

WISCONSIN'S
ENVIRONMENTAL DECADE
INSTITUTE



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FROM THE BOARD

I sometimes chuckle at the optimism of the founders of Wisconsin's Environmental Decade. Thirty years ago, as they chose our name, they clearly believed we would - or at least could - resolve our environmental problems within a decade's time.

Alas, many of these issues have proven tougher and more intractable than initially imagined. We, however, are not discouraged. Instead, we believe we have many practical solutions to our environmental challenges. And we are determined.

But to convey and carry out this vision requires important changes. Streamlining our organizational structure is one area demanding attention. For much of this past year, the board has focused on implementing operational and management reforms that will save staff time, use money more effectively, and provide greater flexibility for policy work. I expect that next year we will begin reaping the benefits from these improvements.

Improvements are also required in the tools used by staff in their day-to-day work. I don't know how many of you have visited our Madison office, but in case you haven't, let me describe what you would find: featureless cramped quarters, mounds of clutter, and a mix of aging 90's technology. You would also detect a whirl of constant activity.

While new office space would be wonderful, a more practical and immediate alternative is to redefine the use of our existing space. This remodeling will improve our interaction with people (either over the phone or in person) and between staff. Adding simple things like art to the walls will enhance the working environment. New computers, a new phone system, and a better copier are all elements we must put in place to move our efforts into the 21st century.

Some of these changes have begun; much more will occur during the coming year.

Lastly, we will continue upgrading staff. Surprisingly, Wisconsin's Environmental Decade has never had an individual working solely on communication. We are close to adding that important position now and hope to procure the remaining funding in the near future.

Nary a day passes without news of another potent threat to our long-term health and well-being. Wisconsin's Environmental Decade can be part of the answer to securing a fruitful, healthy future for our children and our environment. We intend to make this happen.

- Will Fantle,
Board Chair



2001 annual report printed on recycled paper



MERCURY REDUCTION

Mercury pollution puts people and wildlife at risk. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WI-DNR) announced in 2001 that all lakes and rivers in Wisconsin are under a mercury advisory because of the significant risk of consuming fish contaminated with mercury. Coal-fired power plants are the largest sources of mercury pollution in Wisconsin. The Natural Resources board began rulemaking at the end of 2000 in response to a petition written by Wisconsin's Environmental Decade Institute, which requested a 90% mercury reduction by 2010.

Action and Results:

- ✓ Wrote a formal petition requesting a 90% mercury reduction by 2010 from large sources of contamination.
- ✓ Organized a large turnout for the key DNR Board meeting, where the Natural Resources Board authorized the mercury rule for public hearing. The Environmental Decade Institute also organized turnout at 5 public hearings around the state. Thanks to Environmental Decade Institute organizing, those in favor of mercury reduction outnumbered the opposition 4 to 1.
- ✓ Conducted a public campaign to educate Wisconsin citizens on the issue of mercury pollution.
- ✓ Collected thousands of comments in favor of a 90% mercury emissions reduction from power plants by 2001.
- ✓ Served on the DNR Mercury Citizens Advisory Committee. Environmental Decade Institute advice helped ensure achievement of a strong mercury rule.

“petition written by Wisconsin's Environmental Decade Institute, which requested a 90% mercury reduction by 2010.”

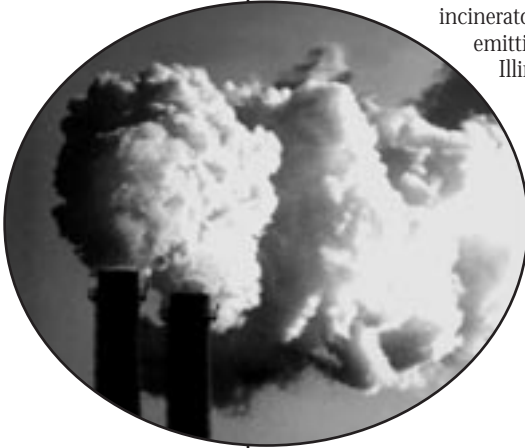


POWER PLANT

Since 1970, the Environmental Decade Institute has worked tirelessly to educate Wisconsin citizens about the need for responsible energy generation. At the same time, the Environmental Decade Institute has fought legally and legislatively for a balanced energy supply. Below is a sampling of our recent work toward these ends.

Action and Results:

- ✓ Filed a notice of intent to sue Xcel Energy for permit and air quality violations. Xcel owns the French Island incinerator near La Crosse. This incinerator has been violating air pollution standards and emitting more dioxins than the combined total of the 20 Illinois power plants that report dioxin emissions.
- ✓ Organized to ensure that Senator Russ Feingold became the first Midwestern Senator to sponsor Senator Jeffords' important Clean Power Act which would reduce emissions of mercury, carbon dioxide, nitrogen oxides and sulfur dioxide.
- ✓ Worked with the Green Corps to recruit 40 Wisconsin endorsers of the nation-wide Clear the Air campaign's Statement of Principles in support of cuts embodied in the Clean Power Act. Wisconsin's endorsers included day care center operators and elected officials, in addition to environmental groups.
- ✓ Completed a 9-city tour of the Environmental Decade video "Deadly Power," highlighting the environmental and cultural devastation caused by a Canadian hydroelectric project and making the connection between Canadian hydropower exportation and the Arrowhead (Duluth to Wausau) transmission line. This highly successful public education tour began in the fall of 2000.



CLEAN ENERGY

In order to solve energy-related environmental problems, it is imperative to understand the solutions available. The Environmental Decade Institute has been working hard for greater energy efficiency and conservation, as well as the development and implementation of clean, renewable power.

Action and Results:

- ✓ Fought off a \$44-million cut in the Public Benefits Fund during the state budget negotiations. This fund, which was created in 1999 thanks to Environmental Decade advocacy, provides over \$100,000 annually in financial assistance for energy conservation and renewable electricity in Wisconsin.
- ✓ Continually profiled clean energy use in our publications. In 2001 we featured articles on solar panels, geothermal heating and cooling, methane digesters and the Midwest Renewable Energy Fair, in order to promote awareness about opportunities for clean energy.

“ The use of solar energy has not been opened up because the oil industry does not own the sun.”

Ralph Nader
1980



GLOBAL WARMING

The solution to this global problem starts at home in Wisconsin. The Environmental Decade Institute has worked to build coalitions and find real-life opportunities to reduce Wisconsin's contribution to the global climate change problem.

Action and Results:

- ✓ Organized and co-sponsored interfaith climate change conferences in partnership with the Wisconsin Interfaith Climate Change Campaign (a coalition started with Environmental Decade Institute assistance) in four cities: Green Bay, Milwaukee, Madison and La Crosse. The Environmental Decade Institute spoke to more than 400 people at these conferences about the importance of collective climate change solutions and the assumption of individual responsibility.
- ✓ Worked to create the "Preserve Our Climate Coalition" for Dane County residents not affiliated with any particular organization.

- ✓ Served on the local U.S. Department of Agriculture's Carbon Work Group, and helped evaluate carbon sequestration pilot proposals. These projects seek to trap carbon dioxide in trees and soil.
- ✓ Helped organize the first annual "Cleaner Transportation" event with the City of Madison and Madison Gas & Electric. This event drew thousands passing by and was widely covered in the Madison media.

"Climate...is fundamental by reason of its vital influence upon the quantity and quality not only of man's food but of most of his other resources; it plays a large part in determining the distribution and virulence of the parasites which cause the majority of diseases; and through its effect on human occupations, modes of life, and habits, it is one of the main determinants of culture."

Ellsworth Huntington
1915

PESTICIDE REDUCTION

Study after study shows that pesticides affect humans, and especially children, by causing cancer, neurological disorders, reproductive disorders, respiratory problems and other serious ailments. The Environmental Decade Institute made protecting children from dangerous pesticides a priority in 2001.

Action and Results:

- ✓ Supported the introduction of the “Healthy Schools Bill” in the State Legislature, obtained bipartisan support in the Joint Finance Committee and got the bill inserted into the state budget. Although part of the intent of the bill was removed via Governor McCallum’s line item veto power, this clear bipartisan success shows the widespread support for this bill. The vetoed language would have created a mandate for using toxic integrated pest management in Wisconsin schools.
- ✓ Monitored the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protections work to create a pilot statewide pesticide database system. The database would help scientist study the effects of pesticide use.
- ✓ Released “From Field to Stream,” a report on the effects of pesticides on Wisconsin’s fish populations. This report was widely covered in Wisconsin’s media.

“A spray like DDT makes people think of a continent arranged like a manicured garden, but you can’t kick nature around that way.”

Richard H. Pough
1945



“Environmental Decade has been instrumental in all the efforts in Wisconsin to reduce our children’s’ unnecessary exposure to pesticides.”

Susan Mudd
former

*Executive Director of
Citizens for a Better
Environment*

WATER MANAGEMENT

“ We'll never know the worth of water till the well go dry. ”
Scottish Proverb

“ The life of every river sings its own song, but in most the song is long marred by the discords of misuse. ”
Aldo Leopold

Our waters make Wisconsin unique. Our lakes, rivers and streams provide a habitat for many kinds of wildlife. Every year millions of people enjoy the lakes, rivers and streams in Wisconsin. Without clean water we could not survive. As our most precious natural resource is more and more threatened, Wisconsin's Environmental Decade Institute is working hard to keep our waters clean for generations to come.

Action and Results:

- ✓ Worked to restore important wetlands protection regulations gutted by a United States Supreme Court decision.
- ✓ Won a lawsuit preventing Ashley Furniture from expanding their operations onto a wetland site. Ashley Furniture had gotten a provision inserted into the state budget granting an exemption from water quality laws so that they could expand onto a wetland. Thanks to the lawsuit (filed by several Wisconsin groups), a judge ruled that this budget provision was unconstitutional and illegal.
- ✓ Worked with the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection to create strong, comprehensive rules to regulate polluted runoff. The Environmental Decade Institute generated public comment and hearing attendance for the proposed rules.



“ Cleaning up a river is a cause worth fighting for. ”
Pete Seeger

Since 1976, the proposed Crandon mine has threatened northern Wisconsin's environment and way of life. If permitted, the Crandon mine has the potential to become the largest toxic waste dump in Wisconsin. As part of a diverse alliance of stakeholders, the Environmental Decade Institute worked to promote new policy and to educate the public so that Wisconsin's environment will not be endangered by sulfide mining.

Action and Results:

- ✓ Sent a letter asking the newly formed conglomerate BHP-Billiton to stop pursuing the Crandon mine project. Billiton Plc merged with Broken Hill Proprietary in early 2001 and had announced that all non-core assets, such as the Crandon project, would be dropped.
- ✓ Released "A Penny Saved," a 14 page report examining the potential for increased metals recycling instead of metallic mining to meet copper and zinc needs. The report was well covered across the state in Wisconsin's media.
- ✓ Lobbied in support of the "Cyanide Ban Bill," which would ban cyanide from all mining operations and the "Equal Treatment Bill," which would take away special regulatory privileges currently given to mining companies.

"I recognize the right and duty of this generation to develop and use our natural resources, but I do not recognize the right to waste them, or to rob by wasteful use, the generations that come after us."
Theodore Roosevelt
1900



STATE BUDGET

The state budget is always one of the most important pieces of environmental legislation in a session, and the 2001-2002 budget was no different. From recycling to natural resource management, there were many good and bad environmental issues at stake.

- ✓ Successfully fought against the DNR split.
- ✓ Successfully enacted the Healthy Schools budget language (although it was partially vetoed by Governor McCallum).
- ✓ Successfully fought for permanent funding for the state recycling program.

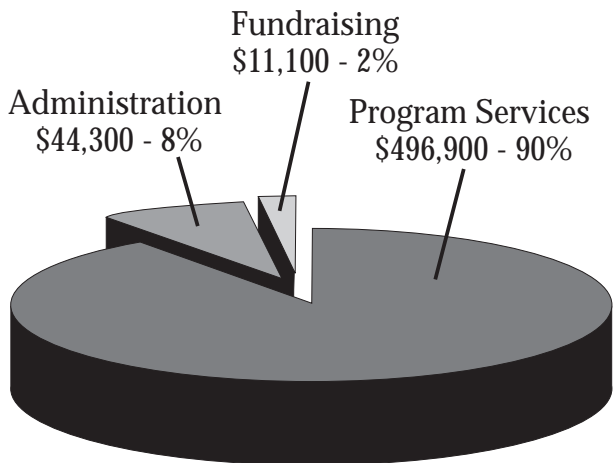
DEVELOPMENT

As we strive to secure a better environment for future generations, the Environmental Decade Institute is working to enhance its skills and become a more effective organization.

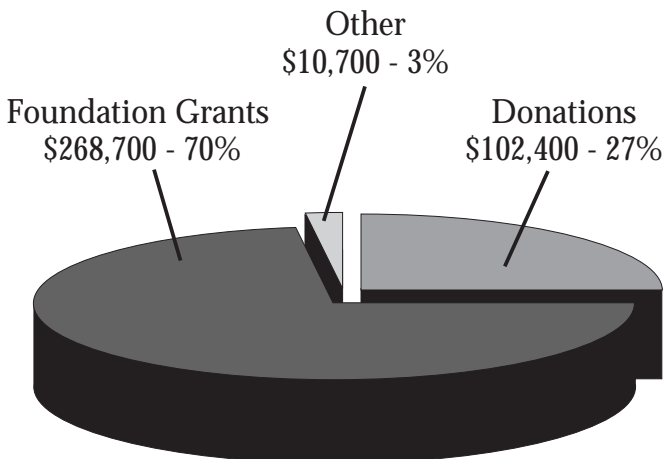
- ✓ Published 5 issues of *The Defender*.
- ✓ Created a more efficient distribution plan for *The Defender*, increasing circulation.
- ✓ Launched popular "Kid's Page" in *The Defender*, making the paper more family-friendly and appealing.
- ✓ Conducted a successful capital campaign. Thanks to the efforts of Environmental Decade Institute staff and a grant from the William H. Donner Foundation, board and friends, staff now enjoy brand new computers, high speed internet connection, new furniture and an improved office décor.
- ✓ Held the first annual Great Lakes, Great Gardens event in Milwaukee. At this event, Environmental Decade members and other Milwaukeeans learned about the possibilities for pesticide-free lawns and gardens and took home organically grown native prairie plant seedlings.
- ✓ Created two new positions. In 2001, the Environmental Decade Institute added a media specialist and a resource ecologist to the staff roster.



Wisconsin's Environmental Decade Institute
2001 Operating Expenses by Category



Wisconsin's Environmental Decade Institute
2001 Revenues by Category



WISCONSIN'S ENVIRONMENTAL DECADE INSTITUTE



2001 ANNUAL REPORT



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