



Working towards a sustainable environment and economy since 1995

2018 ANNUAL REPORT





What is WEI?

In January 1996, a diverse group of leaders came together to launch a new organization. With the idea to bring together business, government, and nonprofit organizations to improve Wisconsin’s environment, economy and quality of life, the Wisconsin Environmental Initiative was born.

The founders recognized that state and local governments, businesses and environmental advocates often have more in common than in conflict. By bringing these groups together in programs, policy forums, and learning events, WEI focused on common values and ways to improve Wisconsin’s environment and economy.

Led by an energetic board and dedicated staff, the organization has held many forums over the years, covering diverse topics such as Doing Well by Doing Good, Green & Growing Strategies, Green Tier Advantage, WI Bioindustry, Quality Urban Development, Animal Agriculture, Energy and Environmental Policy, Shoreland Development, Green Building and Profit-Driven Environmental Management.

World-class speakers including renowned architect Bill McDonough, Ray Anderson, CEO of Interface and green business guru Joel Makower have keynoted WEI’s events, bringing national and global perspectives to state concerns.

In addition, WEI’s nationally recognized Green Built Home program, Main Street Green, and other work to develop green and growing initiatives demonstrate that market-based, affordable programs can help stakeholders evaluate their operations, set goals, and take specific actions towards environmental, social and economic sustainability.

WEI Board of Directors

- Richard A. Heinemann, Chair Boardman + Clark
- Jeff Simon, Vice Chair J. Simon Design Build
- Gregory Armstrong, Treasurer
- Director Emeritus, UW-Madison Arboretum
- Joann Kelly, Secretary Madison Gas & Electric
- Tom Boldt. The Boldt Company
- Tom Larson Wisconsin Realtors Association
- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
- 1000 Friends of Wisconsin
- John Imes, Executive Director WEI

New WEI Website and Effective Social Media Outreach

WEI’s website at www.weigogreener.org features newly updated content and responsive design for ease of navigation. Thanks to Big Rose web design and Hoot Communications for donating the website design and production.

WEI’s social media posts reached over 60,000 people in 2018 with 27 posts resulting in over 5,000 link clicks or post engagements, 571 likes, and 576 new followers on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram

Wisconsin Green Growth



Today, it’s even more important for stakeholders across Wisconsin to collaborate and establish a solid new direction — one that integrates a green growth strategy to create more prosperous, secure and sustainable communities, address climate change and respect our heritage and tradition of environmental stewardship. WEI works with stakeholders to craft innovative strategies and develop stewardship tools that deliver credible market distinction and better environmental results. Here’s a recap and highlights of WEI’s groundbreaking work in 2018:

Executive Director John Imes attended GreenBiz 18, the premier annual event for sustainable business leaders with more than 1,000 influential professionals from the world’s largest companies, government, and NGOs — to connect and explore successful new directions, technologies, systems and policies to build the clean economy. WisPolitics/WisBusiness highlighted John’s blog recapping the event for readers statewide.

In his work with Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts & Letters as part of the statewide Climate and Energy Leadership Network, John serves on the steering committee and moderated a panel on Workforce Development at the Academy’s “Leading the Charge” Summit at UW Eau Claire.

John was also quoted in a WisBusiness.com story on the possible environmental impacts of Foxconn related housing developments, new infrastructure, road expansion, and commercial construction. “The concern would be if we take the same old, low-road approach to economic growth that diminishes the environment, hurts workers and our communities,” he said. Previously, John challenged the state and Foxconn to “Take the High Road” in a guest column published in Wisconsin State Journal, Milwaukee Business Journal and WisPolitics/WisBusiness news sources.

WEI helped distribute the Greater Madison Vision Survey to collect input on how the Capital Region should grow and develop, featuring four different futures that consider many facets of life in Madison, including transportation, roads, water, and the environment. Over 9,200 people completed the survey and the results reflect a shared vision and plan that will help guide how the region grows over the next 25 years. John also serves on the Greater Madison Vision Steering Committee.

WEI attended Verge 18, a three-conference event packed with more than 2500 attendees including leaders from companies and utilities, city and regional governments, policymakers, NGOs, solution providers, and startups — all focused on finding ways to accelerate the clean economy through technology and sustainability. WisPolitics/WisBusiness highlighted John’s recap of each day for their readers statewide.

Finally, WEI is one of more than 3,600 Signatories of We Are Still In a movement that represents over one-third of the U.S. population and \$6.2 trillion of the U.S. economy. This major commitment to climate action and emission reduction goals includes more than 2,100 companies, many that are small or medium-sized firms, but several large Wisconsin corporations are listed, including Johnson Controls, Kohler, and Organic Valley.

Main Street Green



WEI works with the Morgridge Center for Public Service Badger Volunteers to support Main Street Green initiatives and helped the 100 locally-owned independent businesses on Monroe Street “Survive and Thrive” during major street reconstruction. WEI placed attractively lit signs in surrounding neighborhoods to show that businesses were open during road construction. WEI also participated in the Monroe Street Festival to celebrate the new Crazy Legs Plaza featuring low-impact clean, clear waters strategies, including a rain garden to capture stormwater before it enters waterways. The plaza provides a gateway into the Dudgeon Monroe Neighborhood, Vilas Neighborhood, Regent Neighborhood and demonstrates how green infrastructure can be used to reduce flooding and manage stormwater runoff.

Green Built Home



Green Built Home is a national award-winning building initiative that reviews and certifies new homes and multifamily projects that meet sustainable building and energy standards. Energy efficient, eco-friendly building projects are continuing to gain momentum and WEI provides up-to-date information to make the most informed decisions. Since 1999, WEI has worked with stakeholders to Green Built Home certify more than 18,000 homes and multi-family units throughout the state. In 2018, over 2,000 homes and WHEDA low-income housing units were built or remodeled to WEI’s Green Built Home standards.

Clean Clear Waters



A key challenge to protecting and enhancing our Madison area chain of lakes are better management of stormwater runoff. Run-off causes soil erosion and can contain contaminants like motor oils and grease, pesticides, fertilizers, and deicing salt that is harmful to waterways. Each of us can play an important role in improving our lakes’ quality and become better environmental stewards by implementing best practices in our landscaping, lawn care and related efforts to reduce run-off.

With the growing concern about extreme rainfall events, flooding, and stormwater runoff, WEI served on several clean water committees in 2018 including the Lake Wingra Partner Focus Group, where John advocated for low-impact development strategies, best practices in erosion control and the use of green infrastructure to reduce flooding and capture stormwater runoff before it enters waterways.

Past Program Successes

Over the years, WEI has developed programs and forums that give stakeholders the opportunity to learn more about sustainable strategies. Wisconsin can gain a competitive market advantage while protecting the state’s resources and environment. Some examples of WEI’s past programs and events include:

- Doing Well by Doing Good: What happens in Wisconsin if we get this right?
- Germany-Wisconsin Green Jobs in the New Europe
- Green Tier Advantage
- Travel Green Wisconsin
- Green & Growing Bioindustry Tour
- Wisconsin Green & Growing
- New Directions in Environmental Governance
- Energy Fact-Finding Trip to Germany
- Energy Policy Forum
- Environmental Policy Forum
- Profit-Driven Environmental Management
- Agriculture and Land Use
- Shoreland Development
- Quality Urban Development



Dear Friends,

Since 1996, WEI has brought together leading stakeholders representing state and local government, businesses and environmental organizations to focus on common values and finding ways to improve Wisconsin’s environment and economy.

With the help of generous donations, sponsorships and effective partnerships, WEI has become a driving force in support of a green and growing strategy — one that respects our heritage and tradition of environmental stewardship while embracing a more collaborative, practical and effective way forward.

WEI cannot do this important work without your help. As a non-profit environmental organization, we rely on membership donations to drive our mission.

Today I ask you to become a member and make a fully tax-deductible contribution to WEI as an individual donor. With your donation, WEI can continue its innovative programs, partnerships and learning events to revitalize the state and move Wisconsin in a solid, new direction.

Thank you very much for your consideration and support of WEI.

Sincerely,

John Imes, Executive Director

**WEI’s Annual Report is available to the public on our website at www.weigoreener.org*

Source of Funds

Memberships and Grants	\$15,183
Program/Other	\$175,753
Total Income	\$190,936

Uses of Funds

Programs	\$116,966
Fundraising	\$5,500
Administration	\$20,525
Total Expenses	\$143,021

2017 Corporate and Foundation Contributors

- Madison Gas & Electric
- Boldt
- WisPolitics.com
- Tim O’Brien Homes
- Veridian Homes
- Commonwealth Development
- Cardinal Capital Management
- Boardman & Clark
- Bielinski Homes
- General Capital
- JT Klein
- Herman & Kittle Properties
- Horizon Development
- Stone House Development



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