



Message about Justice, Inclusion, and Collaboration in wake of killings by ICE agents

At Wisconsin's Green Fire (WGF), we are outraged and disturbed by the killings of Renee Good and Alex Pretti at the hands of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents in Minneapolis in January 2026. This message comes with the unanimous support of our WGF Board of Directors and staff. We offer our heartfelt condolences to the families, friends, and all who care for Renee Good and Alex Pretti. Their deaths are two of the most recent examples in a long intentional campaign of extreme violence at the hands of masked federal agents against immigrants and citizens alike. This violence continues the centuries-old legacy of systematic oppression and violence in the United States of America that has especially targeted immigrants, Native Americans, African Americans, other minorities and their white allies, and which is counter to our nation's ideals.

We mourn the deaths and injuries and upheaval across our country. We grieve at the grinding repetition of these injustices. After all, not six years ago was George Floyd murdered in Minneapolis just blocks away from the site where Renee Good died. George Floyd's brutal killing shook the world, including us at WGF. [In a statement from the WGF Board of Directors in 2020](#), we challenged ourselves to do more to advance justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion across our work. We still have a lot of work to do.

But why is this our work, too?

As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said in his [1963 Letter from a Birmingham Jail](#), "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."

[Our mission](#) at WGF is to advance science-informed analysis and policy solutions that address Wisconsin's greatest conservation challenges. This mission rests on two fundamental principles: the rule of law, and the rights of people to engage in the democratic process that shapes those laws. If we are going to stand any chance at grounding policy in science, we must rely on a deep social contract of mutual respect for each other. That respect comes from trust. That trust comes from a shared commitment to justice and building our more perfect union together.

February 2, 2026 | Page 1 of 3



In the conservation world, we have a tendency to isolate our efforts in different “silos.” A given problem is couched as solely an agricultural issue or a wildlife issue, for example. When that happens, we can lose sight of the bigger connections. Not only are environmental and conservation topics interrelated across our own disciplines, they are interwoven with social, economic, political, and historical lenses to name just a few. Unfortunately, much of the environmental movements of the last several decades did not go far enough in collaborating with other movements related to immigration rights, racial justice, gender equity, civil rights, and other important causes. Again, we have more work to do. Wisconsin’s Green Fire wants to be part of that work.

One small step we made recently was reimagining our vision as an organization. We revised our vision from specifically mentioning citizens to now explicitly stating our vision as, “All people in Wisconsin and beyond enjoy the benefits of clean water, clean air, and healthy ecosystems achieved through scientific and thoughtful management of natural resources.” This is a truer vision statement, articulating what we’ve strived to achieve all along: that science-based conservation benefits everyone.

It all boils down to care. At WGF, we care about the natural world and people regardless of any citizenship status. We care about the health and well-being of everyone in Wisconsin past-present-future. That includes immigrants and citizens alike. That includes undocumented people and visitors from other countries. It includes Indigenous people who have stewarded these lands and waters for centuries and millennia. We recognize that all people are intertwined and connected with the health of the earth.

When we say that the light of our green fire shines brighter together, we mean everyone. The only exception is for those who would deny the rights of their neighbors, our neighbors.

As an organization, we know from experience that coalition work and collaboration is a recipe for success. This has been true for every conservation issue we have worked on since our founding. As we challenge ourselves to push further, we invite you to do the same. We ask our supporters and our prospective collaborators to push us and help us to do more together. We seek to deepen our relationships with other individuals, nonprofits, Native Nations, local governments, and public agencies across disciplines.

Let us tighten the weave of our collective “garment of destiny” to keep one another protected from the icy grip of violence, apathy, isolation, and oppression.



Signed,

Meleesa Johnson, Executive Director

Tom Jerow, President, Board of Directors

Don Behm, President-Elect, Board of Directors

Jim Perry, Vice President, Board of Directors

Bob Gurda, Treasurer, Board of Directors

Karen Sands, Secretary, Board of Directors

Mark Asplund, Board of Directors

Terry Daulton, Board of Directors

Ashley Gries, Board of Directors

Bob Martini, Board of Directors

Gregory Peter, Board of Directors

Will Scheder, Board of Directors

Valerie Stabenow, Board of Directors

Carolyn Pralle, Communications and Outreach Coordinator

Erica LeMoine, Philanthropy and Membership Coordinator

Nancy Larson, Senior Water Resources Specialist

Paul Heinen, Policy Director

Mike Meyer, Senior Scientist