



Area Waterways Face Host of Challenges

For over 30 years Kentucky Waterways Alliance (KWA) has worked to protect, restore, and celebrate Kentucky's unique waterways and its watersheds. In advocating for clean water and protection for Kentucky streams from the impacts of pollution, they engage citizens and provide the tools for speaking up for our state's critical water resources. Michael Washburn is the Executive Director for KWA.

Common Home recently interviewed him on KWA's work and the state of our area's water resources. Here is part two of that interview.



Floyds Fork in The Parklands

Common Home (CH)

Would you say Louisville area waterways are threatened?

Washburn: Well, we are a water abundant city. People's immediate experience with our water is good. When it comes down to what is the most dangerous threat to our waterways is the fatigue and exhaustion of tracking all the numerous threats. Threats like mercury and plastics are still there, now PFAS (Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) all these things are exerting pressure. A multitude of threats end up being "the problem." It ends up shutting people down and thinking there's nothing they can do.

CH: So, are there one or two things the average person could do to lessen the threat?

MW: The thing easiest to do is to get your head around plastic pollution, especially in places like Beargrass Creek.

CH : Besides degrading the scenery, what harm do the plastic bags and bottle create?

MW: They leach chemicals into the water and that poses incredible risks to both aquatic and terrestrial wildlife. This especially concerning when it comes to plastic pollution in Beargrass Creek and Harrods Creek. There is an incredible diversity in those two creeks and it's all under threat. A big risk is animals getting entangled or ingesting plastic.

CH And those are those key waterways in our area?

MW: Beargrass creek is the primary watershed in Louisville, covering 60 square miles. It's important culturally because it links various parts of the city. Also, there's a lot of importance to Floyds Fork which flows to the Salt river, and in Harrods creek which flows a little bit up from this area.

Floyds Fork is becoming a concern. It's not usually a waterway that people abuse, but about three months ago one of my board

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members did an overnight 20-mile paddle down Floyds Fork and he counted 400 discarded tires. And those things leach carcinogens into the water – that's a huge issue. This is only going to get worse because electric vehicles burn through tires faster because they're heavier. Tires have become a huge issue. And none of the tire disposal fees go to help with these issues.

It's become a community engagement issue to try and get the tires out, but it's also a policy issue. There are changes that can be made by those in Frankfort.

CH: Are you seeing this problem in other areas of the state?

MW: The Red River in eastern Kentucky is the only designated wild and scenic river in Kentucky. Now the upper river is in the Clifty Wilderness which is part of the Daniel Boone National Forest and that's part of the most remote areas of the state. One of my staff lives in eastern Kentucky and she does a lot of septic work. Every year from one of the most beautiful areas of the state they will pull over 40 tires out of that river.

CH: You mentioned chemicals from plastics as



CH: In addition to water quality, what other key areas is KWA focusing on?

MW: An issue we've been working on for the last year and a half is a commitment to justice. It's one of the things that's become implicit in the work of KWA. A lot of what guides our decisions about what we are and what we are going to do is with an eye on the issues of justice and equity. And we understand that can mean different things in different parts of the state.

a problem, are there other chemical problems?

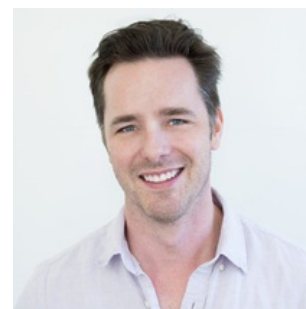
MW: Lawn runoff, from fertilizer ends up as nutrient pollution (eutrophication).

Phosphorus and nitrogen

and that runs off into the water decreases the amount of oxygen in the water. So that ends up killing aquatic plants. It's also damaging to aquatic wildlife and that's how you end up getting algae blooms. It's a very direct threat to both flora and fauna along the urban waterways. And it's really hard to address that kind of thing because lawn runoff falls under this sort of devilish title of non-point source water pollution – so point source pollution is when you see things like the pipe in the water, but then a lot of what we see in waterways like the Beargrass Creeks of the world is non-point source, so it's fertilizer runoff or its stuff that runs off the streets after a hard rain where cars have been driving on it for a month.

CH: Do rural areas have similar issues?

MW: Agricultural practices can have much the same impact as urban practices. And that's not only from fertilizer use and the way it can get washed off into the surrounding waterways, but also from livestock. If livestock is grazing near lakes, creeks and rivers that can be an issue too. There are some best practices that can be implemented to shield the waterways from that. I believe there are federal dollars that farmers can seek if they want to address some of those issues. Where things get really complicated is considering that agricultural practices can pose a dire ecological threat, but that we also need the agricultural produce; we need to eat.



Michael Washburn

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CH: So gets it back to individual attitudes and what individuals can do?

MW: As I've said, individual action is important, but we should never be tricked into thinking it's the individual's responsibility to fix the world's problems that have been caused by legacy polluters and industry. That having been said, you do want to maintain a hold on your trash to make sure it doesn't get into the creek. In watershed planning we work with communities and individuals to figure out what threats the community thinks are most prevalent in their area and then we work with them to find ways to address their concerns. It's intensive work.



Fly fishing in Floyds Fork

Ten Things You Can Do to Sow Climate Hope

1. Calculate your carbon footprint and find ways to reduce it by at least 10% in the next year.
2. Reduce food waste.
3. Cook for a climate-stable planet by eating more vegetables and reducing meat consumption.
4. Reduce fossil fuel use: make your home energy efficient, green your transportation (walk/bike).
5. Reduce, reuse, repair and recycle.
6. Use less water.
7. Petition lawmakers to take bold and ambitious climate action.
8. Speak up! Talk about climate change with friends and family and write to your local newspaper.
9. Join or form an action group at church or school.
10. Pray for our common home and all who defend it. Take the Laudate Deum Action pledge at <https://catholicclimatecovenant.org/my-laudate-deum-action-pledge/>.



What's Your Plan For Voting?

Archbishop Shelton Fabre is encouraging all Catholics in the archdiocese of Louisville “to stay informed and seek correct information on issues in society and in our community.” Are you intending to vote? Not sure whether your vote counts? Consider these thoughts on the importance of voting.

“Someone struggled for your right to vote. Use it.”
— Susan B. Anthony, women’s rights activist during the suffragette movement in the early 20th century.

“It's not enough to just want change ... You have to go and make change by voting.”
— Taylor Swift, singer-songwriter

“The vote is precious. It is the most powerful non-violent tool we have in a democratic society, and we must use it.”

— John Lewis, late civil rights activist and member of the US House of Representatives for Georgia

“Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.”

— Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., civil rights leader and Nobel Peace Prize laureate

“The ballot is stronger than the bullet.”
— Abraham Lincoln, 16th President of the United States from 1861 to 1865



Vote

Need a voting guide? There are a number of helpful publications available either in print or online. For a good print version contact Kentuckians for the Commonwealth at 859-278-8644. For an online look at a sample ballot for the district you live in go to <https://www.climaterealityproject.org/ballot>. You'll see all the candidates and issues that will appear on your actual ballot.

Important Dates for Voting

October 31, 2024 – Early in-person absentee voting (Hours vary by county)

November 1, 2024 – Early in-person absentee voting (Hours vary by county)

November 2, 2024 – Early in-person absentee voting (Hours vary by county)

November 5, 2024 – General Election Day –

Hours of Voting: 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., prevailing time. At 6 p.m. the Precinct Sheriff goes to the end of the line and stays there until everyone in front of him/her has voted. Anyone in line by 6 p.m. is given the opportunity to vote.

You Don't Say... But Do You Know Who Did?

See if you can match the quotes below with the person who said it.



1. The Earth is not just the environment we live in. We are the Earth and we are always carrying her within us.
2. A lot of our fear, hatred, anger, and feelings of separation and alienation come from the idea that we are separate from the planet... We have to change our whole relationship with the Earth.
3. To stop the planet from getting substantially warmer, we need breakthroughs in how we make things, grow food, and move people and goods—not just how we power our homes and cars.



A. Richard Rohr



B. Thich Nhat Hahn



C. Bill Gates

See answers at bottom of page

**Join us Saturday, October 26, 2024, 9am
Shawnee Park, Louisville KY**



Register at <https://louisvilleearthwalk.org/>

In Fight For Clean Energy It's Metal Vs Flower

(Recently Jeanna Danhauer attended a program presented by the Louisville Metro Sustainability Office featuring author Ernest Scheyder. The program held at the Filson Historical Society discussed the mining of rare earth metals and its impact on local environments. Here is her report on that program.

What to do when a rare and endangered plant shares the same piece of earth as a rich source of lithium? That's the dilemma explored in a new book, *The War Below: Lithium, Copper, and the Global Battle to Power Our Lives* by Ernest Scheyder.

On August 22, 2024 the World Affairs Council of Louisville hosted Scheyder for a discussion on his new book. He explained that the dilemma began with the discovery in 1983 of a new species of plant, the Tiehm's buckwheat flower, found at Rhyolite Ridge in Nevada, the only place the flower is found and that just happens to be a lithium-rich site.

Scheyder went on to tell of the flower and a man named James Calaway. Despite being part of a family legacy oil and gas business in Texas, Calaway found himself drawn to explore green energy. As his desire to further green energy grew he decided to leave the family business. He had come to see the electric vehicle with its lithium-ion battery as part of the solution to climate change. Around 2009 he became chairman of a successful lithium mine in Argentina. He retired in 2015, but was persuaded the next year to join a lithium company sitting atop the second largest known lithium deposit in the country... the Rhyolite Ridge.

Scheyder decided to write his book as a way to involve more people in the "conversation of energy transition". He sees that mining companies, conservationist groups, companies needing to buy lithium, and government regulators are all directly involved in the nuts and bolts of energy transition. He wants the public at large to become part of the energy conversation because its transition will have



Tiehm's buckwheat plant at Rhyolite Ridge, Nevada
huge impacts on everyone.

He related that when people were asked if a mine or processing plant would be proposed near their neighborhood, no one would want such a mine or plant built. In his book, Scheyder describes the impact mining usually has on an area: "mines are gargantuan... loud and they are intrusive and maim the Earth's surface." In addition, it's been shown they produce tons of liquid and/or solid waste, which has to be stored in tailings dams forever. Often mining processes require large amounts of an area's water supply. And fleets of bulldozers and dump trucks pollute the air with diesel fumes.

The War Below discusses several mining tragedies that occurred in other countries where tailings dams collapsed overrunning local residents with miles of muddy sludge. It also covers a different type of mining tragedy from western Australia where a mining company blew up Aboriginal rock shelters that had existed there for more than 46,000 years.

Scheyder wants more people in the U.S. to grapple with the reality of the need for minerals like copper, lithium, and nickel needed for the

Metal Vs Flower

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transition to green energy. He questions: “if the United States halts mining projects, does that hasten the onslaught of climate change while also giving China and others an economic weapon?”

While no new mines for critical minerals have opened in the U.S. for decades (except a Nevada copper mine in 2019) a number of projects have been proposed. No project is near startup as it typically it takes ten years for a project's approval.

During the book discussion Scheyder mentioned the Inflation Reduction Act and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Act. He noted “both set out really positive aims of getting us to energy transition levels faster but without thinking through where the minerals for EV batteries, wind turbines, and solar panels would come from”. His book reports that the U.S. holds about 24% of the world’s lithium reserves, but is expected to produce only about 3% of the world’s annual lithium needs by 2030. The U.S. has only one lithium mine and no large-scale facilities to process it.

The War Below lays out problems local populations have with mining, such as the San Carlos Apache who oppose copper mining that would destroy one of their most sacred sites, and the Minnesotans who oppose a 4,500-foot-deep copper and nickel mine just underneath the watershed of the Rainy River, which drains into the Boundary Waters and eventually into Canada’s Hudson Bay.

Scheyder also shares stories of his interviews with mine entrepreneurs, mine employees, mine scientists, Indian tribe representatives, and families with homes threatened by mines. He provides detailed information on how rare earth elements are processed including facts



Mined lithium

showing that only a quarter to a half pound of copper is extracted from a hundred pounds of rock.

Technology may help this. Scheyder profiles two men who started a company, LiCycle, that recycles nickel, cobalt, and lithium from old batteries; the two claim by the end of this year they will be able to reclaim 8,500 tons of lithium carbonate from recycling. A significant increase over the 5,000 tons U.S. mines are expected to produce this year.

The last chapter of *The War Below* returns to the plight of the Tiehm’s buckwheat flower. Through the efforts of a dedicated conservationist and the company’s own botanist’s report to the Fish and Wildlife Service, the plant was declared an endangered species in 2021. James Calaway’s lithium mine, loneer, even hired a full-time botanist to germinate seeds harvested from plants in 2019 and built a greenhouse as part of that special project. Despite loneer having an endangered species on site, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management issued a Notice of Intent in 2022 signaling that the loneer lithium project’s final stage of permitting had begun. Whether the Tiehm’s buckwheat can co-exist with the mine remains to be seen.

People Around the World Concerned About Climate Change

Recently the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the leading United Nations organization fighting to end the injustice of poverty, inequality, and climate change, issued its second report on The Peoples' Climate Vote. This global survey was created to educate world leaders on peoples' perspective of climate change.

The first Peoples' Climate Vote, in 2021, asked whether people thought climate change was a global emergency – to which 64% of people in 50 countries said that it was. Knowing that climate change is accelerating and that many people are experiencing the effects of extreme weather events more frequently and, sometimes, in life-changing ways, the 2024 survey chose to focus on more direct impacts.

The 2024 survey provides a larger scope than the 2021 survey: it asked people in 77 countries, representing 87% of the world's population, for their views on climate change. Over 73,000 people took part.

The results of The Peoples' Climate Vote are loud and clear. Achim Steiner Administrator, United Nations Development Program, states that people around the world want their leaders “to transcend their differences, to act now and to act boldly to fight the climate crisis. The survey results – unprecedented in their coverage – reveal a level of consensus that is truly astonishing. We urge leaders and policymakers to take note, especially as countries develop their next round of climate action pledges – or ‘nationally determined contributions’ under the Paris Agreement. This is an issue that almost everyone, everywhere, can agree on.”

So what did the survey find about how people in the U.S. are reacting to climate change?

On how frequently U.S. citizens think about about climate change:

- 21% of people said they do so daily, 30% said never



On whether their worry over climate change has changed since last year:

- 51% said they are more worried, 34% are less worried

Are people in the U.S. worried about effects of climate change on the next generation:

- 19% are extremely worried, 26% are not worried at all

On how well they think our country is addressing climate change:

- 8% said very well, 26% said very badly

On whether the U.S. should strengthen or weaken its commitments to address climate change:

- 66% said strengthen, 28%, said weaken

In addition to asking about people's perception and their government's response to climate change the survey sought to know what priorities people would place on specific action to combat climate change.

Globally here's how people would set priorities:

- Have countries work together internationally... 83%
- Protect and restore nature... 76%
- Provide more climate change education... 66%
- Add projects to provide protection from weather events... 57%
- Replace coal, oil and gas as energy sources... 27%

Globally, four in every five people would like their country to strengthen its commitments to address climate change.

Trivia Night Brings Out Energetic Crowd

Like Monarchs to milkweed, Epiphanites and others flocked to the Creation Care Team's Trivia Night on Friday, October 11. A boisterous crowd filled the Community Center and had a fun time socializing, snacking and imbibing their way through a series of questions challenging their knowledge and assumptions about the effects of climate change on our common home.

The event's emcee was Deacon Lucio Caruso who kept things light and lively as he presented six categories of questions including Water Quality, Air Quality, Plastics, Lifestyles, Flora & Fauna, and Rising Temperatures.

The competition was intense, with the lead seeming to change with the ending of each new category. At the end of the night the Archangels, a team from Catholic Relief Services, headed up by renowned environmentalist and a founding pastor of Epiphany, Fr. Jim Flynn, took the top prize.

In addition to prizes for the highest scoring team, 8 Is Enough won for Best Table Decoration and Weed Control won for Best Name. Many of the participants expressed their thanks to the Creation Care Team members for putting on such a fun and interesting event. Several commented that they also learned something new while having a great time.



MC Deacon Lucio Caruso



The Weed Control team celebrates a category win.

Fun, food and friendships fill the festivities!



Fr. Flynn's Archangels team won with most points!





The Lighter Side of Climate Halloween Edition!



Q. What kind of truck does Frackenstein drive?
A. A Monster Truck.



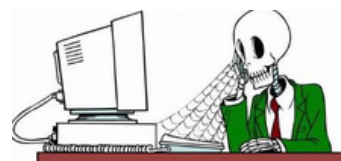
Q. Where does Frackenstein go on vacation?
A. To the Dead Sea.



Q. What's it called when BP has trouble with an oil well?
A. A grave problem



Q. Why did Exxon hire a skeleton for their PR director?
A. They wanted to be sure nothing would get under his skin.



Q. What does a climate-denier dress up for on Halloween?
A. Stuporman.



Q. Do climate-deniers ever worry about the future?
A. Yes, when they read their horrorscope.



Q. Why is the oil executive's ghost so bad at lying?
A. 'Cause you can see right thru him!



Q. How did the oil executive sound when he saw the Grim Reaper?
A. Shrill baby, shrill.



The Creation Care Team would love your feedback on this issue of *Common Home*. In addition, let us know if there is particular climate change topic that you've experienced, have seen in the news or read about in *Laudato Si'* that you'd like to see covered. Email us at commonhome914@gmail.com.

