Greetings and welcome to the fifth issue of the Conservation Leadership Corps (CLC) newsletter!

The 2018-2019 Executive Committee has been working hard to develop annual fundraisers that help fund CLC class expenses, currently funded by the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation (WWF). We plan to have these fundraisers in place by the WWF’s annual meeting in April and hope that future CLC Executive Committees can use these fundraiser ideas and funds to help the WWF offset the costs of educational materials, field trips, travel, lodging, and food associated with the CLC.

I would like to thank all past CLC Executive Committee members for their hard work that enabled the CLC to fund our winter field trip to the Wisconsin DNR’s Black Earth Sampling Center, The Leopold Center, and The Shack in January. To read more about this field trip see page 7.

Also, I want to remind our readers that applications for CLC class 7 for the 2019-2020 academic year are currently being accepted, and the deadline for these applications is May 31st, 2019!

The CLC would not be where it is today without the hard work of George Meyer, Lil Pipping, our CLC coordinators, our Executive Committee members, our alumni, and the WWF. As the CLC continues to reach more and more young minds, I encourage alumni to remain involved and give back to this great organization.

Thank you for reading, and I hope you enjoy the newsletter!

Hunter Nikolai
CLC President
Exercise leadership and moving out of your comfort zone. Randy and Mo had unique exercises for each topic for the students. At the end of the day everyone had done a wonderful job displaying how capable they are of being conservation leaders.

On October 5th, 2018 at the Econo Lodge Inn and Suites in Stevens Point, Wisconsin, Class 6 of the Conservation Leadership Corps arrived for their first session. The Friday night session consisted of introductions, pizza, and building upon the principles of leadership. Lil Pipping and I gave an introduction on the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation and the Conservation Leadership Corps. This weekend’s instructors were retired DNR Warden, Randy Stark, who has historically taught the first session for the CLC accompanied by MO Sook Park, an Organization and Leadership Development Consultant from Chicago, IL.

During this Friday night session, the students were asked “What has been your biggest challenge in life?” To my surprise, all the students were very open about issues that are very common, but not often spoken about openly. The topics ranged from depression, suicidal tendencies, anxiety, growing up in a broken home, to medical conditions. To me it shows how much more valuable vulnerability is becoming and the students became more comfortable with one another after this exercise.

On October 6th, 2018 Randy and Mo directed the day’s exercises as they did the night before. The topics covered were Leadership vs. Authority, what is the difference between an adaptive challenge and a technical problem, what is a faction and managing yourself in
CLC Session Two Recap

Session II: Policy Communication and Advocacy

--Submitted by: Monica Banaszak, CLC 6 Coordinator

On Friday December 7th, 2018 CLC 6 arrived at the Econo Lodge Inn and Suites for their second session of the WI Conservation Leadership Corps. This session’s theme was ‘Policy Communication and Advocacy’. In the midst of finals week approaching these students came with energy and the intent to enhance their leadership goals. During the Friday night portion of the session the students got an introduction to what their exercises and activities will be like for the weekend and for the sessions to come. George Meyer gave an overview of how the policy writing session will be at the third session located at the Central Wisconsin Environmental Station coming up in February 2019. There were special appearances by Hailey Feil, the CLC Executive Committee Secretary and Class 5 Alum and Marco Mascitti, past CLC Coordinator and CLC 4 Alum. Hailey and I partnered on a presentation about the CLC to the students. Hailey, Marco and Monica each gave their own insight on their own personal benefits of staying active with the CLC. At the end of the night the students were left to brainstorm on what their prospective policy topics would be for the decision process the next day and had the opportunity to have some social time at the pool afterwards.

On Saturday December 8th, 2018 we had some more special guests make an appearance. Scott Humrickhouse and Tom Hauge from the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation and Class 3 Alum, Janel Scharhag. For this weekend’s then we had Todd Ambs as our instructor for the Saturday portion. Both George and Todd reviewed: Key Principles of Conservation Policy Persuasion, Meetings with Policy Makers and Testifying at Hearings, with the students to give them a prelude as to how they will be presenting their testimonies for the mock trial they would be participating in later in the day. The students got to put their acting skills into action as they roleplayed various stakeholders that would testify either for or against a scenario that was based on a real life event. The scenario is based on a proposed open pit from a mining company in the Penokee Hills of Iron County, WI. All the students did a great job and remarkably played their parts.

Following the mock trial, Class 6 selected their resolution topics for the third session where they will meet their carefully selected professionals and draft out the resolutions that they will then present at the WWF Annual Meeting at the Hotel Mead in Wisconsin Rapids Come April. Overall, the weekend was filled with laughs, smiles, and hard work. I am looking forward to seeing what these students accomplish in the future.
On July 23rd, four Alumni (including Sawyer Boldt, Monae Taylor and myself Janel Scharhag) of the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation’s Conservation Leadership Corps (CLC), flew to Washington D.C. to take part in a national campaign to protect clean water. This campaign was formed by a coalition of organization.

Our message was to oppose the current attempts to repeal the Clean Water Rule. The Clean Water Rule was established in 2015 to clarify ambiguities in the Clean Water Act’s definition on what qualifies a water body for protection. The 2015 definition includes wetlands important to waterfowl production, including 1 million acres in Wisconsin, and waters that affect 1 in 3 American’s drinking water. There are current attempts in the US Congress and Federal Agencies to repeal the rule, despite broad bipartisan support. Nationally, 83% of sportsmen and women support the Clean Water Rule.

As a group, we met with the offices of Senator Baldwin, Senator Johnson, Congressman Pocan, Congresswoman Moore, Congressman Gallagher, Speaker Ryan, and Congressman Kind. Our training in the CLC helped us prepare to speak with our representatives. A core part of the CLC program is training on how to speak with representatives on conservation issues, how to properly research and become informed on topics, and how to present information in a non-partisan, respectful manner. Therefore, we were able to speak with Wisconsin

Conservation Leadership Corps Goes to Washington

--Submitted by: Janel Scharhag, CLC

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taught us a great deal about our government operates, encouraged us to continue to speak with our representatives about critical issues on conservation, and helped us hone our communication skills for the future. By participating in the Clean Water Campaign, we were fulfilling CLC’s mission, and becoming conservation leaders.
In February 2018, Conservation Leadership Corps asked its members who would be interested in attending the Public Land Foundation’s (PLF) 4th Annual Student Congress later that summer. Upon expressing interest, two members were nominated by CLC, asked to apply by PLF, and later selected by the PLF to be 2 of 29 national participants in the 2018 Student Congress. CLC Alumni, Andre Virden and Brewster Johnson gladly accepted the opportunity to participate in this transformative training.

Held every other year, Student Congress educates youth about the history and current issues regarding public land management, engages students in providing input into the future of these land, and gives students the tools to apply to Federal jobs effectively. The first Student Congress was held in Boulder, CO in 2012. Since then, Student Congress has been held in Phoenix, AZ, Las Cruces, NM, and most recently Baker City, OR. Each year has had a theme of historical context. First, the 200th anniversary of the creation of the General Land Office, then the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act, then Federal Land Policy and Management Act, and this year it was the 50th anniversary of the National Trails System Act and the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. The program has now successfully over 100 students and recent graduates.

As mentioned, Student Congress 2018 was focused on the National Trails Systems Act and the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. It focused on improving designation criteria to better suit the multiple use mission of the BLM, ways to raise public awareness of the acts, the roles of rivers and trails in settling the United States, and the economic effect of public land designations on local communities. The week began with a trip to the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center where we learned the history of the area and the effects settlers had on the habitat and inhabitants already in the area. Then, we visited North Fork John Day Wild and Scenic River in the Umatilla National Forest and learned about the history of it and the public uses it receives now. We spent much of our remaining time in a loosely facilitated, highly interactive brainstorming session, which eventually led into drafting, revising, and finalizing recommendations we had for the BLM. The idea was to both inform students and to help them construct their opinions into useful recommendations. Please enjoy some personal anecdotes from Andre Virden and Brewster Johnson featured below.

Andre Virden
“I really enjoyed this opportunity to participate with the Bureau of Land Management, US Forest Service as well as the other federal and local entities present. Hearing about being able to work with a tribe to move tribal land into Trust land in just a few months was an incredible story. It is really amazing to see how many people are involved in all the decision making that goes into writing these policies, but I believe what I have learned is that if you get more than four to five people in one committee for some policy, law, etc. It will begin to move at
4th Annual Student Congress

a crawl or not at all. What I believe they could improve on is scaling it up a bit... To be frank I felt there was a lot of hand holding going on and over simplifications on subjects that would have been easier to just get right to the point and explain the programs without any sugar-coating. The main reason I applied to be able to go was because of the section in the application they had on working with tribal nations & communities, but once we were there, there was no tribal presence from any of the tribes in the area that I was being told they had such that their relations are not as good as what we were told and most likely to my disappointment nonexistent.

Brewster Johnson:
“I found the intergenerational difference in perspectives to be particularly insightful. Student Congress really fostered an environment where both students and mentors listened closely, genuinely valuing each other’s feedback. Students spoke a lot of opportunities, such as adopting a new social and technological framework to modernize designation and management of our National Rivers and Trails. Meanwhile, our mentors shared their knowledge of the history and politics of our National Rivers and Trails, as well as firsthand experience with designation and management. A major takeaway for me was how storytelling can be a powerful tool for conflict resolution between stakeholders when making decisions regarding designation and management. After establishing common ground, often with the aid of a trusted facilitator, sharing stories of the trail or river can be a great way for stakeholders to sympathize with and better understand each other’s perspective. Most importantly, it can also be an effective way for including under represented communities in the conversation. It was the takeaways like this that make Student Congress an unforgettable and invaluable experience.” All 29 students and our mentors all had unique experience going into this training, they all had experienced the training differently, but because of the interactive nature of it they all learned similar things. Overall, they learned the history and management of our federally protected river and trails, collaborated to synthesize useful recommendations for the BLM regarding their management, and they became better equipped to find employment that contributes to the management of them. Conservation Leadership Corps was proud to send these to this year and, likewise, they were extremely grateful. Who knows who will end up at Student Congress 2020?
On January 15th current CLC class six members Carl Meeker, Bradley Varner, and CLC President Hunter Nikolai attended the CLC’s “fall” field trip. The field trip began at the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources’ Disease Sampling Center in Black Earth, WI. Sampling Center Manager Jennifer Lois gave CLC students a presentation on the history of chronic wasting disease in Wisconsin, a tour of the facility and their processes, and even were able to see how tissue samples are taken from white-tailed deer!

After the tour, students grabbed a quick bite to eat at Culver’s and headed to the Aldo Leopold Center in Baraboo, WI. Their Education Coordinator Maria Kopecky gave CLC students a tour of the Aldo Leopold Shack and the Leopold Center. At the historical Shack site Maria provided an in-depth history lesson on Aldo Leopold and his philosophies, his family, and the Leopold’s successful and nations first attempts at land restoration. Carl, Bradley, and Hunter even read excerpts from Leopold’s *A Sand County Almanac* while standing on the very acreage Leopold was inspired by, along the Wisconsin River. Students then warmed up and toured the Aldo Leopold Center, one of the greenest buildings in the nation. Maria was able to point out many of the unique architectural features of the building that exemplify Leopold’s concept of a land ethic, which even used some of the trees Leopold and his family planted for the building materials!
A Wild Welcome to CLC Class 6

**Haylee Albrecht**

I am a junior at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, originally from Waukesha, Wisconsin. With this program I hope to become an even better leader and team member as well as learn to communicate the importance of conservation. In school I hold officer positions in the following clubs 350 Stevens Point, Adventure Club, and Land Conservation Society and I am studying land use and conservation management. However, I am planning on changing my major to something like wilderness therapy. With this study, I would incorporate my passion for conservation and preservation when it comes to wild areas and their many values. When I am done with school, I hope to pursue a career in wilderness therapy, outdoor education, or conservation management.

**Suhyoon Bae**

Suhyoon Bae is a sophomore at University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, majoring in Water Resources. She has studied Environmental Engineering Technology and worked at Environment Affairs Agency in South Korea as an assistant before transferring to UW-Stevens Point. This experience has developed her interest in conservation management, environmental problem, and wildlife. Shifting in conservation and environmental policy due to various reasons including change in climate and political system is also her concern. She has a desire to learn conservation policy and its impact on environment issue such as water pollution in Wisconsin and how the policy works. She looks forward to learning leadership skills, communication skills as well as ecological knowledge for conservation purposes through the Wisconsin Conservation Leadership Corps.
**Wyatt Benton**

Hello, my name is Wyatt Benton. I’m 21 years old and in my final year at the University of Wisconsin- Stevens Point where I’m studying Conservation Planning and Environmental Policy. I’m also minoring in Soil Science and becoming certified as a Wetland Professional Scientist. I grew up in eastern Wisconsin hunting, fishing, and trapping the wolf and rat river waterways and exploring the diverse wetland and fluvial ecosystems that make them up.

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**Natalie Bradish**

My name is Natalie Bradish and I am a junior at St. Norbert College, majoring in Organismal Biology and Minoring in Peace and Justice. I have been fond of this planet ever since arriving here, and that fondness has only grown as my understanding of the natural world has been expanded through academics and life experience. I am excited to connect with conservation leaders/enthusiasts through the Conservation Leadership Corps this year! Some of my other interests include traveling, reading, socializing, running, doing yoga, telling my dog how much I love him, and sleeping.

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**Adaela Jones**

I'm a sophomore at Northland College. I am majoring in Natural Resources with an emphasis on Ecological Restoration and a minor in Environmental Studies. I love everything about nature and want to dedicate my future to helping it as much as I can.
A Wild Welcome to CLC Class 6

Amanda Haddock

My name is Amanda Haddock and I study Geology at Northland College in Ashland, WI. I am passionate about making a difference in the world by means of environmental stewardship, social inclusion and accessibility. I reside in Virginia Beach, VA and am drawn to exploring the many ecosystems this country has to offer. After spending a three month term with American Conservation Experience, I want to continue my community and knowledge in the conservation field.

Jordan Kitchen

My name is Jordan Kitchen and I am a double major in environmental science and political science at UW River Falls. My majors indicate what I’m passionate about most, politics and the environment. I have worked in politics for a long time and I am currently the chair of the College Democrats of UW River Falls. I love to volunteer and go horse riding in my spare time. I own a horse named Levi who is my favorite pet. I am the type of person that will use any excuse to go outside and stay outside for as long as possible! I am very excited to be a part of this program.
John LaValley

My name is Jonathan James LaValley. I was born in Richland Center, Wisconsin and was raised and attended High School in Merrill, Wisconsin. I am currently attending the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater pursuing a bachelor’s degree in Biology with an Ecology Emphasis. I hope to pursue a career in conservation, and I am in the process of deciding if further education would be beneficial toward this goal. I hope that my experience in the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation’s Conservation Leadership Corps program will provide the opportunity to meet many interesting individuals and discover new opportunities.

Carl Meeker

Carl is a non-traditional student attending UW-River Falls where he will get his undergrad in Environmental Science. Upon graduation he is looking to volunteer with the Peace Corps, to work in communities internationally on local environmental challenges they are facing. After the Peace Corps he will continue his education by seeking a master’s in science, Technology, and Public Policy; followed by a PhD in Future Studies. He hopes that some of his grad work will take him internationally as he intends to go on to work in national and international policy. Since his return to school, he has worked to establish a new student organization whose mission is exploration of how science and technology are shaping our lives and the world we live in, and civic education, outreach, and engagement with the communities we interact with in our lives.
A Wild Welcome to CLC Class 6

Clarissa Rolefson

My name is Clarissa Rolefson I am a junior at Mount Mary University as a biology major with minors in environmental science and business. I enjoy music, hiking, playing volleyball, and adventuring with my friends. I am passionate about nature photography and capturing its beauty and essence to the best of my ability. I love to make people smile and laugh by spreading joy and positivity through everything I do and everyone I meet.

Bradley Varner

My name is Bradley Varner and I am originally from Chicago, Illinois. I currently attend St. Norbert College in De Pere, WI, majoring in Environmental Science and minoring in Business Administration. I am an avid outdoorsman, love to relax with a good movie, and enjoy going for walks with my fiancée. After my time at St. Norbert, I plan on moving to Florida to study law so that I can become an Environmental Lawyer, working in the ever-changing Gulf of Mexico and swamplands of central Florida. A few personal things are that I have 3 dogs, one brother, love all Chicago sports teams other than the Cubs, love to cook/eat, and enjoy long car rides with good music. My favorite thing to do is laugh and make other people smile, so my favorite movie genre is obviously comedy.
Where are They Now? CLC Alumni

Cody Kamrowski, January 2019

--Submitted by: Cody Kamrowski, CLC 1

My name is Cody Kamrowski and I’m a graduate of the first Conservation Leadership Corp Class and served as the organization’s first president. I’m also a graduate of the University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point’s College of Natural Resources where I studied Natural Resource Policy and Public Administration. Upon graduation I accepted a job in Northern Wisconsin as a Community Development and Natural Resource Planner working with Wisconsin’s 10 Northwestern counties and 5 Tribal Nations. Daily, I coordinate public hearings, committee meetings and collaborative sessions with a wide array of stakeholders and viewpoints to achieve an end goal. Recently, our office completed a two year long comprehensive Northwest Wisconsin Regional Flood Hazard Study that I was able to work on. This project analyzed a region-wide impact of large flood events, such as the ones that took place in July 2016 and June 2018. Other notable projects that I have been a part of is collecting data for the Lake Superior Water Trail Map. As the individual who collected the data for the Lake Superior Water Trail Map, I was tasked with traveling to every public access point to Lake Superior from the Wisconsin Shoreline and assess each location (and maybe I fished a little as well). A new planning model that I have been able to implement in my region is the Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) model. This planning model looks at various assets within a community and uses them within a strategic planning framework. What is special about this planning model in Northwest Wisconsin is the assets. The assets that the communities identify are always various natural resources which could be lakes, rivers, public lands, Lake Superior and many others and it is humbling to be able to help each community I work with preserve these assets.
Aside from work, I enjoy staying busy. I'm a volunteer firefighter serving my local community in a wide array of emergency response scenarios. I found this to be an extremely beneficial way to get to know a new community as well as make an impact. One of the most rewarding activities that I now partake in is teaching Hunters Education. As a volunteer instructor, I assist with 5 classes a year totaling around 130 new and exciting students each year. I would highly recommend finding a way to get the next generation involved with what you are passionate about, you will not be disappointed. I also love to be involved in environmental policy. Just this fall, I participated in a fly-in lobby session at the United States Capitol to urge members of Congress to reauthorize and fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund. This event included participants from throughout the United States representing a wide variety of political views and affiliations all with one goal. To reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

The Conservation Leadership Corps was more than just an amazing learning experience. I was also able to make some amazing friends while expanding my conservation experience. After I graduated the CLC, I joined the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation Board of Directors serving as an Associate Director and now District Director. To add to the excitement. This June I was elected to the Board of Directors of the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) as the youngest serving board member in the organization's 83-year history. On the NWF Board, I represent Wisconsin, Minnesota and Michigan. I bring this region's issues and perspective to the Board and we collaborate and execute actions and initiatives like a well-oiled machine. One initiative that I’m continually working with the Board on is developing CLC programs throughout the United States. Our Nation would gain a great deal to have impressive graduates such as yourselves. When I look back at my time as a CLC member, I think of the best time of my life. I hope all of you think the same and I’m thrilled that you have been a part of it!
New WWF Website!

The Wisconsin Wildlife Federation’s website got a new look!

One of our very own CLC members, Molly O’Grady, has served as an intern for the WWF for the past 7 months working on this new website design.

Check out the new WWF website: http://www.wiwf.org

The CLC page has a new look as well! Check it out here: http://www.wiwf.org/clc/

On the CLC page you can find our promotional video, newsletters, resolutions written by CLC members, and much more!!!

Fund the CLC

Donate your unused Scholarship Funds to the CLC Program

Are you part of an organization that has unused scholarship funds? Do you know of an organization that has unused scholarship funds?

We understand that many organizations have scholarship funds that never receive applicants therefore they have funds but no one to award these funds to. If you or an organization that you know would be interested in donating these funds to help sustain the Conservation Leadership Corps program, please contact the CLC Chair, Lil Pipping.

Treasurers’ Report

As of February 1st, 2019, the Conservation Leadership Corps bank account balance is $4,656.31. These funds can be used for field trips, awards, fundraising events, travel expenses, and all other CLC needs not already covered by the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation. We are always looking for new fundraising ideas, so please contact me if you have any suggestions or want to get involved.

Sawyer Boldt
CLC 6 Treasurer

Wisconsin Wildlife Federation Calendars

Wisconsin Wildlife Federation Annual Calendar Fundraiser

If you or someone you know is interested in purchasing a Wisconsin Wildlife Federation Calendar or if you are unfamiliar with the calendar raffle please visit: https://wiwf.org/conservation-calendar-raffle-program/. 
**CLC founders**

**George Meyer** (*Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, Madison, Wisconsin*) assisted in the founding of the Conservation Leadership Corps and is the Executive Director for the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation. He worked for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources for 32 years, including 22 years in Senior Management with 8 years as Secretary. George taught conservation and environmental policy at Lawrence University for two years. He has served as Executive Director of the Federation since 2003.

**Lil Pipping** (*Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin*) is the Committee Chair for the Conservation Leadership Corps and is an active member of the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation (WWF). She is a past president for the WWF and is the only woman to have held presidency of the Sheboygan County Conservation Association (SCCA). Currently, she is President of Tri-County Sportswomen’s Club. She is also President of the Friends of the Broughton, a non-profit dedicated to the conservation of Sheboygan Marsh. In 2002, she was honored but twice as the Conservationist of the Year for the WWF and the Sheboygan County Conservation Association. In 2009, she was inducted into the Sheboygan County Conservation Hall of Fame and is still the only woman to hold that honor. In 2016, she was awarded the CLC Mentor of the year, as well as the Wisconsin Affiliate Volunteer of Year by the National Wildlife Federation.
Interested in joining the CLC?

---The deadline date for applications is **May 31st, 2019**.

Please answer the following questions and limit your response to **TWO pages in length**.

1. What is your personal and professional interest in conservation?
2. What would you say are the high points in your life related to conservation, either from an educational, personal, or organizational standpoint?
3. Why do you want to be a member of the Conservation Leadership Corps with the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation? What would you like to get out of the experience?
4. Why is the concept of a Wisconsin Conservation Leadership Corps important?
5. What role do you see conservation organizations have in the future of conservation in Wisconsin?
6. Will you be willing and able to attend a majority of the training sessions?

**Background and Contact Information-**
Please include this information as part of your application:

- **Name:**

- **Street Address:**

- **City, State and Zip Code:**

- **Email Address:**

- **Telephone Number:**

- **Present School:**

- **Year in School (please specify whether high school or college):**

**Please include a name and contact information for a reference related to your conservation interest.** The reference can be a parent, teacher or other adult that you have had contact with related to conservation. **The reference is a very important part of the application.**

Applications, preferably electronically, should be submitted to WWF Leadership Corps Coordinator, at **CLC.WWF.Coordinator@gmail.com** or sent through mail to the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, 213 N Main Street, Suite 100, PO Box 460, Poynette, WI 53955-0460. **The Deadline is MAY 31st, 2019**