. While no compromise could be reached, Representative Krug deserves credit for working to bring people together to constructively solve the problem.

## REPRESENTATIVE ALVIN OTT

Wisconsin has always been on the national forefront of enacting flexible, straightforward solutions to environmental problems. We did it again this session with the leadership of Representative Ott who authored SB 190. SB 190 gives the DNR the ability to consider all sources of pollution in a watershed, rather than one at a time. His bill allows the DNR to work collaboratively with local municipalities, industry, and agriculture to reduce pollution, especially phosphorus.

## SENATORS JENNIFER SHILLING & KATHLEEN VINEHOUT & REPRESENTATIVE CHRIS DANOU

In the last five years, Wisconsin frac sand facilities have grown from less than a handful to more than one hundred. This relatively new industry has little oversight, which has meant significant consequences for Wisconsin’s environment, public health, and quality of life. Senators Shilling and Vinehout and Representative Danou led the effort to secure additional DNR positions for permitting, compliance, and monitoring of frac sand operations. They were also outspoken advocates when SB 349 and SB 632 attempted to prevent local communities from addressing the threats of frac sand mining.

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# CONSERVATION DISHONOR ROLL

*Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters also understands that there are times when a poor Scorecard score doesn’t do enough to illustrate just how far some legislators will go to jeopardize Wisconsin’s natural resources. Actions by the following legislators are grossly out-of-line with the conservation values of their constituents.*

## SENATOR THOMAS TIFFANY

Senator Tiffany was the lead author on nearly every divisive anti-conservation bill that was signed into law this session, including the Open-Pit Mining Bill (SB 1). He was also the author of the wildly unpopular bills to strip local communities’ ability to enforce public health and safety protections (SB 349 & SB 632). Senator Tiffany makes a habit out of putting out-of-state polluters before the people of Wisconsin.

## SENATOR FRANK LASEE

Senator Lasee is leading a one-man attack on Wisconsin’s clean energy economy, regularly introducing new ways to undermine large-scale wind developments. Senator Lasee offered up several bills such as SB 167 that created outrageous loopholes to keep legitimately sited wind projects from going forward. Fortunately, his attacks on clean energy are widely recognized as out-of-touch by citizens and legislators alike.

## SENATOR NEAL KEDZIE

Senator Kedzie was on the very first Conservation Honor Roll for his efforts to protect groundwater. But a decade later, despite growing evidence of serious groundwater problems cropping up around the state, Senator Kedzie led the charge to pass SB 302, a bill that was a groundwater giveaway to frac sand mining companies, factory farms, and other large water users. Fortunately, his efforts failed.

# STORY OF THE SESSION

## SESSION OVERVIEW

The 2013-2014 legislative session had its share of both good and bad moments. Certainly the most stinging defeat was the passage of the Open-Pit Mining Bill early in the session. It exempted iron mines from having to meet most environmental laws and passed despite the historic outpouring of citizen opposition.

From there, however, the session improved. When legislators attempted to undermine protections regarding groundwater and frac sand mining, citizen efforts paid off. In fact, your efforts helped soundly defeat those attacks three times over. The session ended on a bright note with the defeat of the Eat My Dust Bill, which was a second attempt to prevent local communities from addressing the threats of frac sand mining.

Along the way, we were even able to pass a few pro-conservation bills to improve water quality and prevent toxins like lead and prescription drugs from contaminating our drinking water.

Overall, 50% of the pro-conservation bills supported by Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters were signed into law by Governor Walker.

***We defeated 75% of the top priority anti-conservation bills. Those successes would not have been possible without significant effort from our partner organizations, members, and supporters – thank you!***

While we are proud of these successes, we remain deeply concerned that the Wisconsin Legislature is not tackling the most critical issues facing our state, like developing in-state clean energy options, updating our frac sand mining protections, or managing our groundwater supplies for the long-term.

We look forward to continuing to work with you to build the political will for legislators to address the natural resource issues that matter most to you and your family.

## CONSERVATION CHAMPIONS

*Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters extends a special thank you and congratulations to this year's Conservation Champions. Conservation Champions are legislators who received a perfect 100%.*

SENATORS	REPRESENTATIVES		
Tim Carpenter	Peter Barca	Gordon Hintz	Daniel Riemer
Jon Erpenbach	Mandela Barnes	Brett Hulsey	Janis Ringhand
Dave Hansen	Terese Berceau	LaTonya Johnson	Melissa Sargent
Nikiya Harris	Penny Bernard Schaber	Andy Jorgensen	Katrina Shankland
Chris Larson	Janet Bewley	Frederick Kessler	Christine Sinicki
Julie Lassa	Jill Billings	Debra Kolste	Chris Taylor
John Lehman	Fred Clark	Cory Mason	Dana Wachs
Jennifer Shilling	Chris Danou	Nick Milroy	Mandy Wright
Kathleen Vinehout	Eric Genrich	Tod Ohnstad	Leon Young
Robert Wirsch	Evan Goyke	Sandy Pasche	JoCasta Zamarripa
	Gary Hebl	Sondy Pope	Josh Zepnick
	Dianne Hesselbein	Jon Richards	



HELEN SARAkinos, Parfrey's Glen

## BILL GRAVEYARD AND VOICE VOTES

*Not every bill introduced in the legislature receives a vote, which means that sometimes, the story of what did not happen is just as important as what did. Here are a few bills that are not included in the Scorecard tallies because they were never voted upon.*

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### ANTI-CONSERVATION BILLS THAT DIED

*These anti-conservation bills never saw the light of day for a variety of reasons, but the overriding factor is that citizens took quick action to stop them – sharing information, engaging their communities, and contacting their legislators. Your efforts showed legislators how politically unpopular these bad ideas were. Well done!*

#### SB 302 **SUCKING WISCONSIN'S GROUNDWATER DRY**

The waters of Wisconsin belong to the people of Wisconsin, and it is the responsibility of the Department of Natural Resources to protect those water resources for all of us. SB 302 would have prohibited the DNR from considering the cumulative impacts of high capacity wells throughout our state, undermining the DNR's ability to protect our groundwater and surface waters for current and future generations.

#### SB 349 **KNEECAPPING LOCAL COMMUNITIES**

Communities rely upon their local authorities to be the first line of defense in protecting air and water quality and water supplies. SB 349 would have prevented all local authorities from passing protections for air and water quality and water quantity and even prevented them from monitoring their own air and water. In addition, the bill attempted to further erode local governments' ability to regulate frac sand mining.

#### SB 632 **EAT MY DUST BILL**

Frac sand mining is already causing our hills to disappear and our communities to suffer. If anything, citizens need more tools to address the dramatically changing landscapes of their communities. SB 632 would have allowed sand mining companies, even those not yet operating, to avoid any future mining-related ordinances. In addition, the bill would have invalidated some existing frac sand ordinances.

#### SB 71 & SB 167 **BLOCKING WIND DEVELOPMENT**

In order to compete with other Midwestern states in the clean energy economy, Wisconsin must promote wind development. SB 71 would have allowed a political subdivision to make an arbitrary decision that wind turbines threaten public health and can be exempted from the statewide rules governing wind energy. SB 167 would have allowed landowners near properly sited wind turbines to sue for damages without proving they have been harmed by the turbine. Both of these bills were backdoor attempts to skirt state rules, creating more roadblocks for wind development than exist for other energy sources.

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## PRO-CONSERVATION BILLS THAT DIED

*Unfortunately, these great pro-conservation bills didn't gain traction this session. With your help, we'll work to bring them back for a vote in a future session.*

### SB 47 & AB 902 DEVELOPING NEW CLEAN ENERGY PROJECTS

Wisconsin's current goal of generating 10% of our energy from renewable sources is meant to build up Wisconsin's in-state energy sources, such as wind, biomass, solar, and small-scale hydroelectricity. Developing Wisconsin's renewable energy sources will not only decrease our reliance on out-of-state energy, but will improve air and water quality. SB 47 would have increased Wisconsin's current modest goals so that we'd remain competitive with our neighbors in Ohio, Illinois, and Minnesota, who already have higher clean energy targets. AB 902 would have created a development authority to fund clean energy projects.

### AB 700 KEEPING OUR FORESTS HEALTHY AND OPEN

Wisconsin's Managed Forest Law (MFL) provides tax incentives to landowners who practice sustainable forestry on their private woodlots. This working land incorporates timber harvest, wildlife management, water quality, and recreation in a way that benefits Wisconsin's economy, water and air quality, recreation, and wildlife. AB 700 was the result of a year-long process by the Council on Forestry to update MFL to encourage future enrollments in the program. AB 700 would have closed the loophole that allowed a landowner to essentially deny access to the public by surrounding the land enrolled in the MFL Program with land that was not open to the public.

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## VOICE VOTES

*Sometimes bills pass on a "voice vote" meaning that who voted how is not officially recorded. The Conservation Scorecard only includes bills that have a recorded vote. This session, there were several pro-conservation bills that passed both houses on a voice vote before being signed into law by Governor Walker. We may not have been able to include these votes in the Scorecard charts, but we extend our thanks to the legislators who cast the critical votes to make these bills laws.*

### AB 55 ROCK RIVER TRAIL

AB 55 designates the "Rock River Trail and Scenic Historical Route" as a trail for boaters, paddlers, hikers, and bikers.

### SB 10 CLEAN WATER

SB 10 makes technical changes to our water laws so that Wisconsin remains consistent with federal programs and eligible for funding for clean water programs.

### SB 55 DRINKING WATER

SB 55 allows municipalities that have formed a joint local water authority to be eligible for funding for clean water improvements and to participate in the safe drinking water loan program.

### SB 512 LEAD BATTERIES

Lead is a poisonous substance that can damage the nervous system. SB 512 increases the deposit on lead batteries from five to ten dollars to fund the program that keeps batteries out of landfills.



# BILL DESCRIPTIONS

Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters tracks every important conservation bill as it moves through the legislative process. The Conservation Scorecard includes those bills that received a recorded vote by the full Assembly and/or Senate.

## AB 173 TROUT UNLIMITED

*Pro-Conservation Vote: YES*  
*Status: Signed into Law*  
*by Governor Walker*

Trout Unlimited is a non-profit member organization whose mission is to conserve, protect, and restore North America's coldwater fisheries and their watersheds. AB 173 authorizes a license plate to raise funds to further Trout Unlimited's work.

## AB 448 DRUG DISPOSAL

*Pro-Conservation Vote: YES*  
*Status: Signed into Law*  
*by Governor Walker*

Unused prescription drugs can affect the biology and behavior of fish and other aquatic life. AB 448 authorizes drug disposal programs to ensure that unused medications are not flushed into our waterways.

## SB 1 MINING

*Pro-Conservation Vote: NO*  
*Status: Signed into Law*  
*by Governor Walker*

Open-pit iron mining can increase public exposure to toxins such as arsenic, lead, and mercury. SB 1 eliminates protections for public health and natural resources by exempting new mines from water quality and quantity protections and removes meaningful citizen participation from the process.

## SB 183 SHORELAND ZONING

*Pro-Conservation Vote: NO*  
*Status: Signed into Law*  
*by Governor Walker*

Clean lakes depend on keeping polluted runoff and sediment out of the water. SB 183 removes the few water quality safeguards required of property owners in unincorporated towns by allowing counties to exempt them from shoreland zoning laws.

## SB 190 CLEAN WATER

*Pro-Conservation Vote: YES*  
*Status: Signed into Law*  
*by Governor Walker*

Protecting our waters from runoff pollution from farms, roads, and construction sites is one of Wisconsin's greatest water challenges. Instead of managing these threats by considering one polluting source at a time, SB 190 allows the DNR to consider the cumulative effect on the entire watershed.

## SB 259 REGIONAL TRANSIT

*Pro-Conservation Vote: YES*  
*Status: Passed Senate, but was never taken up by the Assembly.*

Wisconsin's economy depends on a comprehensive transportation system that includes public transit options. SB 259 would have established the Fox Valley Regional Transit Authority to promote public transit in that region.

## SB 278 CLOSING MANAGED FOREST LAND FOR MINING

*Pro-Conservation Vote: NO*  
*Status: Signed into Law*  
*by Governor Walker*

The Managed Forest Law (MFL) allows private land owners who enroll their land in the program to receive greater tax benefits in exchange for keeping their land open to the public for recreational activities. SB 278 will close land enrolled in MFL for iron mining. Creating an exception for one industry and shutting off public access creates a bad precedent and undermines the intention of the MFL program.

## SB 596 ALDO LEOPOLD LEGACY TRAIL

*Pro-Conservation Vote: YES*  
*Status: Signed into Law*  
*by Governor Walker*

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) manages the Aldo Leopold Legacy Trail System on behalf of all citizens. SB 596 authorizes the DNR to include water trails in this state trail system. Water trails can be used for recreational activities such as canoeing and boating and will be a highly valued asset by Wisconsin citizens and visitors.



# SENATE SCORES

DISTRICT	SENATOR	Trout Unlimited	Open-Pit Mining	Shoreland Zoning	Clean Water	Regional Transit	Managed Forests	CONSERVATION SCORE	
		AB 173	SB 1	SB 183	SB 190	SB 259	SB 278	2014	LIFETIME
3	Carpenter, Tim	🍃	🍃	🍃	🍃	🍃	🍃	100%	96%
2	Cowles, Robert	🍃	✗	✗	🍃	🍃	✗	50%	56%
15	Cullen, Timothy	🍃	🍃	✗	🍃	🍃	🍃	83%	73%
8	Darling, Alberta	🍃	✗	✗	🍃	🍃	✗	50%	44%
19	Ellis, Michael	🍃	✗	✗	🍃	🍃	✗	50%	51%
27	Erpenbach, Jon	🍃	🍃	🍃	🍃	🍃	🍃	100%	95%
33	Farrow, Paul	🍃	✗	✗	🍃	🍃	✗	50%	30%
13	Fitzgerald, Scott	🍃	✗	✗	🍃	🍃	✗	50%	38%
20	Grothman, Glenn	✗	✗	✗	🍃	✗	✗	17%	29%
18	Gudex, Rick	✗	✗	✗	🍃	🍃	✗	33%	29%
30	Hansen, Dave	🍃	🍃	🍃	🍃	🍃	🍃	100%	86%
6	Harris, Nikiya	🍃	🍃	🍃	🍃	🍃	🍃	100%	100%
10	Harsdorf, Sheila	🍃	✗	✗	🍃	🍃	✗	50%	47%
25	Jauch, Robert	🍃	🍃	✗	🍃	--	🍃	80%	88%
11	Kedzie, Neal	✗	✗	✗	🍃	✗	✗	17%	39%
7	Larson, Chris	🍃	🍃	🍃	🍃	🍃	🍃	100%	94%
1	Lasee, Frank	🍃	✗	✗	🍃	✗	✗	33%	21%
24	Lassa, Julie	🍃	🍃	🍃	🍃	🍃	🍃	100%	86%
28	Lazich, Mary	🍃	✗	✗	🍃	✗	✗	33%	31%
21	Lehman, John	🍃	🍃	🍃	🍃	🍃	🍃	100%	99%
9	Leibham, Joseph	🍃	✗	✗	🍃	✗	✗	33%	41%
16	Miller, Mark	✗	🍃	🍃	🍃	🍃	🍃	83%	95%
23	Moulton, Terry	🍃	✗	✗	🍃	🍃	✗	50%	23%
14	Olsen, Luther	🍃	✗	✗	--	🍃	✗	40%	46%
29	Petrowski, Jerry	🍃	✗	✗	🍃	🍃	✗	50%	35%
26	Risser, Fred	✗	🍃	🍃	🍃	🍃	🍃	83%	95%
17	Schultz, Dale	🍃	🍃	✗	🍃	🍃	✗	67%	51%
32	Shilling, Jennifer	🍃	🍃	🍃	🍃	🍃	🍃	100%	86%
4	Taylor, Lena	✗	🍃	🍃	🍃	🍃	🍃	83%	84%
12	Tiffany,Thomas	✗	✗	✗	🍃	✗	✗	17%	17%
31	Vinehout, Kathleen	🍃	🍃	🍃	🍃	🍃	🍃	100%	88%
5	Vukmir, Leah	🍃	✗	✗	🍃	✗	✗	33%	21%
22	Wirsch, Robert	🍃	🍃	🍃	🍃	🍃	🍃	100%	92%

JOHN COLEMAN,  
Chequamegon National Forest



## HOW TO USE THIS REPORT

- 🍃 Legislator voted pro-conservation
  - ✗ Legislator voted anti-conservation
  - Excused absence. For excused absences, the legislator's score is derived from the number of votes made when the legislator was present.
  - NA Legislator was not a member of the body at the time of the vote.
- Note: Legislators must be present for at least 50% of all scored votes in a session to receive a conservation score. Legislators with "NA" for the 2014 Conservation Score, were not present for 50% of scored votes for the session.

# ASSEMBLY SCORES

DISTRICT	REPRESENTATIVE	Trout Unlimited	Drug Disposal	Open-Pit Mining	Shoreland Zoning	Clean Water	Managed Forests	Aldo Leopold Trail System	CONSERVATION SCORE	
		AB 173	AB 448	SB 1	SB 183	SB 190	SB 278	SB 596	2014	LIFETIME
32	August, Tyler	--							50%	25%
41	Ballweg, Joan								57%	34%
64	Barca, Peter								100%	100%
11	Barnes, Mandela								100%	100%
77	Berceau, Terese								100%	99%
57	Bernard Schaber, Penny								100%	100%
68	Bernier, Kathy								57%	35%
74	Bewley, Janet								100%	100%
1	Bies, Garey					--			50%	38%
95	Billings, Jill								100%	100%
39	Born, Mark								57%	57%
50	Brooks, Ed					--			50%	47%
81	Clark, Fred								100%	100%
83	Craig, Dave								57%	32%
35	Czaja, Mary							--	50%	50%
92	Danou, Chris								100%	97%
94	Doyle, Steve								86%	89%
26	Endsley, Mike								57%	64%
90	Genrich, Eric								100%	100%
18	Goyke, Evan								100%	100%
46	Hebl, Gary		--						100%	98%
79	Hesselbein, Dianne								100%	100%
54	Hintz, Gordon								100%	96%
21	Honadel, Mark	NA	NA		NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	28%
78	Hulsey, Brett								100%	100%
13	Hutton, Rob								57%	57%
2	Jacque, Andre								57%	33%
37	Jagler, John								57%	57%
17	Johnson, LaTonya								100%	100%
43	Jorgensen, Andy								100%	91%
47	Kahl, Robb								86%	86%
99	Kapenga, Chris								57%	29%
55	Kaufert, Dean								57%	42%
61	Kerkman, Samatha								57%	28%
12	Kessler, Frederick								100%	93%
27	Kestell, Steve								57%	34%
38	Kleefisch, Joel								57%	20%
88	Klenke, John							--	50%	30%
24	Knodl, Dan								57%	33%
30	Knudson, Dean								57%	37%
44	Kolste, Debra								100%	100%
14	Kooyenga, Dale							--	50%	25%
97	Kramer, Bill							--	50%	29%
72	Krug, Scott								57%	38%
84	Kuglitsch, Mike	--			--		--		75%	33%
69	Kulp, Bob	NA		NA	NA	NA	NA		NA	100%
67	Larson, Tom								57%	38%
59	LeMahieu, Daniel								57%	26%
31	Loudenbeck, Amy	--					--		60%	32%
51	Marklein, Howard					--			50%	30%
66	Mason, Cory								100%	100%

# ASSEMBLY SCORES

DISTRICT	REPRESENTATIVE	Trout Unlimited	Drug Disposal	Open-Pit Mining	Shoreland Zoning	Clean Water	Managed Forests	Aldo Leopold Trail System	CONSERVATION SCORE	
		AB 173	AB 448	SB 1	SB 183	SB 190	SB 278	SB 596	2014	LIFETIME
73	Milroy, Nick		--			--			100%	100%
56	Murphy, Dave								57%	57%
36	Mursau, Jeffrey								57%	40%
29	Murtha, John	--			--		--		75%	43%
33	Nass, Stephen								57%	28%
96	Nerison, Lee								57%	40%
98	Neylon, Adam			NA					67%	67%
89	Nygren, John								57%	36%
65	Ohnstad, Tod								100%	100%
3	Ott, Alvin								57%	48%
23	Ott, Jim								57%	38%
10	Pasch, Sandy								100%	100%
40	Petersen, Kevin								57%	38%
93	Petryk, Warren								57%	33%
80	Pope, Sondy								100%	85%
22	Pridemore, Don			--					67%	25%
19	Richards, Jon								100%	98%
7	Riemer, Daniel							--	100%	100%
45	Ringhand, Janis								100%	100%
42	Ripp, Keith								57%	56%
21	Rodriguez, Jessie	NA		NA	NA	NA	NA		NA	100%
15	Sanfelippo, Joe								57%	57%
48	Sargent, Melissa								100%	100%
53	Schraa, Michael								57%	57%
28	Severson, Erik		--						50%	29%
71	Shankland, Katrina								100%	100%
20	Sinicki, Christine					--			100%	99%
82	Skowronski, Ken	NA		NA	NA	NA	NA		NA	100%
75	Smith, Stephen								86%	86%
86	Spiros, John								57%	57%
5	Steineke, Jim								57%	32%
82	Stone, Jeffrey	NA	NA		NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	19%
58	Strachota, Pat								57%	31%
60	Stroebe, Duey								57%	37%
69	Suder, Scott	NA	NA		NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	26%
34	Swearingen, Rob								57%	57%
6	Tauchen, Gary								57%	40%
76	Taylor, Chris								100%	100%
52	Thiesfeldt, Jeremy								57%	33%
25	Tittl, Paul								57%	57%
49	Tranel, Travis								57%	33%
63	Vos, Robin								57%	23%
70	Vruwink, Amy Sue								86%	81%
91	Wachs, Dana								100%	100%
62	Weatherston, Tom							--	50%	50%
4	Weininger, Chad								57%	33%
87	Williams, Mary								57%	35%
85	Wright, Mandy								100%	100%
16	Young, Leon								100%	93%
8	Zamaripa, JoCasta								100%	100%
9	Zepnick, Josh								100%	93%



# CASE STUDY: PEOPLE POWER

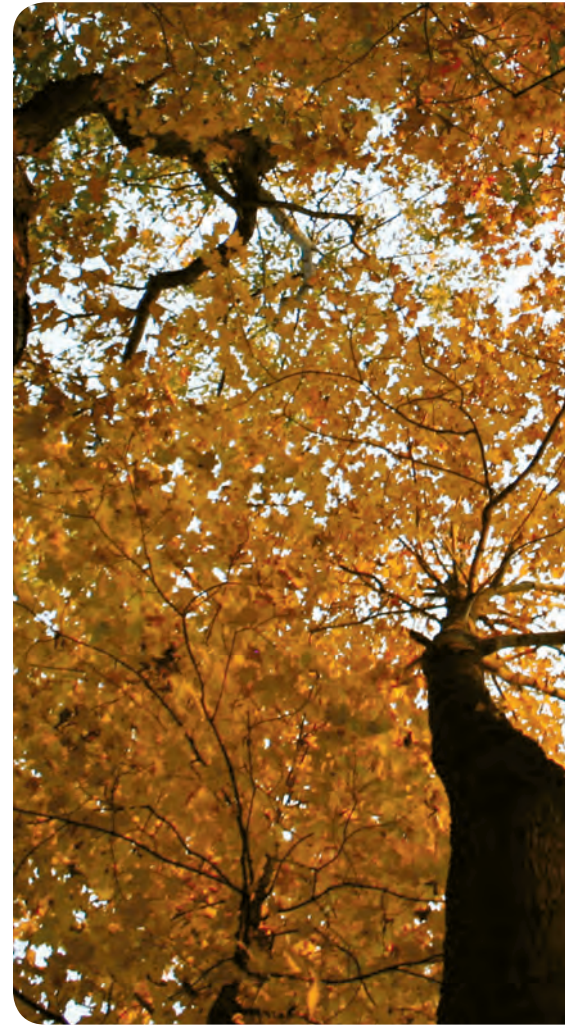
## WHAT ONE WEEK AND A LOT OF CONSERVATIONISTS CAN DO

*We see it time and again - legislators seek to pass complicated, unpopular, anti-conservation legislation by shepherding it through the legislative process as quickly and quietly as possible. However, when the interests of a few big polluters collide with a public intent on protecting their families and neighbors, it can spell defeat for legislation that was expected to fly through the process.*

### A RECIPE FOR VICTORY

A good case study is the example of Senator Tom Tiffany's efforts to force through SB 349, a bill that would have kneecapped local communities' ability to protect the health and safety of their citizens. Here's how it went down:

- In the late afternoon of October 16, 2013, Senator Tiffany introduced SB 349 with no prior warning. By that evening, Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters had completed an analysis of the bill, drafted talking points for the public, and sent an action alert to members. Ultimately, 2,600 letters opposing the bill were sent to legislators.
- One week later, Senator Tiffany announced a hearing in his committee for the following day. Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters immediately alerted conservation groups and citizens around the state. We organized an impromptu lobby day to encourage citizens to testify against the bill and meet directly with their legislators.
- On the day of the hearing, the testimony was overwhelmingly opposed to SB 349. Citizens from across the state testified, including many local elected officials who were able to articulate the specifics of how this bill would impact their communities.
- As a result of the overwhelming opposition, Senator Tiffany was forced to delay any vote in his committee on SB 349.
- Anticipating that Senator Tiffany would try again, Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters continued to work with conservation organizations and members around the state to maintain the pressure. With your help, we published letters-to-the-editor, collected signatures of local elected officials, and directly lobbied legislators at Conservation Lobby Day 2014.
- In the last weeks of the session, Senator Tiffany attempted to resurrect a pared-down, but still unacceptable version of the bill (SB 632). The coalition that had been fighting SB 349 was not fooled, and once again, sprang into gear, immediately contacting their legislators to oppose it. While Senator Tiffany was able to pass the new version of the bill through his own committee, both SB 632 and SB 349 died at the end of the session.



*By instantaneously responding to serious threats, the conservation community sent two clear messages to legislators this session: Wisconsin citizens will stand up to direct attacks on our communities and legislators who pursue such policies will pay a high political price.*

# STATE BUDGET

## THE GOOD NEWS

### RESTORED FUNDING FOR COUNTY CONSERVATION STAFF

The staff of the Soil and Water Conservation Departments help implement critical programs that prevent manure, fertilizer, sediment, and other chemicals from entering our waterways. Governor Walker's proposed budget had slashed support for County Conservationists by a devastating \$998,600. After a significant effort by Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters and our partners (including 32,000 letters to legislators!), the Joint Finance Committee restored the funding and the Wisconsin state budget was signed into law with the funding needed to maintain the County Conservation staff.



JESS HAVEN, Pewit's Nest

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## THE BAD NEWS

### CUTS TO THE KNOWLES-NELSON STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

The Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program helps protect Wisconsin lands utilized and treasured by residents and visitors alike. It also protects many of the places that fuel our \$13 billion tourism, \$22 billion forestry, and \$4 billion hunting and fishing industries. The program was undermined in the budget in a variety of ways. The Joint Finance Committee passed Motion #267 reducing the overall bonding authority of the Stewardship Program by \$63 million over the next six years. They also maintained a diversion of \$14 million for fish hatchery development requested by Governor Walker. In addition and most disturbingly, the motion directed the DNR to sell at least 10,000 acres of public land in the next four years.

### UNDERMINING GROUNDWATER PROTECTIONS

With no public notice, the Joint Finance Committee adopted Motion #375, which prohibits a citizen from challenging an application for a new high capacity well, even if the state has not considered the cumulative environmental impacts of other nearby high capacity wells. The motion could result in depleted groundwater levels, impairing lakes, rivers, wetlands, and drinking water supplies.

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## BAD NEWS THAT TURNED INTO GOOD NEWS

### UNDERMINING THE SPORTING HERITAGE GRANT

The Sporting Heritage Grant was established through the state budget process to recruit, train, and retain Wisconsin sportsmen and women. While it was a worthy concept, the criteria outlined in the budget were specifically designed so that only one grantee, a political organization with no sporting experience, was eligible. The measure passed through the budget process, but after a strong public outcry, Governor Walker rejected the grant before it was awarded to the political front group.

# HOW TO COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR LEGISLATORS

*There is no one more qualified to advocate for Wisconsin's natural resources than a concerned and engaged citizen, like you! Building a good relationship with your legislator is critical to protecting our air, land, and water. Use every opportunity to communicate with your legislators about your conservation concerns. Here's how you can be an effective pro-conservation advocate through every step of the legislative process:*

## BECOME **A MEMBER**

Thanks to generous contributions from thousands of individuals like you, Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters engages and unites its organizational partners and citizen activists to advocate effectively for clean air, clean water, and pristine open spaces. Your membership helps us build our numbers, so decision makers hear from conservation voters more often and more powerfully!

## VOTE **FOR YOUR CONSERVATION VALUES**

Your vote is the most important way you can stand up for your conservation values. Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters can help you find information about how to register and where to vote on Election Day.

## JOIN **OUR EMAIL ACTION NETWORK**

When it comes to Wisconsin's natural resources and public health, things can move pretty fast on the ground and in the state Capitol. Sign up for email alerts to be the first to get breaking news, political scoops, and information on actions you can take to protect Wisconsin's air, land, and water.

## SPEAK **AT A HEARING OR MAKE A PHONE CALL**

You can't top personal interaction when it comes to influencing the direction of conservation policy. The organizers on our field team will alert you to opportunities when your physical presence in the Capitol or a personal phone call to your legislator will be most effective. Connect with your Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters organizer on our website.

## WRITE **A LETTER TO THE EDITOR**

One way that legislators keep tabs on what is important to the voters in their district is by reading the opinion section of local newspapers. Check the editorial page or website for directions on submitting a letter (many now have online forms that make submission very easy). You don't need to know bill specifics to write an influential letter. Just share your story about why you are concerned.

## ATTEND **CONSERVATION LOBBY DAY**

Each year, conservation voters come from every corner of the state to share their natural resource values (and expectations) with their state legislators in the Capitol. By being a part of a unified lobby day, we are reaching every single member of the legislature at the most critical decision-making times. Plus, Conservation Lobby Day is a great way to connect with conservationists in your hometown as well as across the state. We'll alert you by email and social media to let you know when the next one is happening.

## INVITE **YOUR LEGISLATOR TO MEET WITH YOU IN THE DISTRICT**

Setting up a meeting with your legislator is a great, no-pressure way to get to know him or her better. You can invite them to one of your conservation organization's meetings, a coffee shop, or take them on a tour of a specific place that you care about. The legislator's staff in the Capitol should be able to set up a time for you (and others) to meet with your legislator while they are home in your district.





GREG BANECK, Durphee Lake

## **WISCONSIN LEAGUE OF CONSERVATION VOTERS OFFICES**

### *Madison*

133 S. Butler St. #320  
Madison, WI 53703  
608-661-0845

### *Green Bay*

1642 Western Ave.  
Green Bay, WI 54303  
920-429-9008

### *Milwaukee*

633 W. Wisconsin Ave. #1930  
Milwaukee, WI 53202  
414-921-0084

[www.conservationvoters.org](http://www.conservationvoters.org)  
[info@conservationvoters.org](mailto:info@conservationvoters.org)



133 S. BUTLER STREET, #320  
MADISON, WI 53703  
**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

JOSHUA MAYER, Wisconsin River State Natural Area #283

A photograph of a dense forest with sunlight filtering through the trees, creating a dappled light effect on the forest floor. The trees are mostly deciduous with green leaves.

# **BEFORE YOU VOTE, KNOW THE SCORE**

## **CONSERVATION SCORECARD 2013-2014**