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(FORM UPDATED: 08/11/2010)

WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE ...
PUBLIC HEARING - COMMITTEE RECORDS

2007-08

[session year]

Senate

[Assembly, Senate, or Joint]

Committee on ...
Environment and Natural Resources
(SC-ENR)

INFORMATION COLLECTED BY COMMITTEE FOR AND AGAINST PROPOSAL

- Appointments ... **Appt** (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
- Clearinghouse Rules ... **CRule** (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
- Hearing Records ... **HR ... bills and resolutions** (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
 - (**ab** = Assembly Bill) (**ar** = Assembly Resolution) (**ajr** = Assembly Joint Resolution)
 - (**sb** = Senate Bill) (**sr** = Senate Resolution) (**sjr** = Senate Joint Resolution)
- Miscellaneous ... **Misc**

* Contents organized for archiving by: Mike Barman (LRB) (July/2014)



ROBERT W. WIRCH

STATE SENATOR TWENTY-SECOND DISTRICT

May 23, 2007

To: Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

From: Senator Bob Wirch

Thank you Chairman Miller for holding a hearing on Senate Bill 15. I have worked with Representative Black on this important legislation which restores the Department of Natural Resources Board's authority to appoint the Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources.

-Aldo Leopold and other conservationists who created the board-appointment system in 1928 understood the potential for politicization of important natural resource issues.

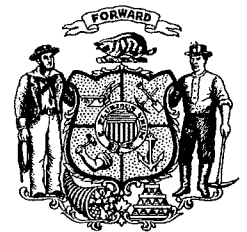
-Natural resource decisions should be based on the merits. Allowing the Governor to appoint the DNR secretary allows critics to argue that politics, not policy, has tainted every permit and decision reached by the DNR.

-Senate Bill 15 will restore the public's confidence in the DNR and ensure good environmental policy.

Once again, thank you for holding a hearing on Senate Bill 15.



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



**Testimony of Elizabeth Lawton, Midwest Environmental Advocates
Before the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources**

**2007 Senate Bill 15
May 23, 2007**

Honorable Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today regarding Senate Bill 15, regarding the appointment of the Secretary of Natural Resources.

Midwest Environmental Advocates, Inc. is a nonprofit environmental law center that works for clean air, clean water and clean government. In the interest of ensuring the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is able to most effectively preserve and protect Wisconsin's natural resources, we urge you to report Senate Bill 15 to be scheduled for floor action.

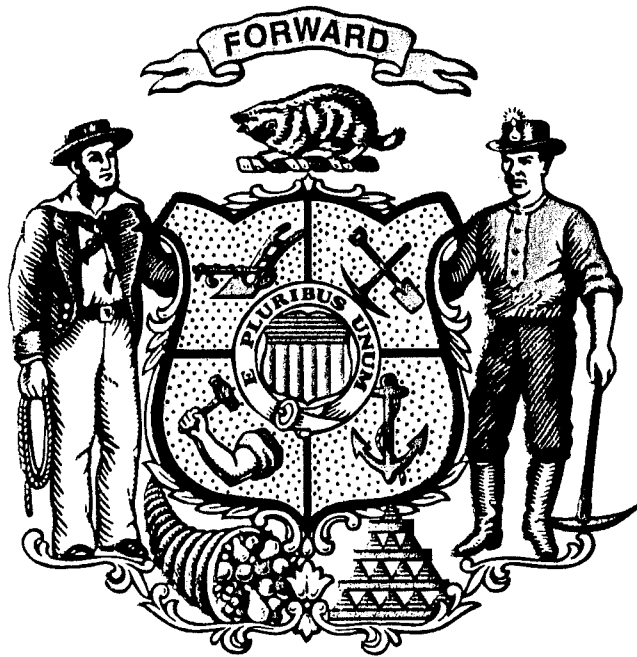
In 1995, the power to appoint the Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources was shifted from the Wisconsin Natural Resources Board to the Governor. This shift transformed the position of the Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources from one with a high degree of political independence to an appointment vulnerable to a high degree of political influence.

The preservation and protection of Wisconsin's natural resources cannot be effectively pursued in such a potentially hostile political climate. In order to fulfill its function, the Department of Natural Resources must have the independence necessary to make decisions based upon sound science, rather than political practicality. The governor's present power to hire and fire the Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources at will presents an alarming restriction on the Secretary's ability to make

decisions with the impartiality the preservation and protection of Wisconsin's natural resources requires.

Senate Bill 15 seeks to restore the independence the Secretary of The Department of Natural Resources maintained before 1995. The bill will return the appointment of the Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources to the Natural Resource Board, a group composed of seven citizens from across the state, protecting the Secretary from political influence. This separation from political pressures allows the Secretary the ability to direct the Department of Natural Resources to preserve and protect Wisconsin's natural resources in the best interests of the people of Wisconsin.

The integrity of Wisconsin's natural resources is too important a matter to leave so vulnerable to political influence. In order to ensure our resources are adequately protected, the Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources must be allowed a measure of independence. Again, we urge you to vote for the integrity of Wisconsin's natural resources by returning this independence to the Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources.



PUBLIC HEARING—SB 15

May 23, 2007

Eighty years ago when northern Wisconsin was struggling to recover from a landscape devoid of vegetation and wildlife caused by massive timber cutting and uncontrolled fires the state legislature at the urging of conservationists Aldo Leopold, Bill Aberg and Haskell Noyes created an unpaid citizen Conservation Commission to direct the Department of Conservation in managing the state's natural resources.

Forty years later Governor Knowles appointed a Blue Ribbon Commission headed by Neenah industrialist Bill Kellett to review the governmental structure of Wisconsin.

The Kellett Commission made its final report in 1967, it recommended downsizing and consolidations.

In its final approval enforcement of Federal EPA environmental standards was combined with resource management to create a Department of Natural Resources under the direction and supervision of the Natural Resources Board (15.34, Wis. Statutes)

Governor Knowles appointed me to that first board.

An immediate challenge was hazardous waste disposal which was being tossed into town dumps and eventually leaching out into the ground water.

Another was point discharge of industrial and human waste into rivers and lakes. The Wisconsin, Fox and Peshtigo rivers among others were extremely polluted. DNR worked with industry and municipalities to establish and monitor acceptable levels of discharge.

Today the Wisconsin and Peshtigo are clean and we are all aware of the current struggle to remove PCB's from the Fox.

Under the leadership of dedicated and highly qualified career employees of the DNR Wisconsin has managed its natural resources and the environment extremely well.

Among its nearly 3,000 dedicated, career employees were those that advanced to leadership positions in the field and went on to top administrative positions in Madison. As such they developed science based long range resource management programs that many other states have adopted.

In the period from 1968 to 1995 four DNR secretaries were appointed by the Natural Resources Board...each time following a nation wide search seeking the most experienced and qualified.

Of the four secretaries appointed during that period...Lester Voigt.... Buzz Besadney and George Meyer were career employees of the DNR.

Tony Earl had not previously worked for the DNR.

Tony served as DNR Secretary for four years following Lester Voigt and provided excellent leadership.

When Buzz Besadney retired in 1993 the board received 87 applications.

In the final ten considered most qualified were three from outside the DNR.

George Meyer was appointed DNR Secretary by the board in 1993 and was fired by Governor McCallum in 2001.

His successor Darrell Bazzell...an outstanding administrator served only two years until Jim Doyle became Governor.

While the Natural Resources Board is charged by statute to supervise and direct the DNR.... policy and administrative directives by the board can be ignored by the secretary and administrators who are all political appointees

of the Governor.

I did not agree with Tommy in 1995 when he linked political appointment of the DNR Secretary to the budget bill.

As chairman of the Natural Resources Board I expressed my concerns to the Joint Finance Committee that a change in DNR leadership every time Wisconsin elects a new Governor could negatively affect long range planning and ongoing programs.

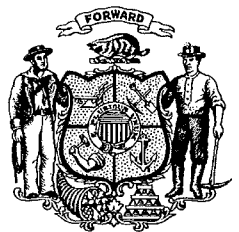
Scott McCallum and Jim Doyle made those changes posthaste.... and in Doyle's case all top administrators were almost immediately replaced by political appointees.

In private business that would be a formula for bankruptcy.

Career employees throughout the state are frustrated and morale is at its lowest point ever.

It is time for the legislature to correct the 1995 mistake and return control of the DNR to the Natural Resources Board.

Herb Behnke



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 15, BOARD APPOINTMENT OF THE DNR SECRETARY

**By Thomas Thoresen, Board President of Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters
and Vice-President of Association of Retired Conservationists - May 23, 2007**

Chairman Miller and members of the Senate Natural Resources Committee – thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am Thomas Thoresen, Board Chairman of the Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters and Vice-President of the Association of Retired Conservationist. I retired in 2005 after 30 years of State Service. When I retired I was the Deputy Chief Conservation Warden, and previous to that I spent 12 years as the Deputy Administrator of the Division of Enforcement. I am speaking today strongly urging you to pass Senate Bill 15.

First, let me say “thank you” for introducing this legislation and holding a public hearing. It has been almost 6 years since there has been a public hearing on this important issue. This is such an important issue that, since 2001, I was intending to take a day off work and testify on some of the things I experienced at DNR under a Governor-appointed Secretary. This legislation was and is necessary to better protect our natural resources.

Our natural resources belong to all of us. Natural resource issues are generally long term issues and need knowledgeable professionals to take them to the public for discussion and open, public decision making, followed by legislative review.

There are multiple reasons why this legislation is necessary to better protect our natural resources and restore integrity to conservation issues. I will limit my remarks to three areas and provide some documentation to illustrate these points.

1. Natural resource issues should be science based, long term and removed from undue political influence.
2. Under a Cabinet run DNR, the focus of DNR Administration is sometimes geared toward protecting the governor and their donor friends instead of natural resource protection.
3. Under Cabinet DNR, there is reduced public input and a loss in science based decision making and expertise. There is more partisanship on issues which costs the hunter/angler and taxpayer significantly and makes DNR a political football.

You already have or will hear of the science based, citizen led reforms that Aldo Leopold, Haskell Noyes and William Aberg help lead to remove undue political pressure in the management of the state’s natural resources in the 1920’s. That was unfortunately changed 12 years ago in the State Budget. The legislature gave more power to the Executive Branch of government and took it away from the legislature and citizens in managing our state’s natural resources as a power grab for the governor. I’m including with my hand-outs to the Committee a copy of the Wisconsin State Journal editorial that

ran on Monday February 5, 2001. The WSJ endorsed Board appointed Secretary simply based on the appearance of corruption. While the appearance of politics should be enough to pass this bill, what they didn't realize, but I experienced first-hand, was that it was more than the appearance of politics – politics really was (and is) playing a role in determining natural resource decisions.

The Conservation Commission -led agency started in the 1920's and reaffirmed by Governor Knowles in the Board-led DNR created in 1967 under the Kellett Reorganization of State Government was a great model for public input and decision making on natural resource issues. Having worked and lived in a top classified civil service position from 1989 and then again after the 1995 change to Cabinet, I saw less accountability, more political partisanship and less public input on key natural resource decisions.

Citizens – especially hunters and anglers – understand that Natural Resources are best managed by a Board appointed DNR. Every time the Conservation Congress has had the question on the ballot at the Conservation Spring Hearings, it has passed with a very high percentage of the vote. Additionally, Board appointed DNR is one of the “Hunter, Angler, Trapper Bill of Rights” proposals that the conservation community came behind as one of the *Conservation Priority Agenda* items for this legislative session, with over 400 citizens lobbying for it on Conservation Lobby Day.

The second major reason why the DNR Secretary should be Board appointed is one I saw first-hand time after time. Because of the political nature of the Secretary's office, the focus of some DNR Administrators was on protecting the governor and his donors first and not focused on natural resource protection. To illustrate this point, I'm including a memo written by Joe Ryder, then a state conservation field warden assigned in Lincoln County, to his supervisor Dave Arendt about the “Consistency problems with DOT/DNR MOU”. Warden Ryder correctly pointed out in his memo the problems that were occurring not only in Lincoln County but also statewide at the time and the political interference of the Cabinet system. Two years later, in 2000, in discussions on clarifying the MOU because of continual problems I personally met with Enforcement Administrator Dave Meier to tell him that this issue needed to get fixed. Meier's response to me was “didn't I understand the politics of this?” and the “road builders were the donors.” I certainly already understood the politics of it, but having spent my career dedicated to public safety and protecting natural resources, I knew my duty was to natural resource protection, not protecting political donors. The needed clarifications in the MOU were scrambled to be immediately fixed right after the November 2002 elections. In that case, and in others I encountered, it was clear that having a political appointment system cost Wisconsin natural resources and taxpayers significantly.

Let me give another example: Hunting and fishing license fee increases. What should be a very open and public process has now evolved to what political advantage can be gained or diminished under a potential fee increase. In the 1970's, once the Natural Resources Board approved a budget issue in the fall, they directed the DNR Secretary and staff to work with Bill Murphy and the Conservation Congress early and often, so

public input was being sought as soon as the Board endorsed a fee proposal. When the proposal would come to Joint Finance some months later, the public had already had a chance to discuss and ask questions and give knowledgeable input and informed decision could be made by citizens and the legislature. Under DNR Cabinet, proposals are often held tight to the vest until the Budget address by the governor in February. This gives members of the public a much shorter time to address the issues and their need.

Under Cabinet, I know DNR Administrators who instead of saying "let's take this policy issue to the Board and public" would say "let's see what the governor's office has to say," and the Board or public never gets input because of concerns by the governor's office of how it may play out politically.

I mentioned there is a loss of professional expertise and lack of continuity in addressing long term natural resource management with a Cabinet Secretary. Under Cabinet, its quite likely that all the top administrators could be replaced every four years. In 1996, as Deputy Enforcement and Science Division Administrator, I saw first-hand how costly and intensive it was to train political appointees who were not familiar with conservation issues. I will quote in part from my own employee evaluation in 1997, "this employee has been faced in the past year with supporting a fresh Division Administrator who arrives with virtually no knowledge of the agency or its' issues. He demonstrates patient, calm and insightful support as Deputy Administrator while simultaneously running a section." I spent numerous hours either covering meetings for or briefing a political appointee whose orientation was for politics and donors first, rather than as a knowledgeable natural resource professional.

Having a system of political appointees in natural resource management is costly to the taxpayer and our natural resources. This was why Aldo Leopold, Haskell Noyes, William Aberg and the public put in place Natural Resources Board governance for conservation in Wisconsin. We need to reestablish public involvement and professional management that has legislative input and reduces undue political influence.

For more information, contact Thomas Thoresen at 608-276-9446.

OUR OPINION

Move DNR post out of Cabinet

Environmentalists have complained nonstop for five years that having an appointed secretary of the Department of Natural Resources has turned Wisconsin over to the polluters. It's not true. Secretary George Meyer, the state Natural Resources Board and the agency's professional employees have consistently protected Wisconsin's land, water and air.

Unfortunately, a political charge repeated often enough, and loudly enough, can assume the cloak of reality. That's been the strategy of some Wisconsin environmental groups since the Legislature, urged on by former Gov. Tommy Thompson, voted in 1995 to make the job of DNR secretary a Cabinet post instead of one selected by a citizen board.

The status quo has become the last refuge of intellectual scoundrels who, when they lose their scientific or policy arguments, whine about the unseen hand of politics guiding DNR's decisions. It is time to take this crutch away from the naysayers and restore the old method of selecting DNR secretaries.

The Senate Committee on Environmental Resources voted unanimously Thursday to support a bill that would have the seven-member Natural Resources

Charges of political influence at the DNR aren't true. But it's time to remove the appearance that makes such false charges possible.

Board appoint the Cabinet secretary. Republican committee members who had previously opposed going back to the old system agreed there's a perceived problem – even if that perception isn't supported by hard fact. Key agricultural lobbyists such as Ron Kuehn of Madison's DeWitt, Ross and Stevens law firm agreed. "We've agonized over this perception problem for a decade or more and it's time to be done with it."

Indeed. Let's bring the DNR secretary bill to a vote in the Legislature as soon as possible. Until that change is made, every decision made by the DNR will be subject to charges of undue political influence, even in the absence of credible evidence.

Let's take away the excuse that some environmental groups use every time the science doesn't break their way. If the DNR secretary is once again appointed by the Natural Resources Board, the second-guessing by critics won't end. But at least they'll be forced to change their tune.

WISCONSIN
Newspaper Association

P.O. Box 5580
Madison, WI 53705

Clipping Service Division

SHEBOYGAN
The Sheboygan Press

JUN 11 1996

DAVID G. DECKER, FURNISH

OUR VIEW

A PRESS EDITORIAL

DNR appointment raises questions

It's only fair to give the new Department of Natural Resources chief of enforcement, who was appointed last week, a chance.

Still, given recent history, we understand the concern of environmentalists and others over how well the state's environmental laws will be enforced in the coming months.

Wisconsin's Environmental Decade Inc. and 16 other groups met last week with David Meier, the new administrator of the DNR Division of Enforcement and Science, to urge him to resign.

Those 17 groups are concerned that Meier does not have an appropriate background to prepare him for the DNR position, and that the political nature of his appointment jeopardizes his ability to do his job.

As part of the 1995-'97 state budget bill last year, Gov. Tommy Thompson and the Republican-dominated state Legislature OK'd the politicizing of the previously independent DNR.

Wisconsin's national reputation since the 1930s as a steward of the environment has been based on bipartisan backing of the principle of keeping politics out of environmental decision-making. Before the current budget bill, the DNR secretary was appointed by a citizens panel, the Natural Resources Board.

Thus past DNR secretaries could select staff members without worry of of-

fending the governor or a key legislator. Now, however, there's a fear that through appointment of the secretary, the governor can inappropriately influence who the secretary puts on his or her staff.

Meier is a lawyer who worked on Thompson's staff reviewing land-purchase contracts and spent nearly two years reviewing contracts with the state Department of Transportation.

Asked by the Associated Press about his background, Meier said his work with the governor and ties to the transportation department would not conflict with his DNR position.

Besides being the main person involved in enforcing state environmental laws, Meier has control over the environmental-impact statements through which the DNR evaluates effects of mining, road construction and other projects. The DNR is currently evaluating whether Exxon Corp. should be given permission to mine metallic sulfide ore near Crandon, a project critics fear could jeopardize the Wolf and Wisconsin rivers.

George Meyer, the Thompson-appointed DNR secretary who named Meier to his position, said the decision was based on Meier's wide experience.

"I think he has a strong environmental and conservation ethic," Meyer told the AP.

We hope so.

OUR VIEW

PRESS EDITORIALS

Has DNR become a toothless watchdog?

The precipitous drop in the number of pollution cases referred for prosecution by the state Department of Natural Resources in 1997 should be a concern to all Wisconsinites.

Obviously, one year's experience doesn't make a trend, but when the number of cases referred to the state attorney general's office goes down from 170 in 1996 to 100 in '97, one wonders what's going on. It could be an early indicator that the politicization of the DNR under the 1995-'97 state budget is leading to less vigorous protection of the environment.

In that budget, submitted by Republican Gov. Tommy Thompson and approved on a party-line vote by the GOP-dominated state Legislature, the secretary of the department was made an appointee of the governor.

Previously, the independent citizens panel, the Natural Resources Board had appointed the secretary.

The change alarmed environmentalists. They pointed out that the state had a long tradition supported by both parties going back to the 1930s of keeping decision-making that has long-term impacts on the environment out of politics, which is focused on the short-term goal of re-election for the politicians.

Conservationists were aroused again in 1996 when the governor's appointed sec-

retary, George Meyer, named David Meier, a Thompson office attorney who had little or no environmental experience, as the administrator of the DNR Division of Enforcement and Science, the branch that makes referrals for prosecution, in 1996.

The first year's experience shows reason for that concern.

"We do not believe there are fewer environmental violations taking place in the state," a spokesman for Attorney General James Doyle, a Democrat, was quoted as saying by the Associated Press.

Meyer responded to the concerns by saying there has been no change in philosophy nor direction on enforcement in his department. He said his department is aware of the drop in referrals and expects the number of cases to rise to about 120 per year when staff vacancies are filled.

He also said the drop in prosecutions reflects a nationwide trend.

But why is Wisconsin following negative environmental trends from across the country? This state has a heritage of setting a positive example in environmentalism as exemplified by the work of Aldo Leopold, John Muir and Earth Day founder Gaylord Nelson.

If the politicized DNR can't adequately enforce our environmental laws, the appointment of the department secretary should be returned to the Natural Resources Board.

Press editorials express the views of the newspaper's editorial board. Readers are encouraged to comment on editorials through letters to the editor.

JUL 14 1998

DATE: June 18, 1998

TO: Dave Arendt

FROM: Joe Ryder *JR*

SUBJECT: Consistency problems with DOT/DNR MOU.

**OFFICE OF THE
SECRETARY**

FILE REF:

On Thursday, 06-11-98, I was contacted at my home by a cooperator at approximately 7:00 p.m. I was advised that an ongoing DOT project in the city of Merrill was allowing so much silt to enter the Prairie River Mill Pond that "you could walk on it". At the time of the call, Merrill was receiving about 2 inches of rain. Subsequent investigation disclosed the erosion control measures employed on the project consisted of a sump dug at the end of the sewer outfall that failed shortly after the start of the rainstorm. There were no other erosion control measures in place, nothing. Upon investigation the next morning the contractor was in the process of installing silt fence and the DOT engineer on the project, John Kasper, advised they would also install a silt boom in the mill pond to mitigate the problem, all good ideas, all of them 13 hours too late. The deposit of the silt into the mill pond represented a blatant violation of state law, any private citizen that allowed such a release of silt into navigable waters of this state would get hammered by DNR, and rightly so! I have been advised, once again, that because of the memorandum of understanding we have with DOT, normal enforcement procedures are not followed. Our, DNR's, lack of action with DOT project's is developing into a serious problem in this county, to better understand my frustration regarding this matter, I would like to explain little law enforcement history regarding my involvement with DOT projects in southern Lincoln County.

In the fall of 1994, DOT engineers were involved with survey work for the highway 51 project north of Merrill, Highway 51 was going to be relocated to the west, and the highway was to be improved to four lanes from Merrill to just south of Tomahawk. The DOT engineers reported to our DNR liaison person, James Grafleman, that a local contractor had violated our "best management practices standards" with a road that had been constructed in an area the engineers routinely passed while working on the highway 51 project. The local contractor's name was Michael Nisson. The complaint alleged Mr. Nisson had not maintained silt fences properly in the area of his construction project and as a result run off from his road project formed a delta of silt on the bed of the Prairie River. Mr. Grafleman informed me the DOT engineers were concerned that no action was being taken by DNR in relation to the run off from Mr. Nisson's road, yet DOT and their contractors working on the highway 51 project, would be subjected to a higher standard. Mr. Grafleman suggested Mr. Nisson be cited for the violation. This would give Grafleman increased credibility with DOT should future problems arise with the highway 51 project.

Mr. Nisson was cited in Lincoln County Circuit Court for a violation of ss 29.29 and ultimately was found guilty of the offense by the Honorable J. Michael Nolan in a trail to the court.

The highway 51 project started and late in the summer of 1995, heavy rains in the area turned the ponds and streams in the area of the construction project into an environmental nightmare. The unchecked run off from this event represented the most serious violations of Chapter 30 law I have observed in my 21 years as a law enforcement officer. There is no question in my mind that the contractors had so much water to deal with they breached their own holding pond areas to get the water off the construction site so they could keep their equipment working. It was the result of the breaches of these holding ponds that inundated the Lincoln County Sports Club pond, and destroyed Meadow Creek, a wonderful little trout stream. So much silt was allowed into the water systems north of Merrill that the Prairie River Mill Pond, an impoundment of 117 acres, turned red. Lake Pesobic, a 156 acre lake was the recipient of a huge jolt of silt as well. Further north, where Meadow Creek runs into Tug Lake, the stream was also running thick with silt from the highway project. It would have taken very little investigation on my part to prove the breaches of the sediment holding ponds was an intentional act by the contractors so they could "stay on schedule". I as much as got an admission of that fact from one of the construction supervisors when I talked with him after Chuck Batchelder, the president of the Lincoln County Sports Club, asked me to look into why their pond had turned into a sediment hole. When I discussed enforcement action, I found our hands were tied. I was told we would not be issuing any citations. End of issue!

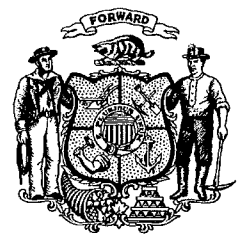
We in DNR do not live in a vacuum however. The people in Merrill understand fair treatment and it was not very long after the highway 51 debacle that I was standing in front of Judge Nolan trying to explain our lack of action in relation to the huge mess created by the road building project. Mike Nisson had contacted the judge and wanted his record cleared. Who could blame him. My credibility with Judge Nolan on this issue is not good!

Dave, in my discussions with DNR people that work on these DOT projects, I have been advised that many, many complaints have been forwarded through DNR channels requesting enforcement action be taken against DOT contractors because of their environmental negligence. I have further been advised that these complaints stop, with no or little action, within DNR. My inquiries indicate these complaints get to David Meier's, Administrator - Division of Law Enforcement and Science, desk and go no further. The suggestion is any aggressive enforcement action by our agency is blocked by Mr. Meier. If this is true, Mr. Meier has created a huge double standard in our enforcement policy as it related to private citizens and those companies working for DOT.

Our lack of action with these cases in this county has created a consistency problem that must be addressed. DNR allowed a localized environmental disaster to go unchecked with the highway 51 project in our recent past. Now there has been another large release of silt into the same water system, a release that could

have been mitigated had proper erosion control measure been installed as the construction project proceeded. I believe court action is justified in the erosion event that occurred on 06-11-98. If Mr. Meier believes otherwise, I would like an explanation of his reasoning so I can educate the public and the court as to why DOT and their contractors do not get cited for actions routinely brought into court when perpetrated by the general public.

JCR:mp



Bier, Beth

From: Kuhn, Jamie
Sent: Thursday, May 24, 2007 3:49 PM
To: Bier, Beth
Subject: FW: Restore appointment authority of the DNR Secretary to the Natural Resources Board

From: Wisconsin Waterfowl Association [mailto:wwainfo@centurytel.net]
Sent: Wednesday, May 23, 2007 11:42 AM
To: Sen.Schultz; Sen.Kedzie; Sen.Wirch; Sen.Jauch; Sen.Miller
Subject: Restore appointment authority of the DNR Secretary to the Natural Resources Board

May 23, 2007

Senate Natural Resources Committee

Re: Restoring appointment authority of the DNR Secretary to the Natural Resources Board

Dear Senate Natural Resources Committee Members:

The Wisconsin Waterfowl Association (WWA) is a 6,000 member nonprofit organization with 30 chapters located across the State of Wisconsin. On behalf of our members and chapters, WWA absolutely supports the appointment of the DNR Secretary by the Natural Resources Board. Our state has not fared well with politics in natural resource issues. We must do everything we can to make certain our resources are protected in an objective fashion. We believe that restoring the appointment authority of the DNR Secretary to the Natural Resources Board will greatly benefit our state's natural resources.

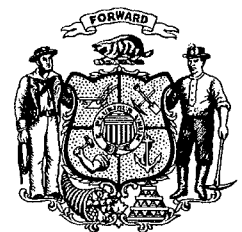
Sincerely,

Jeff Nania
Executive Director
Wisconsin Waterfowl Association

Wisconsin Waterfowl Association
PO Box 427
Wales, WI 53183
(262) 968-1722
(262) 370-1542 (Cell)
(262) 968-1723 (Fax)
wwainfo@centurytel.net



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



Bier, Beth

From: Kuhn, Jamie
Sent: Thursday, May 24, 2007 3:50 PM
To: Bier, Beth
Subject: FW: SB 15

Importance: High

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

-----Original Message-----

From: Paul Mongin [mailto:pjmongin@hotmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, May 23, 2007 10:31 AM
To: Sen. Miller
Cc: carylterrell@charter.net
Subject: SB 15

Dear Senator Miller:

I urge you to support SB15 restoring the independence of the Secretary of the DNR. Wisconsin's proud heritage as a leader in environmental protection and sound resource management took a major step back when then Gov. Tommy Thompson was instrumental in making the position political.

In April of 2002 I was active in conducting a poll of the Conservation Congress Public Hearings at all the counties in Wisconsin. These hearings are a good sampling of the outdoors community in general. Of the 70 counties that responded a huge majority (6448 for and 238 against) voted in favor of restoring the independence of the DNR Secretary's Position. This should not come as any surprise because previous votes by the sporting community prior to this had the same results.

As our elected leaders you have an opportunity to restore sound resource management to our great State, while at the same time eliminating the partisan politics that so often are not beneficial to sound scientific resource management.

Please support SB 15 and share this with your fellow committee members.

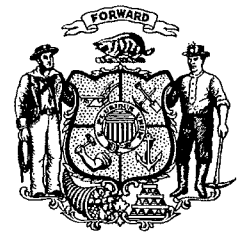
Sincerely,

Paul J. Mongin
1151 Delray Drive
Green Bay, WI 54304
1-920-499-7468
pjmongin@hotmail.com

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WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



OUTDOORS FOREVER

Conservation Club

P.O. Box 361 • Mauston, Wisconsin 53948



June 13, 2007

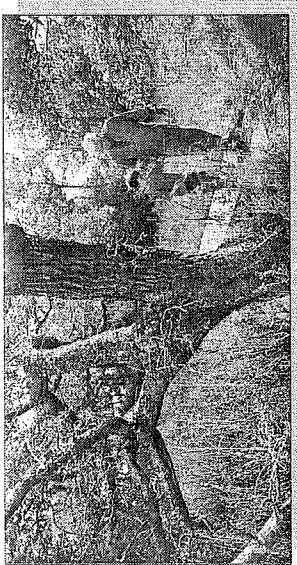
Senator Mark Miller,

Outdoors Forever, a Conservation Club in Juneau County, would like to express it's support for Senate B.11 15 which would restore the authority to appoint the DNR Secretary to the Natural Resources Board. We feel it is in the best interest of our Natural Resources, to remove the DNR as far away from Politics as possible. Your consideration in this matter is greatly appreciated.

Also enclosed for your information is a brochure about our organization.

Respectfully Submitted,
Tom Godawski - Secretary
Outdoors Forever

Leave Your Legacy For Future Generations



The only thing you take with you when you're gone is what you leave behind." - John Allston

What better legacy is there to leave than your commitment to protecting this great earth for generations to come.

Making a Legacy Gift to Outdoors Forever is easy and all the decisions are yours. Whether you want to provide monetary support, support a particular program, or donate a piece of property, your Conservation Legacy will be put to use in the support of the cause you love.

To Join Outdoors Forever

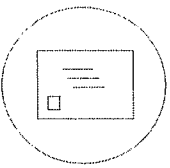
or to find out about volunteering, sponsoring or leaving a legacy gift donation, please contact:

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| Bill Rose | 608-562-3669 |
| Tom Jodarski | 608-847-4979 |
| Dan Manthe | 608-847-4201 |

Outdoors Forever

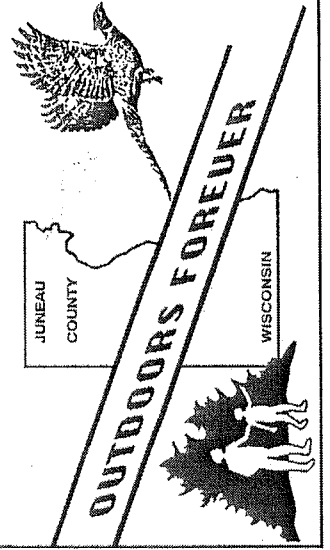
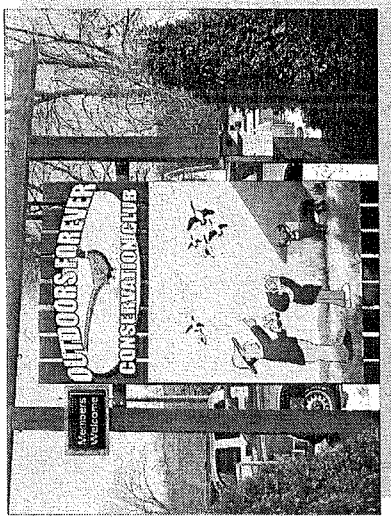
P.O. Box 361

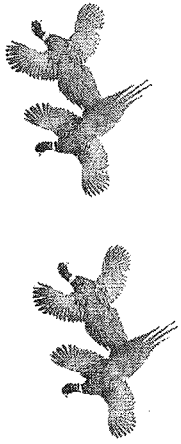
Mauston, WI 53948



Juneau County Outdoors Forever

A Non-Profit Organization





Outdoors Forever

A Non-Profit Organization

Become A Part of Outdoors Forever

How Can You Help ?

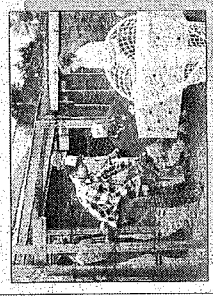


Join a group of men and women devoted to the education of our youth. Kids and adults both benefit from sharing their knowledge, experience and stories.

Volunteer as an adult instructor or helper at the annual Spring Kids Day event. Kids learn a lot from the experience and knowledge of adults and everyone has fun.



There's always plenty to do with maintaining the pheasant pens too. Volunteers are welcome to help with the rearing and releasing of over 2,000 pheasants a year.

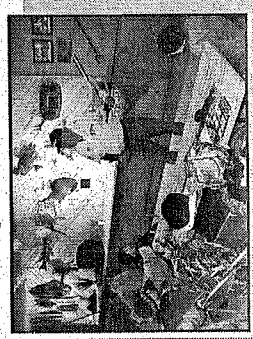


Other Ways To Help

- Volunteer for special events and programs*
- Company Sponsorships*
- Donations to specific programs*
- Estate Planning Gifts*

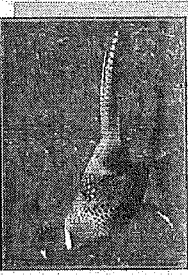
ODF Programs and Projects

Kids' Day



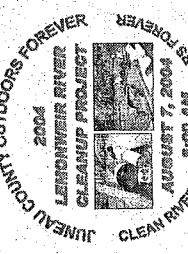
Seminars are given on fishing, hunting, first aid, land conservancy, safety, and ethics. Special thanks to the volunteers who help with this Kids' Day event.

Pheasant Rearing and Release



Each year ODF raises and releases over 2,000 pheasants to reestablish bird populations and provide hunting opportunities for our members.

Conservancy Programs



Lemmonweir River Clean Up

Volunteers spend a day each year cleaning debris out of the Lemmonweir River east of Mauston.

Other Projects & Services

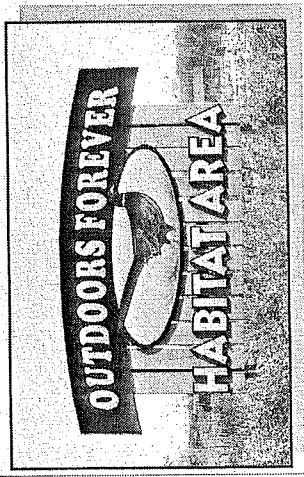
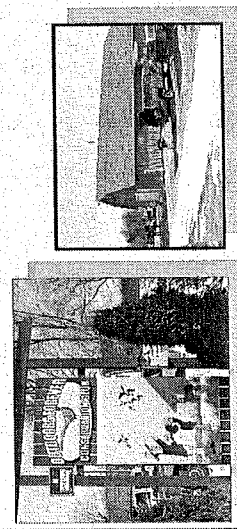
- Planting habitat to attract and protect wildlife*
- Awarding \$1,000 Natural Resource Scholarship*
- Hosts Conservation Field Day for youth*
- Habitat improvement recognition*

ODF's Mission Statement

Dedicated to youth outdoor education, wildlife habitat, and the safe, ethical, and wise use of our natural resources.

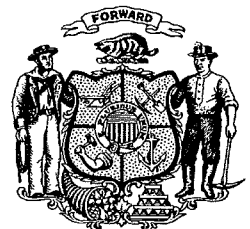
Outdoors Forever (ODF) was founded in 1987 by a group of area residents seeing a need for a county-wide conservation program. In 1991 ODF purchased a 200 acre farm and club house which features 2 miles of meandering Lemmonweir River frontage with lowland and highland areas. A wide array of wildlife abounds at the site for the enjoyment of the club's members. The club now owns and manages over 600 acres of habitat.

Because of the diversity of Outdoors Forever programs, men, women and children of all ages have joined.





WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



**FLOOR DISTRIBUTION
AUTHORIZED BY SENATOR
GROTHMAN**

TO: Members, Wisconsin State Senate
FROM: Wisconsin Builders Association
Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce
Wisconsin Realtors Association
DATE: October 30, 2007
RE: Senate Bill 15 - Appointment of the DNR Secretary

Blenn Grothman #20

The Wisconsin Builders Association, Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce, and the Wisconsin Realtors Association are opposed to Senate Bill 15, which would change the manner in which the Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is appointed. We respectfully request that you vote against this legislation.

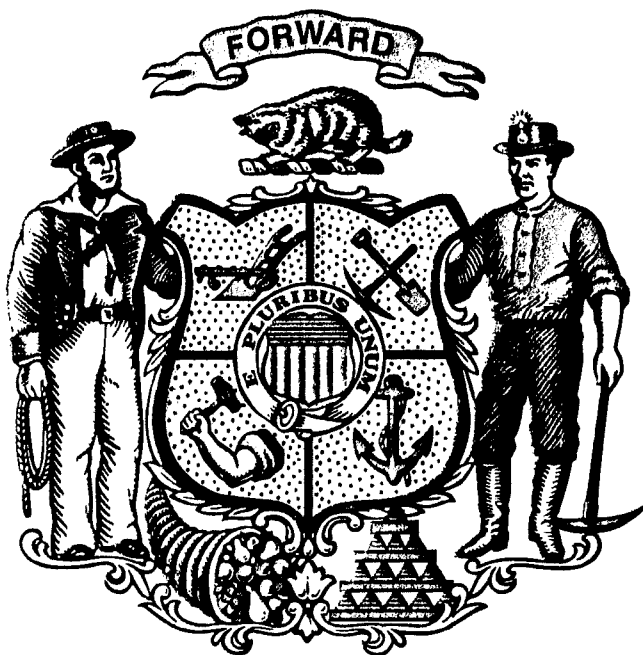
We believe government must be responsive and accountable to the citizens of this state, and we believe the cabinet form of government is the model that best accomplishes this important goal. We therefore support allowing the Governor to appoint, with the consent of the Senate, the DNR Secretary because making that position accountable to the oversight of elected officials will ensure that agency decision making is reflective of the will of the people.

As an agency, the DNR makes regulatory decisions that substantially impact the day-to-day operations of Wisconsin employers, property owners and other members of the public. In addition to impacting the ability of Wisconsin companies to compete in the national and international marketplace, DNR decisions frequently impact the use and value of property throughout the state. However, the DNR is not unique in this regard, and the fact that DNR plays a regulatory function is not a legitimate reason for insulating the agency's top decision maker from the public through an unelected board.

Virtually every cabinet-level agency plays a significant regulatory function in state government. Whether it is DHFS overseeing the facilities that provide care for our elderly and infirm, DWD regulating workplace standards and fair employment practices, or the Department of Regulation and Licensing overseeing dozens of professional occupations, including the physicians who deliver our health care, the Governor appoints the Secretary of these agencies with the consent of the Senate. As such, we do not believe there is anything unique about the DNR's regulatory functions that should preclude the agency's Secretary from being appointed by the Governor.

We believe the citizens' ability to hold agency decision making accountable is dramatically enhanced when the top agency decision makers are themselves accountable to the voters through their elected officials. Giving citizens a voice through their elected Governor and elected State Senator helps ensure that agencies are responsive to the citizens who have entrusted public officials to run state government. By contrast, insulating bureaucratic decision making by placing an unelected board between the Secretary and the citizens results in less accountability.

In conclusion, our organizations believe the surest way to keep the secretary of any agency accountable remains the cabinet model of government, where decision makers must answer to elected officials. Placing the appointment of the DNR Secretary into the hands of an unelected and unaccountable board will remove an important check on the responsiveness of state government. For this reason, we urge you to vote against Senate Bill 15.





AFT • AFI • CWI
AFT-Wisconsin
A Union of Professionals

Date?

My name is **Gary Steffen**, and I am a forester at the Department of Natural Resources and president of the Wisconsin Science Professionals. I am here today to testify in favor of SB 15 relating to the appointment of the secretary of natural resources.

The Department of Natural Resources regulates and oversees much of what makes Wisconsin such a great place to live and to play. The purview of the agency touches a vast array of areas – everything from keeping our waterways pristine and forests sustainable to dealing with the environmental impact of something as catastrophic as the Falk Corporation explosion in Milwaukee.

Because the agency impacts so many of our lives on a daily basis, I believe that SB 15 is essential to continue Wisconsin's proud environmental tradition.

In recent years, DNR has become a political piñata for elected officials to kick around when the going gets tough. Candidates have threatened to divide it up or reorganize it – all in the name of winning an election.

DNR was created to be an independent protector of the public good, not a political pawn. SB 15 is so important because DNR would no longer change hands from administration to administration. The secretary would be selected by the Natural Resources board – a bipartisan board from across Wisconsin. Board members are well-versed on the issues our environment and resources face, and would be in the best position to choose the right person for the job. The consistency created by this structure would help Wisconsin develop common sense, long-term plans to deal with vital issues like global warming, pollution and many other threats on the horizon.

I urge this committee to support SB 15 and protect the DNR, just like the DNR protects us. Thank you.