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

Another year is in the books as the sixth CLC class graduated at the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation’s Annual Meeting on April 13th, 2019! I want to congratulate each of the graduates, and I wish them nothing but success in their futures. The main goal of this year’s Executive Committee was to implement successful fundraisers to continue to develop and expand the CLC program. We held three fundraisers – a t-shirt sale, silent auction, and gun raffle – at this year’s Annual Meeting, raising a mere $2200. Thank you to everyone who contributed to the CLC!

The Annual Meeting also brought about the election of the 2019-2020 CLC Executive Committee members. The election was very exciting and even resulted in a tie for one of the positions, a first for the program. I would like to welcome the following Executive Committee members elected by CLC class six and CLC alumni in attendance: Wyatt Benton, President (class 6); Carl Meeker, Vice President (class 6); Bradley Varner, Treasurer (class 6); Jordan Kitchen, Secretary (class 6); Sioux Collom, Publicist (class 2); and Nicole Loeffler, Program Director (class 4). Clarissa Rolefson, a member of CLC class 6, was hired to take over the CLC Coordinator position for the 2019-2020 year.

This group of students, and all of their hard work, is very driven to be leaders in the conservation arena. I am very excited to see their ideas!

I could keep writing about this group of students, but I will let the remainder of the newsletter do the talking. If you missed the resolutions presented by this year’s CLC class, check them out at https://wiwf.org/board-resolutions/. It has been a pleasure to serve as the CLC Executive Committee President. Thank you for reading and enjoy the newsletter!

-Hunter Nikolai, CLC President
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.

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 (lpippin@wi.rr.com).

Follow Us:

Want to learn more? On the CLC webpage you can find our promotional video, newsletters, policy resolutions written by CLC members, CLC applications, and much more!!!

Visit us here: http://www.wiwf.org/clc/

Watch the CLC video:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OKHNmPOa keg

Follow us on Facebook:
Wisconsin Conservation Leadership Corps

Wisconsin Wildlife Federation Calendars

These calendars feature a variety of prizes with a value over $100,000.00!

Purchase a calendar for only $20.00 today! 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-.
CLC Session 3 Recap

Session 3: Policy Resolution Development

--Submitted by: Monica Banaszak, CLC 6 Coordinator

From February 15th-16th, 2019, CLC 6 participated in their 3rd Session at the Central Wisconsin Environmental Station in Amherst Junction, WI. The evening of the 15th, the students stayed at the Walker Lodge where important CLC matters were discussed. The students were informed of the variety of opportunities available to be active in the CLC and with the WWF after they graduate from the program as well as what the expectations will be when they attend the 4th and final session of the program at the WWF Annual Meeting in Wisconsin Rapids, WI coming up in April. I really hope all, if not most, of the students take advantage of the opportunities the CLC and WWF can bring to them. These students continue to impress me each time I work with them and I see them doing great things in the future.

After business was taken care of, we had social time. The ladies scoured the land for ingredients to make S’mores (peanut butter s’mores, no doubt), we had an intense game of ‘Hangman’ where we learned what some of our favorite movies, plants, fish and mammals are. The following morning, we started our day off with breakfast at the Sunset Lodge. Afterwards we had an introduction of our professionals who would be joining us for the day then jumped right into learning what a resolution is and how to write one. The remainder of the morning and early afternoon consisted of our students working in their groups to work on their policy resolutions with their assigned professionals. The day ended with team building activities coordinated by CWES. It was so much fun and all who participated enjoyed themselves.

CLC Session 4 Recap

Another annual meeting, another amazing end to a year

--Submitted by: Monica Banaszak, CLC 6 Coordinator

On April 12th, 2019 CLC Class 6 arrived for their final session. Friday night students enjoyed a pizza dinner before a busy night of activities. Alumni and current students socialized before our traditional Friday night speaker. This year we had the honor of having a presentation by Christine Thomas, Dean of the College of Natural Resources at the University of Wisconsin- Stevens Point. We also had Mark Smith from the National Wildlife federation speak to us about the invasion of Asian Carp. Afterwards the CLC held elections for the next year’s executive committee. Our newly elected officers are Wyatt Benton- President, Carl Meeker- Vice President, Sioux Collum- Publicist, Nicole Loeffler- Event Coordinator, Jordan Kitchen- Secretary, Bradley Varner- Treasurer and Hunter Nikolai will hold the Past President position seeing that he was the President for the previous year.

On Saturday, April 13th, 2019, both current CLC students and alumni presented their policy resolutions to the WWF. Everyone did an amazing job! The CLC would like to give a special thank you to The Izaak Walton League for making a donation to the CLC scholarship fund once more. At lunch the CLC presented our ‘Mentor of the Year’ award to Todd Ambs. At the evening banquet the students received their scholarships and certificate of completion from the program.

It was another exciting year in the CLC and we are looking forward to seeing what the seventh year of the Conservation Leadership Corps brings.
Meet Your 2019-2020 Executive Committee!

Wyatt Benton - President
My name is Wyatt Benton and I am a graduating senior at the University of Wisconsin –Stevens Point majoring in Land Use Planning and minoring in Soil Science. I am 21 years old and spend whatever time isn’t at work or school hunting and fishing my way across the state. I grew up in Greenville, WI and spent most of my childhood running tralines and learning to hunt and fish. In the summer I spent time in Manitowish Waters fishing and attempting not to destroy grandpa’s fishing boat. I am excited to continue with the CLC as president as this program was a true stepping stone in my professional career and I hope to give that opportunity to the future conservation leaders behind me.

Carl Meeker – Vice President
My name is Carl, from River Falls, WI. I am a 34 year old non-traditional student at the University of Wisconsin - River Falls majoring in Environmental Science, and will be graduating in the Spring of 2020. Upon graduation I am looking to serve in the Peace Corps working on environmental and conservation issues before going on for a graduate degree in Science, Technology, and Environmental Policy. My goal is to work at the National and International levels on environmental policy issues. When I am not doing academic work, I enjoy yoga and running, meditation, reading, and getting to spend time with my cats.

Jordan Kitchen – Secretary
Jordan Kitchen is a senior at the University of Wisconsin River Falls. Jordan currently serves as the secretary for the CLC. She is a double major in environmental science and political science. She aspires to someday work in environmental policy, enjoys horse riding and spending time outdoors.

Would YOU like to become a member of the CLC Executive Committee?
If you are a current CLC student or Alumni, you can apply for a 2020-2021 Executive Committee position at the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation Annual Meeting, April 2020. If you cannot make the meeting, please send your material to CLC President, Wyatt Benton, by April 1st, 2019.

Bradley Varner - Treasurer
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.
**Meet Your 2019-2020 Executive Committee!**

**Nicole Loeffler – Program Coordinator**
Hi my name is Nicole Loeffler. I was born and raised in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. I recently graduated with a degree in Environmental Education and Interpretation from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. Currently, I am a Resource Assistant for the United States Forest Service working out of the Neighborhood House of Milwaukee. I enjoy hiking, kayaking, and traveling whenever possible. I have a passion for working with youth and helping them develop a connection to the natural world. I believe it’s important for everyone to remember that nature is everywhere, even in urban areas, and no one should miss out on the opportunity to explode it, no matter your upbringing.

**Sioux Collom - Publicist**
Hi, my name is Sioux Collom and I live and grew up in Southwestern Wisconsin in a small town named Eagle. I work for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources in an area known as Kettle Moraine State Forest Southern Unit. I started working for the DNR immediately after graduating high school since I had grown to know and love the area I had a passion for conservation and sustainability. I’ve been working for them ever since while gradually continuing my education.

**Clarisa Rolefson – CLC Coordinator**
Hello, I am Clarissa Rolefson. I am a graduate from CLC 6 and am currently a senior at Mount Mary University studying Biology with emphasis in Environmental Science. I also, have a business minor; this gives me a unique perspective to situations and has given me valuable connections and financial information. Throughout my life I have always enjoyed spending time in nature and find peace and serenity within it. Over my college career, I have had wonderful internship opportunities that have combined my love for science, photography, conservation, and educating children and the public. Having studied abroad in Costa Rica, I have experienced the benefits of ecotourism, sustainability, and conservation firsthand and want to help Wisconsin move towards a more sustainable future.

**Hunter Nikolai – Past President**
Hunter is from Kenosha, WI and gained a strong appreciation for the outdoors through family hunting and fishing traditions. He is a graduate of Conservation Leadership Corps Class 5 (2017-2018) and served as CLC president from 2018-2019. After graduating from UW-Madison with a Bachelor’s degree in wildlife ecology, he was hired as a Hunter Education and R3 Assistant with the Wisconsin DNR. He spent the summer of 2018 as a seasonal water patrol officer with the Iowa DNR (photo) and has aspirations to become a full time conservation warden in the future. In his free time, Hunter enjoys attending Badger football games, visiting Washington Island, and fishing or hunting with his family. Hunter is excited to work with like-minded individuals that can empower the next generation in conservation leadership in Wisconsin and beyond!
Where Are They (Alumni) Now?

Where are They Now? - Justin Mueller August 2019
--Submitted by: Justin Mueller, CLC 2, Served as President and Past President

My name is Justin Mueller and I am a graduate from the second Conservation Leadership Corps. I served as the third president of the Conservation Leadership Corps and also an associate director for the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation. I graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point with a degree in Resource Management-Law Enforcement. After College I worked as a Conservation Warden with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. I am currently a Police Officer with the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay and continue to grow in the law enforcement profession. I currently excel at traffic enforcement specifically OWI enforcement and my department has chosen me to become a Drug Recognition Expert for the department.

I currently reside in Denmark, WI with my fiancé with two dogs (Addie and Callie). We are both into hunting and fishing. I am currently training Addie to be an antler shed dog and also a waterfowl dog. We both were fortunate to harvest a deer this year. I enjoy speaking to the upcoming generation of outdoor enthusiasts and seeing them tell me I helped them make a decision to go into the natural resource field.

The Conservation Leadership Corps has helped me in so many ways like being a team leader, organizing fundraiser, public speaking and so much more. I am looking forward to seeing where my skills take me that I learned from the Conservation Leadership Corps. Another great thing about the Conservation Leadership Corps is the networking that I have been a part of and how people know each other. Working at UW-Green Bay I encourage the students to apply for the Conservation Leadership Corps because it has helped me in so many ways and will help them the same. I hope every CLC Alumni member has the opportunity to look back at the program and see how influential the program was for them.

Where are They Now? - Hunter Nikolai August 2019
--Submitted by: Hunter Nikolai, CLC 4, served as President and is current Past President

Hello again! My name is Hunter Nikolai, and I am a graduate of the fifth class of the Conservation Leadership Corps. I served as the CLC Executive Committee President from 2018 to 2019, and I will serve as the Past President until 2020. I cannot say enough about the CLC program and the success it has seen in a short six years. I was hesitant at first and unsure of what I was getting myself into as retired Chief Conservation Warden Randy Stark immersed the class into the realms of leadership during our first session. Though he took us all out of our comfort zones that day, he brought out each student’s potential to be conservation leaders of tomorrow. And well, from there, the rest is history. The CLC program has some of, if not the best, conservation policy instructors and mentors in the nation. Lil Pipping, George Meyer, and the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation Board of Directors created a core of current and retired professionals with the will to share their knowledge and experience. I am extremely grateful for the assets that these mentors have instilled within me over the past two years, and I know that they will continue to provide me and other CLC members with the resources to be conservation leaders!

Story Continues on Page 7...
Where Are They (Alumni) Now?

I recently graduated in the spring of 2019 with a bachelor’s degree in wildlife ecology and a certificate in environmental studies. Two days after graduating, I began joint positions with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources as a Hunter Education and R3 (Recruit, Retain, and Reactivate) Program Assistant. I am very excited to provide volunteer Hunter Education instructors, Learn to Hunt mentors, and Hunt for Food mentors with the resources they need to establish the hunters of tomorrow. As many of you may already know, the overall number of hunters across Wisconsin and the Nation is declining, leaving it to sportsmen and woman alike to provide solutions to the future of natural resources management. As a lifetime hunter and angler, I urge you to take someone new fishing and hunting! It may just keep the rich outdoor recreation traditions of Wisconsin alive.

Aside from my involvement with the CLC, I enjoy watching sports and spending time with my family, friends, and girlfriend. I grew up in the Kenosha area, but I spend a lot of my free time on Washington Island at the tip of the Door County Peninsula.

This is where I spend many of my fall weekends bow hunting, catching up with relatives during the 9-day gun season, and enjoying the great outdoors on what is left of my ancestors’ settlement. I am extremely lucky to have had the resources necessary to hunt and fish growing up, and I hope that I am able to provide these resources to my children and anyone else intrigued to give it a try. Where I am now is not where I will be in a year, five years, or even twenty years from now, thanks to something I heard that has stuck with me since joining the CLC. It went a little something like this. People are not afraid of change, but rather, they are afraid of loss. The ways of hunting and fishing may not be what they once were, and they may not be as they are today twenty years from now. But thanks to you, your father, your ancestors, and your children, hunting and fishing is not lost. I hope that you enjoyed reading a little about my life.

Wonders of Wisconsin

Baird Creek, Wisconsin

--Submitted by: Jordan Kitchen, CLC 6

Growing up in an outdoorsy family and going on camping trips every summer means I have visited many fantastic hiking places throughout my life. However, my favorite natural recreational spot in Wisconsin is, ironically, in the same city I grew up in. Baird Creek is located on the east side of Green Bay, Wisconsin. It is only a two-minute walk from my cousins’ house so my family and I have been hiking and exploring Baird Creek my entire life. I still frequent the area when I come back to visit my family. Baird Creek is a beautiful forested park with both paved and unpaved trails along the water. It is a perfect spot for fishing, hiking, jogging, dog walking, picnics, photography, and so much more. Whenever I go, (normally accompanied by a dog or two), I get a good workout as well as a trip down memory lane. My childhood friends and family spent many hours exploring nature,
climbing trees, collecting rocks, catching frogs and crawfish, and endless hours of playing in the park. We went year-round. On hot day it was fun to wade in the creek and during the winter we slid down hills and tried our best to ice skate. This park was the perfect lure to get my siblings, cousin, and myself outside experiencing nature as kids. We all grew up with a better understanding and appreciation for the natural world. In fact, most of us are currently in college studying fields such as biology, conservation, and environmental science. Although it may not be a national attraction, Baird Creek holds a special place in my heart and is therefore my favorite natural place in Wisconsin.

**Wolf River and Rat River Wildlife area**

--Submitted by: Wyatt Benton, CLC 6

The state of Wisconsin offers numerous opportunities to explore exciting new ecosystems. From kayaking the shores of Lake Superior to fly fishing the trout streams in Region and everything in between, we are truly blessed with our vast wealth of natural places. One commonly missed (or avoided) ecosystem are our wetlands. My personal favorites are the Wolf River Wildlife Area and the Rat River Wildlife Area starting just south of Hortonville, WI. The Rat River flows through Outagamie and Winnebago county into the Wolf River just before Lake Poygan. These wildlife areas combined are roughly 5,800 acres of state-owned land and offer numerous recreational opportunities from hunting deer and turkeys in the hardwood bottoms to canoe and kayaking through the marshes. The Wiouwash State Trail cuts through the property offering hiking and biking, wildlife viewing, horseback riding, and snowmobiling. And if geocaching is your game, I know for a fact there is one hidden on the far east side of the Rat River Wildlife Area, but I won’t give any more hints than that! The marshes are gorgeous especially at sunrise and sunset. The opportunity to see various species of waterfowl, furbearers, and more while listening to the frog’s croak and cranes in the distance are all the more reason to visit.

I was lucky enough to be raised around these marshes, growing up running traplines out of the old family minivan and testing my waterfowl hunting chops, I learned to love the seclusion and beauty of our wetlands. The sounds and sights are unique and it’s very possible to get lost following the wandering track of a mink in the fresh snow, tracking a canoe through the narrow passageways of the marsh, or following the gobble of a far-off turkey so bring a compass and go explore!
**Why I Joined the CLC**

---Submitted by: Wyatt Benton, CLC 6

I was lucky enough to hear about the Conservation Leadership Corp from an individual I greatly look up to, my aunt, Sandra Benton. I came into the trainings with no expectations, I had a basic understanding of what we would be doing but little more. As crazy as it may sound, I came out of that first training a new person. And everyone after that raised the bar even further. My public speaking and leadership skills soared, I became more confident in myself and was able to practice and learn with fellow students in an open and friendly environment.

Not only did I get to meet a group of future conservationists I am happy to call friends, I was given the opportunity to meet various mentors and network extensively. We had mock meetings with policy makers, learned persuasion skills and how to speak clearly and respectfully to policy makers, had the opportunity to research and draft resolutions with conservationists, and so many more activities and teachings that I will remember throughout my career in land planning and conservation.

The CLC has advanced me as a person both in my personal and professional life and I am so happy I get to continue as the President for the 2019-2020 class.

---Sawyer Boldt

CLC 6 Treasurer (2018-2019)

**#StopAsianCarp**

As Asian Carp continue to spread throughout the country, the waterways we love are in danger. As filter feeders with no native predators, they reproduce rapidly and consume the base of the food chain, starving out forage, native and sport fish. Lake Michigan is at risk.

The Brandon Road Lock and Dam, about 50 miles south of Chicago, is our best opportunity to provide a long-term structural deterrent to Asian carp. Like and share. Spread the word. Congress has the power to approve and fund this key barrier before it’s too late.

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**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 (2018-2019)

The CLC is made possible by generous funding from the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, the National Wildlife Federation, the Izaak Walton League, and those that donate to our annual auction. We are always looking for ways to Fund the Conservation Leadership Program. If you have any ideas or are interested in donating, please email our 2019-2020 Treasurer, Brad Varner, at Bradley.Varner@snc.edu.
Interested in being a leader in conservation?

Interested in having your voice heard on conservation issues by Wisconsin and National policymakers?

The Wisconsin Wildlife Federation has created a Conservation Leadership Training Program just for you!

The Wisconsin Wildlife Federation (WWF) is in the process of completing its fourth year as an exciting program to assist in the development of future conservation leaders in Wisconsin, known as the Wisconsin Conservation Leadership Corps. (CLC). WWF has based the CLC on a highly successful and similar project developed by the Conservation Federation of Missouri, our counterpart organization.

The CLC is designed to provide expert training for seniors in high school along with college freshmen, sophomores and juniors to develop leadership skills and techniques to allow students the ability to analyze as well as develop conservation policies in his or her subject of interest. Students involved will also gain experience advocating their conservation resolutions at the Annual Meeting for WWF. Successfully written and presented conservation resolutions may be adopted by WWF to serve as official polices.

Training will be provided by current and former natural resource professionals in both public, non-profit as well as private sectors. Students will be presented with real-world experience and will receive feedback from professionals with the conservation policy process. Such interactions will be valuable to participants in relation to school success, future career aspirations, and involvement in organizations.

It is anticipated that the program will take place during the 2020-2021 academic year. Events will be scheduled for four weekends throughout the year. Conservation resolution presentations conducted by those involved would be made at the Annual Meeting of the Wildlife Federation in April 2020. Selected CLC candidates are encouraged to attend three of the four events. All expenses encountered while participating in the CLC program will be covered by WWF. At the successful completion of the year, each participant will receive a Certificate of Accomplishment for the training program, a letter of commendation for their resume portfolio and a $250 scholarship to advance their continuing education.

Interested CLC candidates should fill out the application on this page and send it to the CLC Coordinator, at CLC.WWF.Coordinator@gmail.com by May 31st, 2020. Candidates will be selected by June 15th, 2020. All applicants will be notified of the results. More detailed information on the program will be provided to those selected over the 2020 summer.
Interested in joining the CLC?

CLC APPLICATION

---The deadline date for applications is May 31st, 2020.

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.
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