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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Scientists form new group to address threats to Wisconsin's natural resources**

Wisconsin's Green Fire: Voices for Conservation has been formed in response to recent developments at the state and national level that threaten science-based practices and long-term vision in natural resources management.

[Madison, WI – April 21, 2017]

Once regarded as a national leader in conservation, Wisconsin's proud tradition of dedicated stewardship of its land, waters, and wildlife has been severely compromised. A new organization, Wisconsin's Green Fire: Voices for Conservation (WGF), now seeks to reclaim that tradition of leadership for a new generation.

Under Governor Walker's administration, budgets have been slashed for Wisconsin State Parks and public lands management, scientific research, the *Wisconsin Natural Resources* magazine, and the Wisconsin Environmental Education Board. Scientific information on climate change has been scrubbed from Department of Natural Resources communications and restrictions on Department of Natural Resources staff have limited access to science at public hearings. This is a partial list of changes by the current administration that make it clear that responsible, science-based, long-term management practices are no longer welcome at the table.

In response to these threats, a group of retired and active Wisconsin scientists with experience from a wide range of institutions—including the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), the University of Wisconsin, federal natural resource agencies, nonprofit environmental groups, research institutions, and the private sector—have established Wisconsin's Green Fire.

WGF is an independent, nonpartisan group. Its nearly 70 members represent a depth and breadth of experience in natural resource management, environmental law and policy, scientific research, and education.

Historically, Wisconsin managed its abundant natural resources based on sound science, wise economic investments, fair and open public process, and a shared conservation ethic. In the last six years that tradition has been eroded.

"Wisconsin's Green Fire believes Wisconsin's citizens deserve better. We believe there are many in Wisconsin who feel, as we do, that a state as beautiful and bountiful as ours deserves thoughtful stewardship." said WGF board member, Nancy Larson, who retired in the past year from WDNR's water program.

Wisconsin's Green Fire will help local units of government, nonprofit organizations, media, decision makers and citizens get the scientific information they need to address local and regional issues. The group will also be a source for those seeking experts who can and will take positions and bring scientific clarity and scrutiny to contentious and complicated environmental issues. Underpinning WGF's mission is the belief that scientific research, knowledge and education are a basis for ensuring clean water, air, and healthy ecosystems for the economic and social benefit of society.

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“In recent years, Wisconsin’s longstanding tradition of balancing natural resource conservation with human activities has been undermined,” said Terry Daulton, a coordinator for Wisconsin’s Green Fire. “Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources staff is no longer able to fully share their expertise with policy makers and the public. As a result, we are seeing new and unprecedented threats to Wisconsin’s water, air, lands and wildlife. Our goal is to be a voice for sound science in conservation.”

The group takes its name from one of Aldo Leopold’s essay, “Thinking Like a Mountain”. “We decided to use Green Fire in our name to tie us to Wisconsin’s conservation hero, Aldo Leopold,” Daulton said. “Leopold’s land ethic relies on understanding that people are a part of the land, every species has importance, and human activities must be in harmony with nature. It also tells us, as citizens and as scientists, that we all share a responsibility for the land, for one another, and for future generations.”

More information about Wisconsin’s Green Fire: Voices for Conservation, a website, and opportunities to join and/or contribute will be available in coming months. For information now, you can contact [terryldaulton@gmail.com](mailto:terryldaulton@gmail.com).

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**Wisconsin’s Green Fire: Voices for Conservation** was formed in 2017 and supports the conservation legacy of Wisconsin by promoting science-based management of Wisconsin’s natural resources.

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