

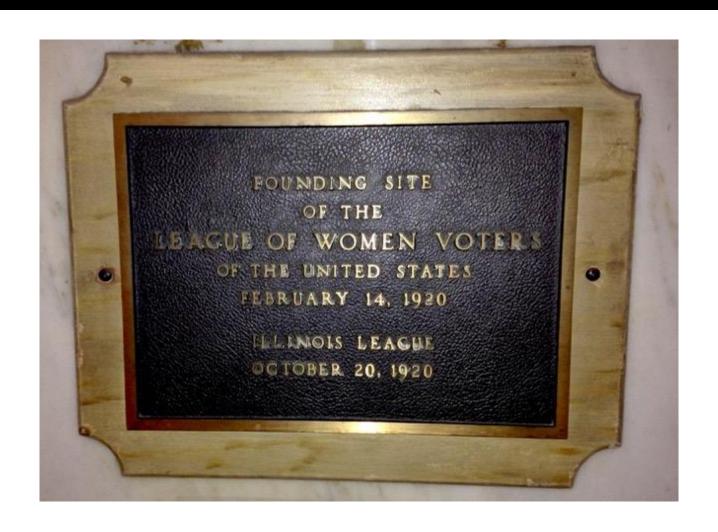
#### LWV Upper Mississippi River Region Inter-League Organization

LWV CMAL May 20, 2023





#### Joining today from Chicago (in the Mississippi River Basin)















#### **Topics today**

- What is an ILO? (Some are very different from CMAL)
- Some stuff on hydrology and nutrient science
- LWV UMRR's operation and work
  - Mission
  - Accomplishments
  - Tools



#### What is LWV UMRR?

To start with, it's the League of Women Voters Upper Mississippi River Region Inter League Organization.

(LWV UMRR, for short.)



The base of League of Women Voters is comprised of local Leagues, mostly serving a given city or county. Local Leagues work on local issues, run candidate forums and register voters.





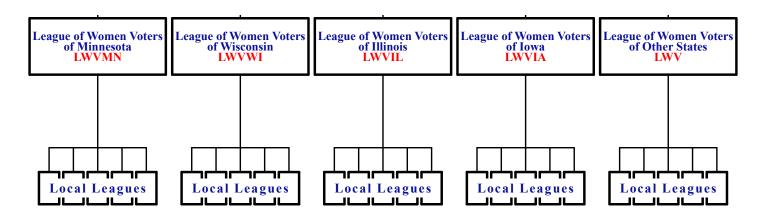




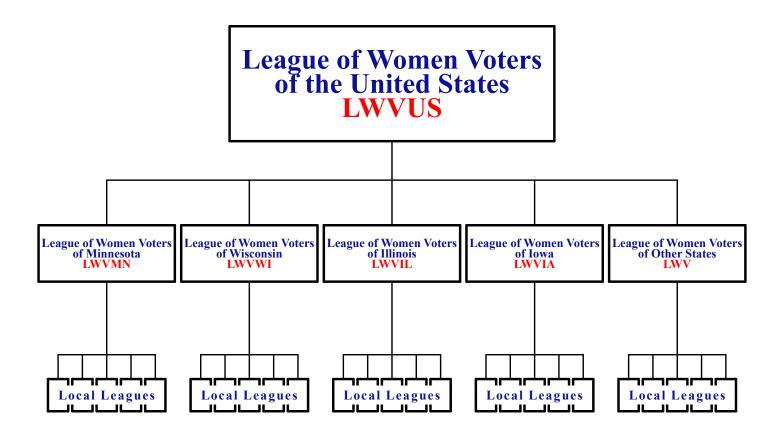




## State Leagues tie together the local Leagues, and advocate on state issues.





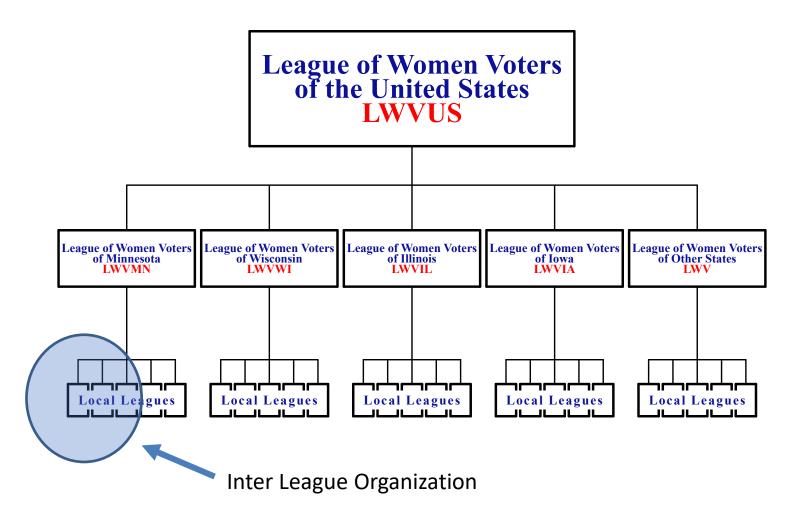




In some cases, local Leagues band together to address particular issues or the needs of particular areas.

This is what we call an Inter League Organization, it looks like this:







### There are about 20 Inter League Organizations nationwide.

Los Angeles County ILO	Orange County ILO	San Diego County ILO
The Bay Area ILO	Lake Michigan ILO	Cook County ILO
Lake County ILO	Detroit Metro Area IIO	Council Metro Area ILO
Bergen County ILO	Monmouth County ILO	Morris County ILO
Nassau County ILO	Suffolk County ILO	Westchester County ILO
Delaware County ILO	Southeastern PA Region ILO	National Capitol Area ILO



# Two Inter League Organizations are larger, incorporating Leagues from multiple states.

These are LWV Lake Michigan Region and LWV Upper Mississippi River Region.







#### LWY LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® LAKE MICHIGAN REGION

**Incorporated** in 1966

Lake Michigan Advocacy & Education | Leagues of Women Voters of Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin and Michigan

About LMLWV Action Focus: STORMWATER Illinois Indiana Michigan Wisconsin Additional Resources **Great Lakes Compact** 



#### LWV Upper Mississippi River Region

- Our territory is the river basin, from the Headwaters in northern Minnesota to southern Illinois, and all tributaries
- We focus on water quality and quantity

*Incorporated in 2015* 





LWV UMRR is comprised of 64 local Leagues and four State Leagues in the Upper Mississippi basin.



#### **League of Women Voters** of the United States **LWVUS** League of Women Voters of Illinois League of Women Voters League of Women Voters League of Women Voters of Minnesota League of Women Voters of Wisconsin of Other States LWV LWVMN LWVWI **LWVIA** LWVIL عالمبهالمبهالمبهال Local Leagues Local Leagues Local Leagues Local Leagues Local Leagues



## Like the State Leagues, LWV UMRR reports to LWV US.

LWV UMRR's purpose is to educate and advocate for the Upper Mississippi.



## Many common issues unite Leagues in the Upper Mississippi Watershed

- Nutrients flowing into the Gulf have created a 'dead zone' where anoxic conditions affect fisheries, shellfish and shrimp; poor water quality also affects wildlife along the river's route
- Transport of hazardous materials on roadways, by rail or on the water, can threaten water supplies for thousands of people
- Aquatic invasive species, such as invasive silver and big-head carp are found along the river
- Also commercial navigation, ecosystem restoration, water quality, flood risk management, water supply, and other water resource issues



#### LWV UMRR ILO Purpose (from by-laws)

The purposes of the **LWV-UMRR ILO** are to promote:

- -public understanding and active, informed citizen participation in evidence-based decision-making as essential elements of responsible and responsive management of the natural resources of the Upper Mississippi River Region;
- resource conservation, science-based stewardship, and long-range planning for managing the region's natural resources; and
- efficient and economical government requiring competent personnel, the clear assignment of responsibilities, adequate financing, effective enforcement, coordination among the different agencies and levels of government and well-defined channels for citizen input and review.



#### Our Board

Position	Name	Home League
Chair	Mary Ellen Miller	LWV Des Moines
Vice-chair	Nancy Porter	LWV Johnson County
Past Chair	Mary and Steve Ploesser	LWV Dane County
Secretary	Tam Prenosil	LWV Dubuque
Treasurer	Catherine Franczyk	LWV Wheaton
Communications	Gretchen Sabel	LWV ABC
IA Representative	Sue Wilson	LWV Dubuque
IA Alternate		
IL Representative	Lee Ekstrom	LWV McHenry County
IL Alternate	Paula Ekstrom	LWV McHenry County
MN Representative	Kay Slama	LWV Willmar
MN Alternate	Lonni McCauley	LWV ABC
WI Representative	Carolyn Mahlum-Jenkins	LWV La Crosse
WI Alternate	Nancy Hill	LWV La Crosse



#### Board meetings all virtual

- First Monday of even-numbered months
- Usually start at 10am, 1-2 hours in length
- Educational session follows
  - Topics of concern in basin
  - Highlight different areas within the ILO
  - Open to the public, recorded
  - Advertised through newsletter and social media



#### LWV is in the right place at the right time

- Education and awareness
- Advocacy on issues
- Coalitions with partners

With the League's century of experience lobbying and advocating, we see the chief benefit of "the Ummer" being the ability to amplify the voices of our citizens across dozens of congressional districts.





#### Our origin story

#### Followed the examples:

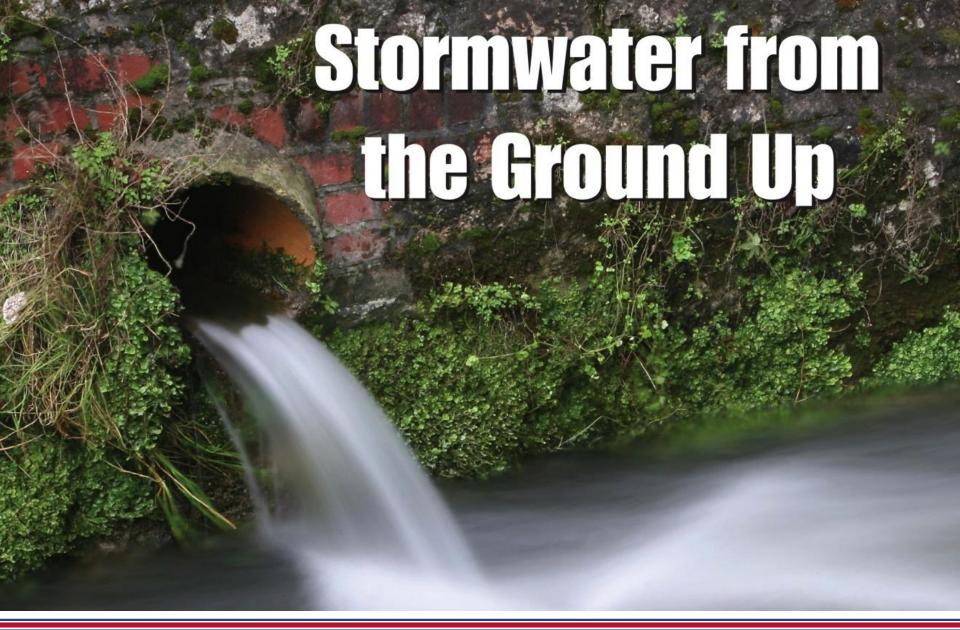
- LWV Lake Michigan Region
- LWV Jo Daviess County

Video shown at LWV UMRR's 2022

**Annual Meeting:** 

https://www.lwvumrr.org/blog/using-leagueprinciples-to-guide-water-work















#### LWV Upper Mississippi River Region

- Our territory is the river basin, from the Headwaters in northern Minnesota to southern Illinois, and all tributaries
- We focus on water quality and quantity

*Incorporated in 2015* 



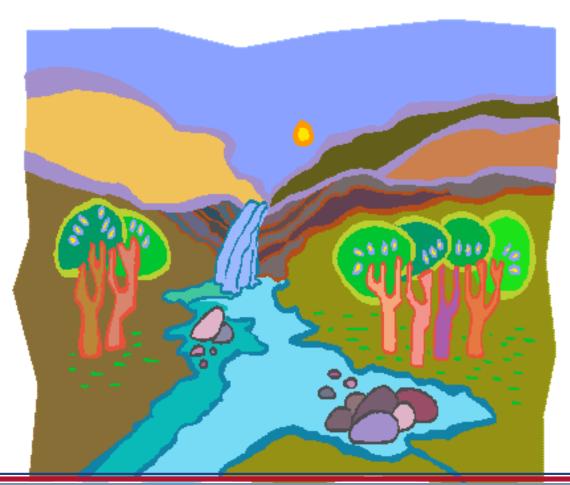


#### Our work – Basin-wide

- LWV UMRR chose nutrient loss reduction as our first focus
- That means helping people keep nutrients where they belong, not in our waters
- Excess nutrients cause algae blooms which contaminate water and use up oxygen, creating a Dead Zone
- All four UMRR states have nutrient loss strategies that they are working to implement



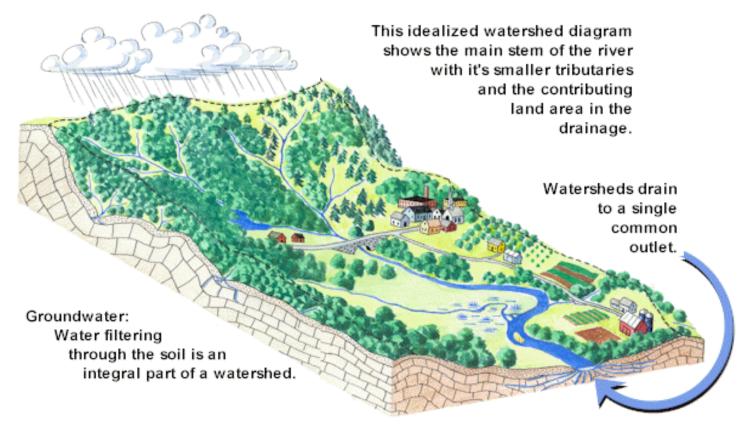
#### What is a Watershed?



#### The simple definition

It's the area of land that catches rain and snow and drains or seeps into a marsh, stream, river, lake or groundwater.





A watershed can be compared to a huge basin collecting all the precipitation that falls within it and carrying this to the common outlet. A watershed includes not only the land within its boundaries but also the surface water of lakes, streams and wetlands as well as the groundwater moving beneath the surface. Watersheds vary from the largest river basins to just a few acres in size.















## Why is nutrient pollution a good issue for us as an ILO?

- 1. It is an issue that transcends political boundaries and affects the entire Upper Mississippi River Watershed (the region within our ILO boundaries).
- 2. Whether a LWV is urban, rural or suburban; their members and their communities can take actions to reduce nutrient pollution since the excess nitrogen and phosphorus comes from a myriad of sources.
- 3. Nutrient pollution is an issue that is not as yet well understood by the general public and needs education.
- 4. Each of our states has been charged with the task of developing and implementing a nutrient loss reduction strategy that we can all work to implement in our states and communities.

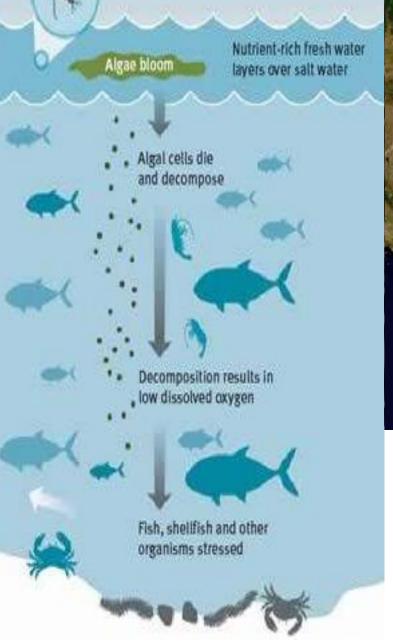


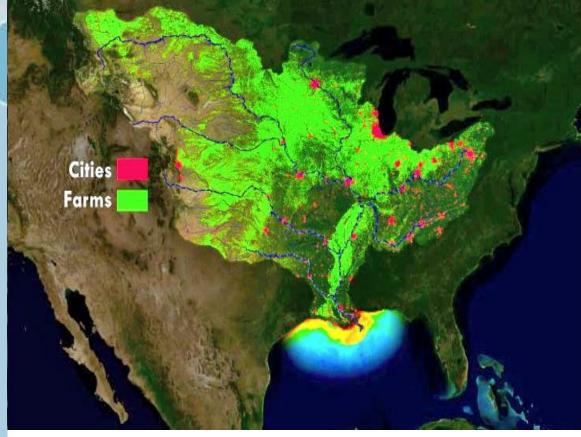
#### Causes Of Excess Nutrients\* in Water

- 70% comes from farm fields.
  - Mostly through drain tiles
  - Runoff from crops planted closely to waterways
- 20-30% comes from
  - Urban residential
  - Industrial runoff
  - Water treatment plants.



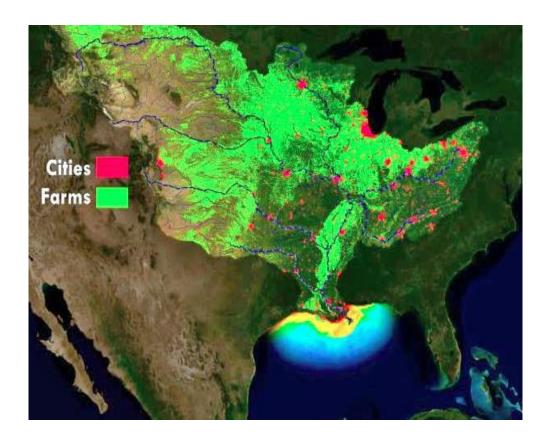
<sup>\*</sup>Nutrients – chemical compounds that make things grow. Found in fertilizers, animal waste, lawn clippings and leaves, etc.





#### The Dead Zone





## We all contribute to nutrients flowing into the Gulf of Mexico.

•Nutrients flowing from farm fields, city streets and wastewater plants into the Gulf have created a 'dead zone' where anoxic conditions affect fisheries, shellfish and shrimp; poor water quality also affects wildlife along the river's route.

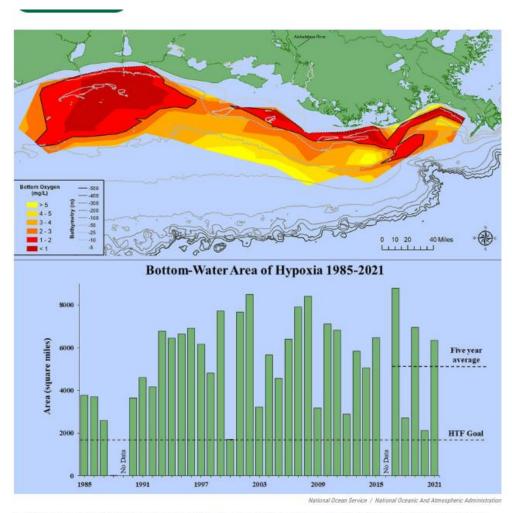
In 2014 there were 5,052 square miles of dead zone in the Gulf of Mexico. 2018's dead zone was the size of New Jersey. Our four states are major contributors of nutrients that cause the dead zone.



### Dead Zone size varies by year

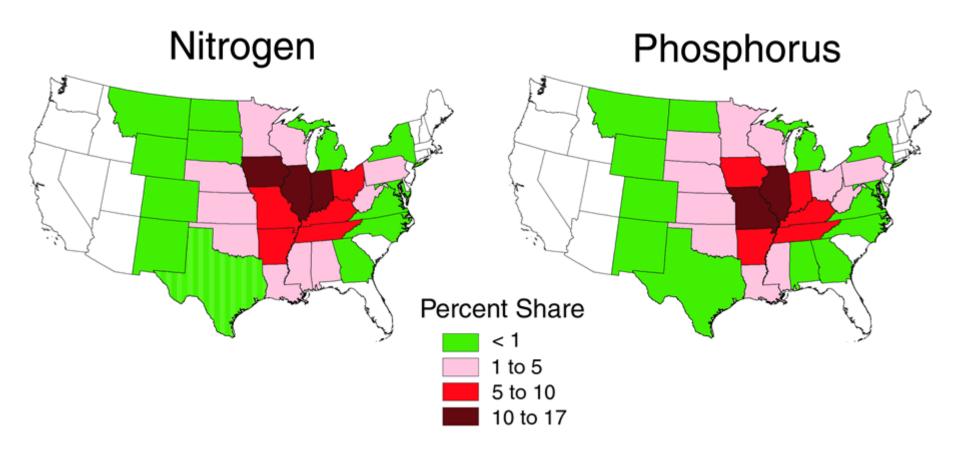
Data shown is from 1985-2021.

2022 Dead Zone was smaller than average due to the drought.

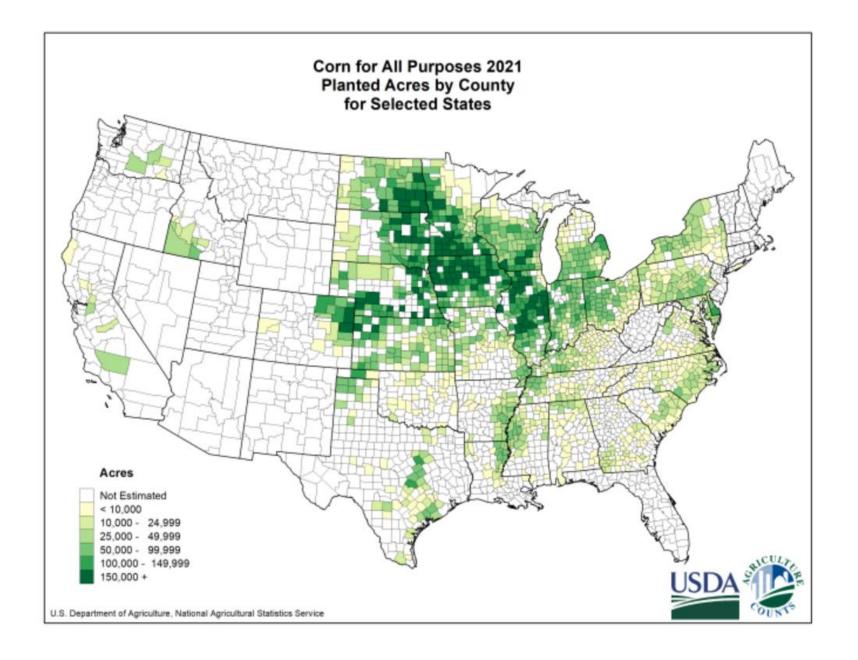


"At 6,334 square miles, the 2021 hypoxic zone in the Gulf of Mexico is the 16th largest ever measured in the 35-year record, measured from July 25 to

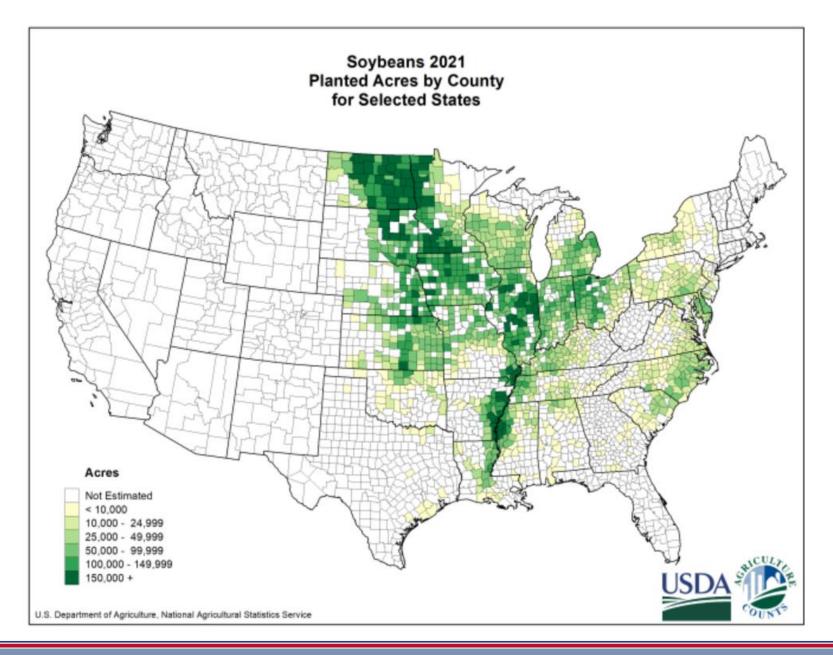












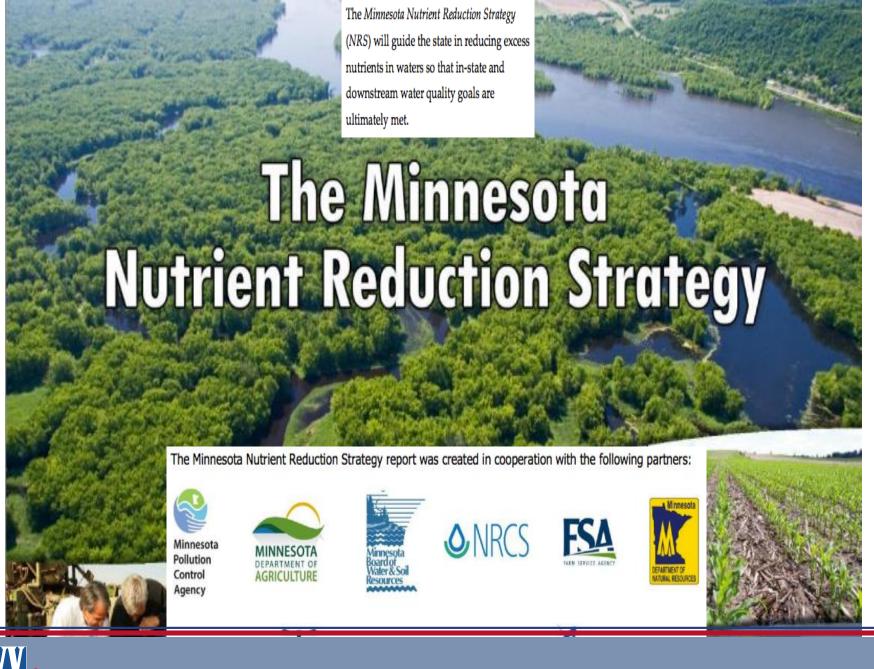
















Wisconsin's Nutrient Reduction Strategy is a broad overview of nutrient management activities for both point sources and nonpoint sources in Wisconsin. This strategy documents ongoing activities whether they are implemented by federal, state or local agencies. It identifies areas where further progress is needed.

Lead Authors:

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources:

Jim Baumann, Brian Weigel, Amy Callis, Corinne Billings and Mark Binder (GIS maps)

University of Wisconsin Extension

Ken Genskow, Chad Cook, John Exo and Astrid Newenhouse

# Wisconsin's Nutrient Reduction Strategy



#### **Progress**

- Strategies adopted 2013-2015
- Goal set to reduce dead zone to 5000 acres\*
   Originally to be met in 2015
- New goal is 2035
- Funding increased in 2022 through Inflation Reduction Act
- States must also take actions...

\*About 8 square miles



#### **Education and Advocacy**

- Education on nutrient solutions
- Education on bills in Congress
  - Farm Bill
  - MRRRI
- Partnering with like-minded non-partisan organizations
  - Mississippi River Network
  - Clean Water for All
  - Izaak Walton League
  - Land Stewardship Project
  - Minnesota Environmental Partnership



#### Workshops for Absentee Farmland Owners



#### FARM LANDOWNER WORKSHOP SERIES: MANAGING RENTAL AGREEMENTS FOR STEWARDSHIP

Join us on Friday, April 12th for a hands on day to learn how to improve the health of your land.

WHEN: 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Lunch and treats provided!

This event is free and open to all!

• Albert F. Reding Environmental Education Center, 1546 SW 58th St, Owatonna, MN 55060













#### University of Minnesota | Forever Green

#### **Benefits of Living Plant Cover**



- Diversify farming operations-increase economic opportunities
- Reduced erosion
- Reduce runoff and nutrient leaching
- Builds organic mattersequesters carbon
- Increases water storage on the landscape
- Increase habitat for bees, beneficial insects and wildlife





## We Hope to Inspire Others

The League takes on this challenge committed to expanding the knowledge of river basin residents about the watershed they live in. The resulting ripple effect should be development of a robust stewardship ethic.

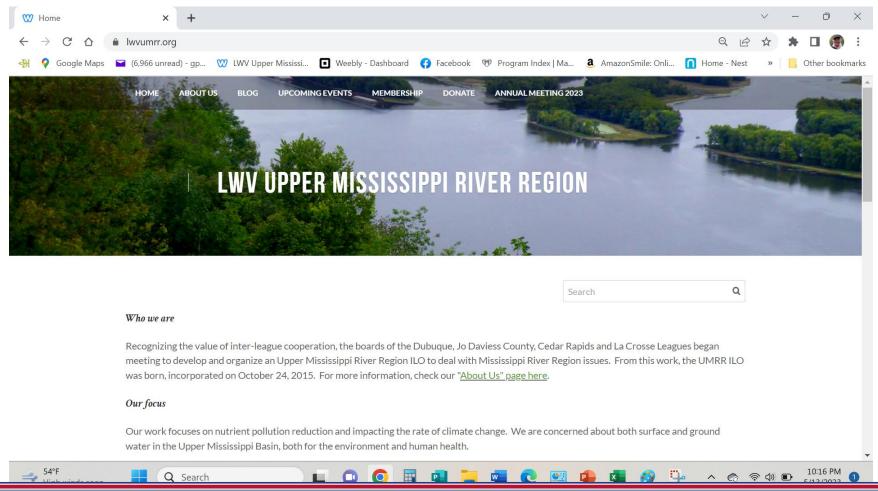
We all know our zip code, our area code and all should know our watershed!





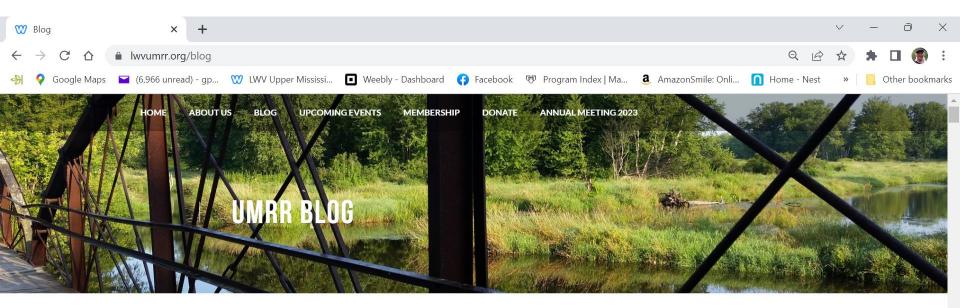


#### LWV UMRR Website: <a href="https://www.nrr.org">lwvumrr.org</a>





#### LWV UMRR Blog



#### Mining in Minnesota - Impacts on the Mississippi

4/30/2023

0 Comments

Arne Carlson was governor of Minnesota from 1991 to 1999. He continues to speak out on issues, especially those affecting Minnesota's environment. In a recent interview with Minneapolis Star Tribune columnist Dennis Anderson, Carlson talked about his concern regarding the proposed PolyMet and Tamarac mines. In this interview, Carlson restates his long-held concerns about the ownership of these proposed mines and their past performance in other settings. The PolyMet copper mine would be located in the Boundary Waters watershed. The Tamarac mine in the headwaters of the Mississippi, and would be a source of nickel, cobalt and copper. This report on the Minnesota Legislature's website provides deeper information on these two projects.

Another mining project proposed in Minnesota is a manganese mine near Emily, Minnesota, in the heart of our

#### Categories

All

Boundary Waters Canoe

Area Wilderness

Climate Change

**Drinking Water** 

Event

Farm Bill

Government Policy

Groundwater

LWV

Mining

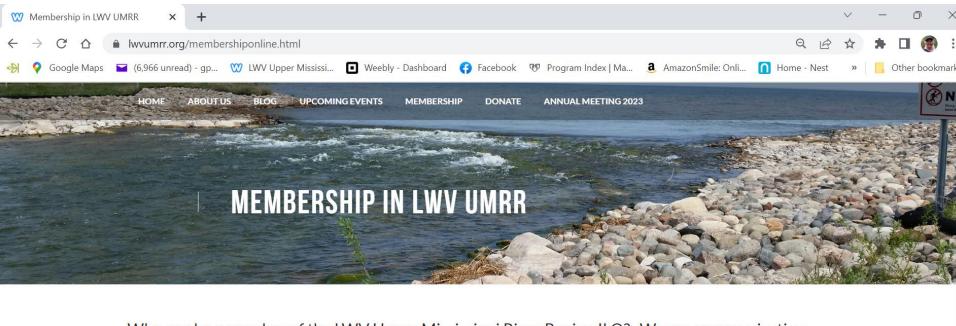
MRRRI

Nutrient Pollution



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#### Membership Page



Who can be a member of the LWV Upper Mississippi River Region ILO? We are an organization built of member Leagues, not individuals. To support our work as an individual, please visit our <u>Donate Today page</u>, or click the button below.

Donate Today!

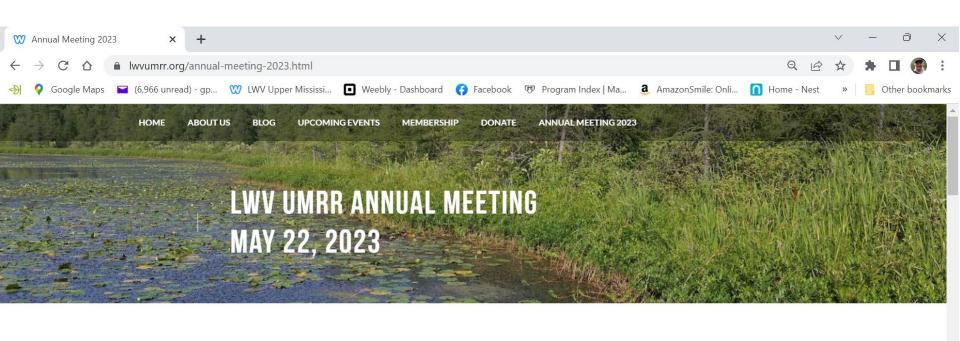
Payment Information for LWV

Member Leagues:





#### **Annual Meeting Page**



United, We Stand Stronger!

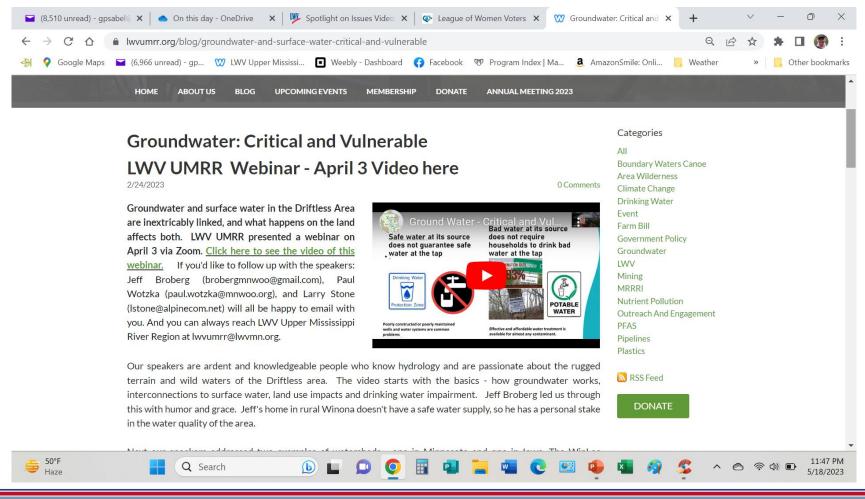
LWV UMRR Annual Meeting May 22, 2023 via Zoom

Business Meeting May 22 at 5:30 pm

Click this button to join the meeting on May 22 at 5:30!

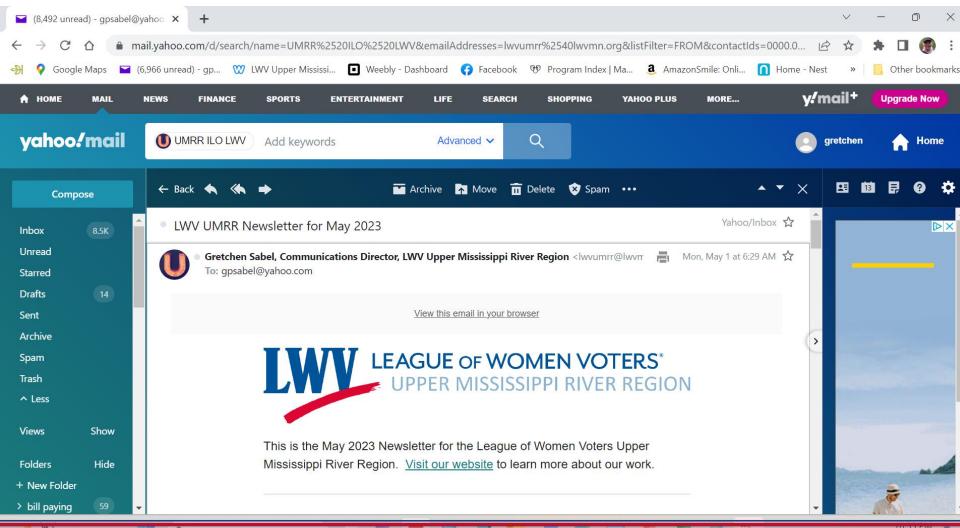


### Bi-monthly Educational Meetings





## Monthly Newsletter





#### Annual Meeting LWV Upper Mississippi River Region

May 22, 2023 - 6pm business meeting; 7pm program

#### United, We Stand Stronger!

**Guest speakers:** 

- Jessica Rolhoff, LWV Midwest Regional Organizer and
- Joy Guscott-Mueller, LWV US Climate Interest Group



This year's LWV UMRR Annual Meeting will be on a Monday evening. Email notices for the Annual Meeting were sent to member Leagues on March 20 and April 24. Agenda and meeting materials are posted on the <a href="LWV UMRR webpage">LWV UMRR webpage</a>. Member Leagues can each send one delegate to the business meeting; the program is open to all League members. We ask that delegates <a href="pre-pregister">pre-pregister</a> at this link.



The business part of the meeting will go from 6pm to 7. Our program, United, We Stand Stronger, will begin at 7 with Jessica Rohloff (on left, above) from LWV US will talk about the upcoming Transformation, followed by E Joy Guscott-Mueller (right) from LWV US Climate Interest Group. Even if you're not a delegate, join us at 7pm for this discussion and see how League works

#### SNIPPETS:

Minnesota legislation on PFAS is proceeding - read about it in this post from Matt Doll of the Minnesota Environmental Partnership. We should note here that the invention of PFAS chemicals happened here in Minnesota. It perhaps makes it fitting that Minnesota is now poised to lead the way to try to fix this mess.





Food waste is a significant part of the solid waste stream in the US, and one that is readily addressed than other, thornier problems. LWV US's Climate Interest Group has developed a tool kit that local Leagues can use to develop their own action plans for reducing food waste. Find the tool kit on the LWV UMRR blog at this link.

Mining projects are proposed in Minnesota that have the potential tin impact both the Mississippi River and Lake Superior. In this post on the LWV UMRR blog, we provide an introduction to the issues with links for more information.

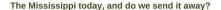


#### PARTNER PRESENTATION:









How a 5-state alliance is preparing for water diversion challenges and the surprising news in 25-year trends

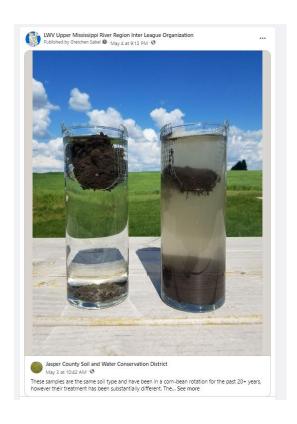
Erin Spry, hydrologist— Upper Mississippi River Basin Association

**BUMRBA** 





#### Facebook - @LWVUMRRILO

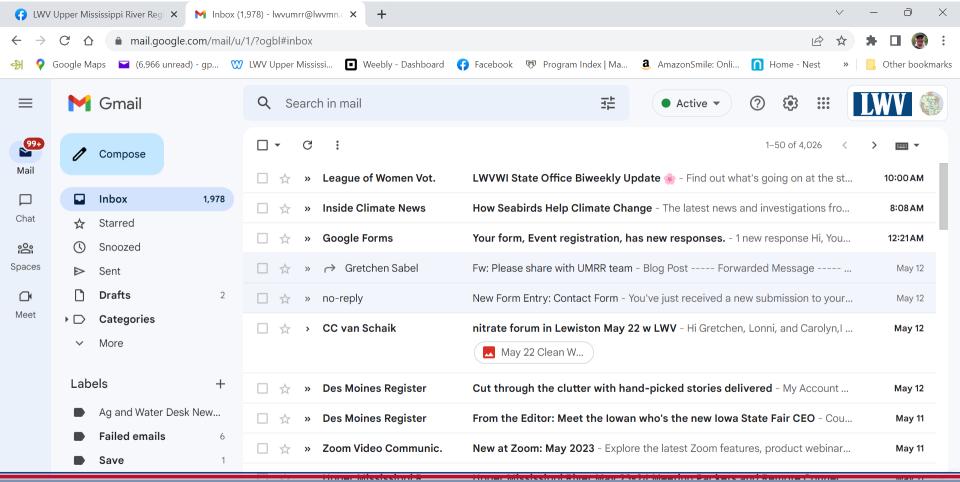






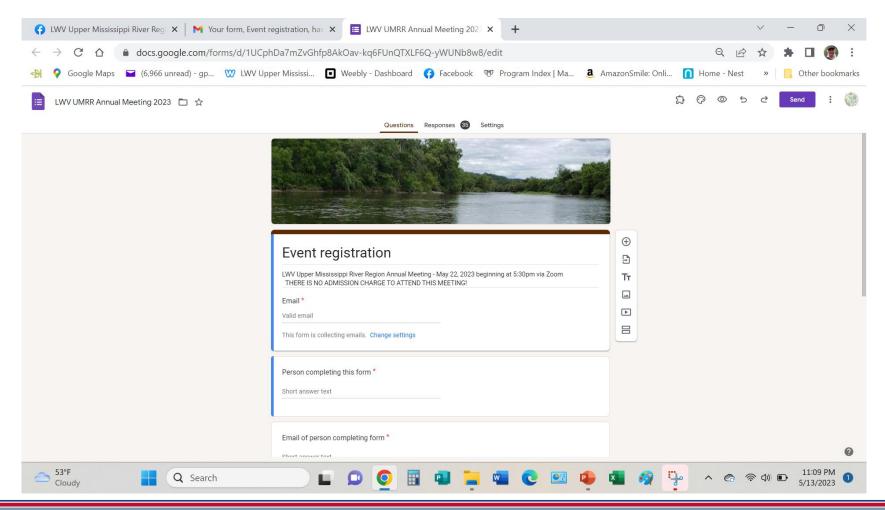


## Google – <a href="mailto:lwvmn.org">lwvumrr@lwvmn.org</a>



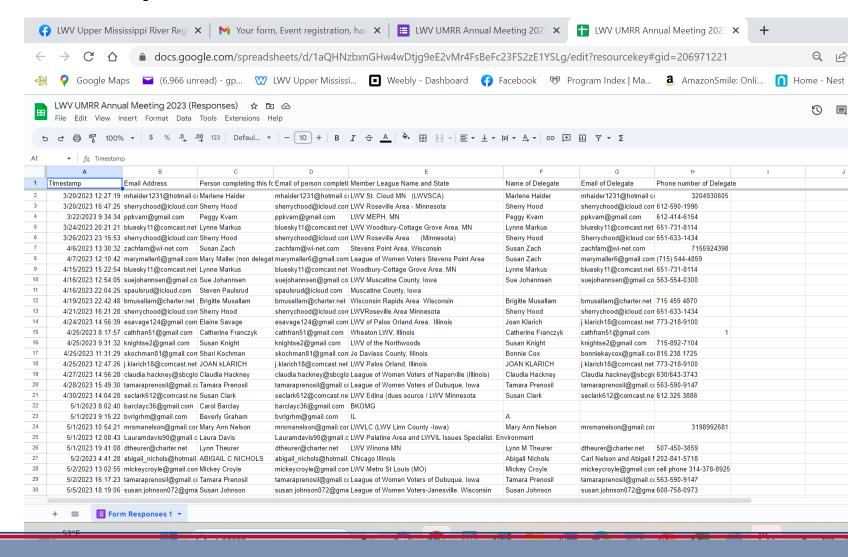


## Google tools – like Forms



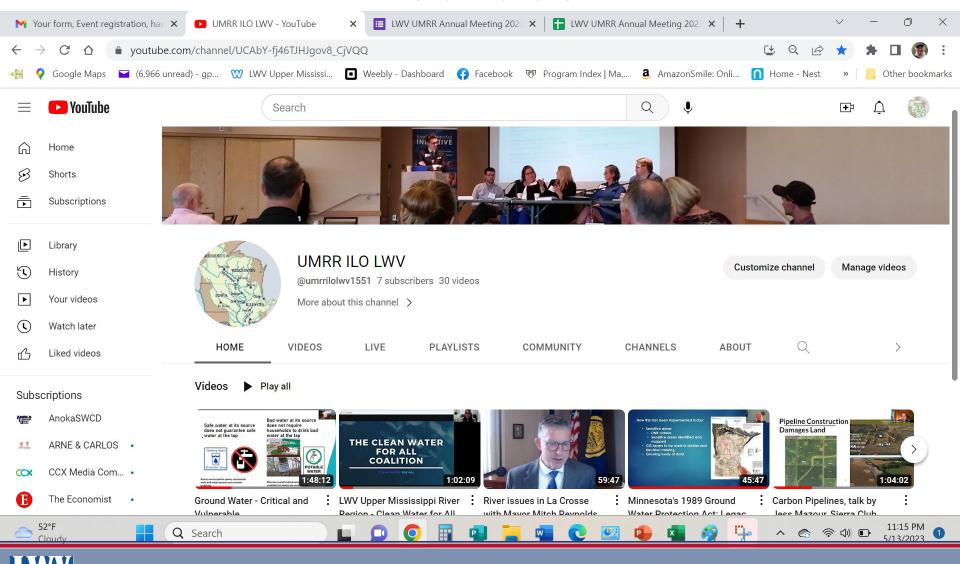


#### Responses are tabulated...





#### YouTube



#### **Action Committee**

- Members monitor legislative activity in states
- Text to 'activate' committee
- Email communications to approve or deny
- Mostly sign-on letters, occasional action alerts through email to members in targeted areas

























