

November
2022



Latest news and bulletin updates

GREETINGS ABC LEAGUERS AND HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

Time for an email/newsletter update on our very productive Ashland/Bayfield/Sawyer County activities so far this fall! Keep your eye on our website for League activities and calendar events.

IT'S BEEN A VERY BUSY FALL...

Here is an update on our activities:

The League moved back into in-person public education events, one on September 26 on the potential of the Inflation Reduction Act in moving our counties forward to handle climate change, the other on October 18th presenting the danger to Medicare solvency from the stealthy move by the insurance industry to privatize Medicare through the Medicare Advantage plans.

Our two standing Committees -Natural Resources and Voter Services have also been hard at work in September and October.

And likewise the four Units - Ashland, Bayfield, Washburn and Sawyer County are meeting regularly. Our membership remains strong and continually growing.

League members also participated in coalitions on other issues notably with the Climate Change Lobby for a GOTV event at Northland College and members joining local Reproductive Rights rallies.

ALAS, NO LWV/ABC HOLIDAY PARTY AGAIN THIS YEAR!

Weighing the continuing threat from “super spreading illness” and that impact on attendance, the League Board voted on November 15 to cancel plans for the annual Holiday Party.

Instead, everyone is encouraged to celebrate at their Unit meetings or to just invite some of your favorite Leaguers out for coffee, hot cocoa, a glass of wine, or a lunch or dinner out!!



WE ORGANIZED TWO PUBLIC EDUCATION EVENTS

Both events were well attended both in person and virtually: <https://www.lwvabcwi.org/>

o **September 26 (Vaughn Library Ashland) - Local Vision and Implication of the Inflation Reduction Act.** An excellent panel shared their plans to move forward on climate change preparation and mitigation. Steve Sandstrom represented the Bayfield County Board. Chris Kopel spoke as the CEO of Bayfield Electric Coop, Bill Bailey shared his extensive experience with local renewable energy projects and Philomena Kebec gave a perspective from the Bad River Tribe. It was encouraging to hear how all are working hard on the transition to alternatives to fossil fuels. o

October 18 (Washburn Library) - Medicare and the Threats to Health Security for Seniors/Privatization of Medicare. Another set of excellent presenters walked the audience through how the Medicare Advantage program and other unpublicized initiatives in Washington have transferred delivery of Medicare services to private insurance agencies at much greater cost to taxpayers which threatens to bankrupt Medicare. Dr. Mark Neumann from Physicians for a National Health Plan and Karen Kirsch, Health care Organizer for Citizen Action of WI were the virtual presenters.



Natural Resources

Joan Elias - *Chair*



The League of Women Voters of Ashland and Bayfield Counties Natural Resources Advocacy Committee has received statewide recognition for its efforts to protect clean water and move forward on planning for climate change.

- **Clean Water Resolution.** On the Committee's initiative to the Bayfield County Board, Bayfield County residents successfully passed an advisory Clean Water resolution on November 8. It requests that the WI Legislature "establish a right to clean water to protect human health, the environment, and the diverse cultural and natural heritage of Wisconsin." Five counties have already passed it - Marquette (73%), Wood (76%), Portage (77%), Eau Claire (79%), La Crosse(86%). Four other counties (Adams, Green, Juneau and Outagamie) also voted on the resolution on November 8.
- **Line 5 Opposition.** The Committee continues working in a broad coalition with Tribes and WI environmental organizations to monitor the permitting process for Line 5 and to oppose Line 5.
- **Storm Sewer Clean up in Ashland.** Work continues in monitoring City of Ashland work on replacing their polluting storm sewage system.
- **Also monitoring and commenting on other water issues.** Organizing to oppose Krystle Water withdrawal denial lawsuit. Also monitoring for any PFAs in our local water.

Voter Services

Anne Chartier and Diane Koosed
Co-Chairs

Ashland and Bayfield Counties had some of the highest voter turnout in the state for this fall's election! Committee members broke into three local groups (Sawyer County, Ashland and Bayfield/Washburn): Sawyer County devotes its efforts exclusively to Voter Registration and Information. Ashland and Bayfield/ Washburn focused on getting as many people as possible to participate in the November 8 Midterm Elections. The committee, which met via Zoom the third Friday of each month, supported these efforts:

- **Candidate Forums:** Despite numerous attempts by the Candidate Forum Team to reach out to the candidates from both parties, it was unable to recruit both candidates on the ballot for the 74TH Assembly and the 25TH Senate Districts. At the request of Bad River voters, a potential candidate forum for Tribal Government elections became a Meet and Greet opportunity facilitated by League members. In the end, five of the six candidates for three offices, Vice Chair, Secretary and Council Member participated, exceeding the number of community members who attended! Nonetheless, it was a great opportunity to nurture the League's relationship with the tribe, while supporting democracy and informed voting.
- **Registration/Voter Information:** Tables were set up throughout Ashland, Bayfield and Sawyer Counties including at Ashland High School, Lac Courtes Oreilles College, Northland College, Northwood Technical College, Honor the Earth Pow Wow, the Ashland Area Farmers' Market and several businesses. Yard signs urging community members to vote were made widely available. These include bilingual ones in Ojibwe/English, created by our local League, and in Spanish/English provided by the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin.
- **GOTV:** Members and friends of the committee worked hard to Get Out The Vote. The local chapter of Citizens Climate Lobby and The League of Women Voters of Ashland and Bayfield Counties co-sponsored Earth Day: Election Edition at Northland College on October 22nd . League Members and Friends have also partnered WI Native Vote under the leadership of organizer Dee Sweet, to provide voter information in Red Cliff and Bad River.

Units

Conveners:

Washburn: Kate Miller
Bayfield: Bev Lindell
Ashland: Kate Ullman and Kate Siegler
Sawyer County: Carolyn Pare

Our four Units are digging into issues most relevant to their locale. They are also providing a welcome opportunity for members to informally discuss the bigger state and national issues.

Here are the meeting dates for the Units with a mention of some the issues that have been discussed:

- **Washburn Unit.** Meets monthly on the third Tuesday of the month at 2 PM at the Washburn Public Library. Next Meeting-Tuesday, December 20. Issues being discussed: local affordable housing shortage/ City Council proposal to expand Thompson West End Park RV rental space onto undeveloped land between Holman Drive and the lake, and school board and city budget issues.
- **Bayfield Unit.** Has been meeting bi-monthly. Will take December off and resume in January with date to be set. Focus has been on voter registration and information for the mid-term elections, setting up voter education displays and sending flyers in CORE food boxes. They also attended 2 cultural orientations with Dee Sweet, Carolyn Gouge and Laura Miranda to prepare for in depth canvassing at Red Cliff and Bad River. They also organized the LWV/ABC participation in the 2020 Apple Fest Parade.
- **Ashland Unit.** The Ashland Unit also focused on supporting voter services efforts for the mid-term elections. They tabled and did some get-out-the-vote outreach at Northland College at least 5 times, connected with Northwood Tech, collaborated with Wisconsin Native vote to knock doors at Bad River, and did election day GOTV in Ashland.
- **Sawyer County Unit.** They are a hardworking, dedicated crew that also devoted their energies this fall to voter information, registration and GOTV.



Upcoming Events

- **January 10, 2023.** “The Decline in Wisconsin’s Conservation Legacy and the Shift in Balance of State Government” (Time and registration still to be announced).

The LWV/ABC has accepted an invitation to cosponsor with the LWV LaCrosse, the LWV Greater St. Croix Valley and the LWV Milwaukee County Leagues a virtual webinar discussion of the imbalance of power between the Executive Branch and the Legislative Branch as it relates to Conservation and Environmental Protection. The program is based on an important recent publication of Wisconsin Green Fire, a non-partisan organization whose mission is to advance science-informed analysis and policy solutions to address Wisconsin’s greatest conservation challenges. (Full publication: https://wlgreenfire.org/2019/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/WGF_2022_OppNow_ImbalancePower_Final-web.pdf).

- **January 28, 2023: LIVELY ISSUES** Discussion open to membership and friends. Location to be announced. The Washburn and Ashland Unit Chairs, Kate Miller and Kate Ullman have organized an in-person and virtual meeting where we can gather and discuss what we see as the salient issues of 2023, what are our priorities, and advise the League Board where we should put our energy and resources in 2023.

Get Involved and More!

HAVE YOU PAID YOUR 2022-23 DUES?

We have been transitioning the Membership duties recently. Sue Niemi and Roger Aiken are eager to get us all up to date. If you have lost track of where you stand please do not hesitate to contact them at susysisu64@gmail.com or roger.aiken@gmail.com. Likewise, we will be contacting members as membership renewals come up or if you are overdue. Thank you for your support of the League!

WANT TO BECOME MORE INVOLVED?

Please feel free to contact either our Committee chairs, or Unit convenors. We are also looking to fill President, President-Elect (or two co-presidents) and Communications Coordinator. If you don’t want to take on the full responsibility of the position, but might be able to help in a particular area, please contact one of our board members or email us at president@abcleaguevoters.org.

COMMUNICATIONS

Please consider these quarterly email **UPDATES** as an experiment in substituting for our quarterly newsletter. Feedback to our Board was that members read emails, but less often opened the newsletters (and they were a big production). So now our Board asks for your opinions about whether these monthly emails will be an adequate substitute.