

August 5 – 11 Forestry & Agriculture Comments

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The embankments, medians, and roadsides of miles of Wisconsin highways should all be naturally landscaped with native plants. In addition to less fossil fuel use for mowing there would be more carbon sequestration in large root systems (1/3 of which die back each year), less herbicides, no pesticides, no irrigation, and lower maintenance costs. Catchbasins would absorb polluted runoff and clean it as it percolates through the soil on its way to recharge our aquifers, habitat for native wildlife would be created, and its beauty would showcase our beautiful Wisconsin flora. The environmental, economic, and social benefits make natural landscaping with native plants desirable for multiple reasons.

Martha Lunz
Glendale WI

Hello,

As the State of Wisconsin looks at the critical issue of global warming, it is important to look at answers that are right outside our front (and back) doors. Urban trees can be an important part of the answer. They help in numerous ways.

Urban trees sequester atmospheric carbon (from carbon dioxide) in tissues. This ties up the carbon for long periods so it is not in our atmosphere. Trees have been shown to be a significant sink of carbon. Carbon storage by Wisconsin's urban forest is estimated to be 6.1 million metric tons. And that is with an average urban tree canopy of only 26% in Wisconsin. Through planting new trees and maintaining the existing trees (very important) we can double the amount of carbon sequestered by Wisconsin's urban forests to combat greenhouse gases that contribute to global warming.

Even more important urban trees affect energy consumption of buildings, providing evaporative cooling, and by blocking winter winds. Trees reduce energy use. In Wisconsin, interactions between trees and buildings are projected to save homeowners \$24.3 million annually. Because of reduced building energy use, power plants will burn less fossil fuel and, therefore, release less carbon dioxide. Energy conservation due to trees, reduces carbon emissions by 50,000 metric tons in Wisconsin with an estimated value of \$1,000,000 per year. And it saves individuals who are paying the utility bills money.

We get all of these positives with great aesthetic benefits too. Please make sure trees are an important part of your answer to the global warming issue in Wisconsin.

Thank you for taking time to read my thoughts. It is acceptable to make my comments public on your web site.

Sincerely,

Dave Scharfenberger

Dave Scharfenberger
Board Certified Master Arborist WI-0131B
Wachtel Tree Science & Service, Inc.

Governor's Task Force on Global Warming:

I believe that the state plan of action to reduce our state's contribution to global warming, which you are supposed to deliver to the Governor, should include incentives for public schools, universities and other institutions to encourage people to eat lower on the food chain; that is, to eat more of a plant based diet, and less meat, eggs, and dairy. Perhaps this could be achieved by, among other things, removing subsidies and economic externalities (a form of market failure) which allow animal derived foods to be sold at a deceptively cheap prices.

I believe that the possible solutions to global warming challenges that pose a threat to Wisconsin's economic and environmental health. The task force will create a state plan of action to deliver to the Governor to reduce our state's contribution to global warming.

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization recently published a report titled "Livestock's Long Shadow-Environmental Issues and Options," which documents that animal agriculture contributes more greenhouse gas emissions than all modes of transportation:

"Livestock a major threat to environment: Remedies urgently needed"

29 November 2006

Rome - Which causes more greenhouse gas emissions, rearing cattle or driving cars?

Surprise!

According to a new report published by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, the livestock sector generates more greenhouse gas emissions as measured in CO2 equivalent - 18 percent - than transport. It is also a major source of land and water degradation. ...

<http://www.fao.org/newsroom/en/news/2006/1000448/index.html>

Last November, I personally attended a Princeton University conference on the ethical issues of eating. In the 3rd session, a geophysicist named Gidon Eshel, Assistant Professor of Physical Oceanography and Climate, Department of Geophysical Sciences at the

University of Chicago and co-author, with Pam Martin, of "Diet, Energy and Global Warming" (Earth Interactions, Vol. 10, pp. 1-17, March 2006), showed us that eating high on the food chain (meat, in particular) is responsible for more greenhouse gas emissions than the difference in emissions between driving a hybrid car, such as a Toyota Prius, instead of a gas guzzling car:

"Diet, Energy, and Global Warming"
by Gidon Eshel and Pamela A. Martin
Earth Interactions, Volume 10 (2006)
Paper No. 9

<http://geosci.uchicago.edu/~gidon/papers/nutri/nutriEI.pdf>

"Food, Ethics and the Environment"

A 5-part Princeton University conference, exploring the broad and compelling issues and ethical dilemmas surrounding food production in the U.S. and the choices individuals make regarding the food they eat.

http://uc.princeton.edu/main/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1345&Itemid=20

Thank you,
Steve Barney
Oshkosh, WI

PS: You have my permission to make this comment available to the public on the Task Force Web site.

Comments from Organizations

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN -- One major item not mentioned in most press releases, editorial comments and other related news media with regard to climate change is maintenance of landscaping. Namely, not using leaf blowers and electric pruners, not mowing lawns more than once a week and/or instead using human propelled mowers. Using native plants and no mow grass to eliminate the need for additives such as fertilizer, herbicides, insecticides and water. These are all things which could be easily accomplished right now and would greatly help to reduce the carbon footprint.

National Wild Ones President Joe Powelka outlined the following three steps in the March/April issue of the *Wild Ones Journal*. Joe stated, "besides the basic individual responsibilities to conserve resources and reduce our consumption, we should have as our primary focus the use of native plants in our landscapes. Native landscapes offer the following three global warming solutions, among others:

- With global warming comes an increased **need for potable water**. Native plants require less water to survive with changing environments. Native plants, with their deep root systems, will return more water to the ground preventing rainwater runoff. Native plants are what make rain gardens work. Wetland native species offer natural filtration systems to improve water quality.

• **Carbon sequestration** - taking carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere. The root structures of many of our native prairie plants extend deep into the ground, unlike most non-natives. This root structure allows the native plants to remove more carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Carbon is one of the major constituents of global warming and removing it from the weather cycle slows the warming process. The main carbon "sinks" are grasslands, forest, and organisms in the oceans and soil.

• **Reductions in fossil fuel and chemical use** - native landscapes, in general, require less maintenance in the form of mowing, fertilization and chemical disbursement. In fact, native landscapes can survive without any of these man-made solutions for control. But for those needing some order in their landscape, no mow lawns and native plants significantly reduce the emissions associated with lawn and garden care combustion equipment, and the use of water polluting fertilizers and life-destroying chemicals. When we stop using fossil fuels and chemicals in our yards, we also reduce the need to transport and produce these items, further reducing the impact on our environment.

Individuals and families alike can have a big impact on reducing the carbon footprint by something as simple as how they maintain their yards. Using environmentally sound landscaping practices to preserve and restore ecological biodiversity and clean water by reducing the use of herbicides, insecticides, fertilizers and water will go a long way toward making a difference in climate change.

For more information about Wild Ones and sustainable landscaping through the use of native plants, go to our Wild Ones website at <http://www.for-wild.org/native.html> or call toll free 877-394-9453.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide you with this information.

Donna VanBuecken, Executive Director
Wild Ones: Native Plants, Natural Landscapes

See our website at www.for-wild.org

Wild Ones promotes environmentally sound landscaping practices to preserve biodiversity through the preservation, restoration and establishment of native plant communities. Wild Ones is a not-for-profit environmental education and advocacy organization.