

## In This Issue

1. [Remember to Be Salt Wise](#)
2. [Free Native Plants Applications Due February 1](#)
3. [Great Backyard Bird Count: February 14-17](#)
4. [Outdoor Fun During A Pandemic](#)
5. [Oregon Opens First Net-Zero School in Wisconsin](#)
6. [Governor's Task Force on Climate Change Report](#)
7. [Renewables Surpassing Fossil Fuels](#)
8. [Upcoming Events/Deadlines](#)

## Remember to Be Salt Wise

<https://www.wisaltwise.com/>



Winter storms continue apace throughout Dane County, and in addition to putting in extra hours shoveling, many Fitchburg homes and businesses are putting out salt to help keep sidewalks, parking lots, and roads as clear and safe as possible. But that salt can have significant impacts on our water bodies and environment, as well as ending up in our drinking water, so it's important to use the smallest amount of salt required for the job to minimize eventual runoff.

### Be Salt Wise!

#### 1. Shovel



Clear walkways and other areas before the snow turns to ice. The more snow you remove manually, the less salt you will have to use and the more effective it will be.

#### 2. Scatter



If you use salt, scatter it so that there is space between the grains. Believe it or not, a coffee mug of salt is enough to treat an entire 20-foot driveway or 10 sidewalk squares.

#### 3. Switch



When pavement temperatures drop below 15 degrees, salt won't work. Switch to sand for traction or a different ice melter that works at lower temperatures.

#### 4. Love the Lines



Stripes on roads before a storm are anti-icing. They show that your professional maintenance crew is concerned about safety and is saving money, time and protecting our environment!

#### 5. Be Salt Wise All Year



Water softener salt ends up in local freshwater bodies. If your household softener uses more than 1 bag of salt per month, have a professional tune it up or replace it with a high-efficiency model.

Fitchburg is a member of the Wisconsin SaltWise Partnership, a coalition of organizations around the state working to reduce salt runoff into lakes and streams. Salt-Wise certification is available to anyone involved in winter maintenance, whether public or private. If you'd like to pursue certification, you can learn more at <https://www.wisaltwise.com/Winter-Salt-Certification>, and if you hire a professional to help you with winter maintenance, you can ask if they're certified (or find them in [this online listing](#)) or encourage them to take that step.

*Speaking of salt, there's another snowstorm coming to southern Wisconsin this weekend. Drive safely if you have to go out in your car, and don't forget your winter gear in addition to these tips on salt usage!*

## Free Native Plants Applications Due February 1

From the Dane County Land & Water Resources Department

<https://lwr.dane.gov/grants-and-costshare/free-plants>



Native plants have tremendous water quality benefits and increase habitat and food sources for pollinators. Because of this, the Dane County Land and Water Resources Department has started a native plant growing program to provide a source of free native plants to help schools and community groups in Dane County. These plants will be available in spring and fall each year. Spring plants are donated from community members through the Plant Dane! native plant program and fall plants are grown by local volunteers.

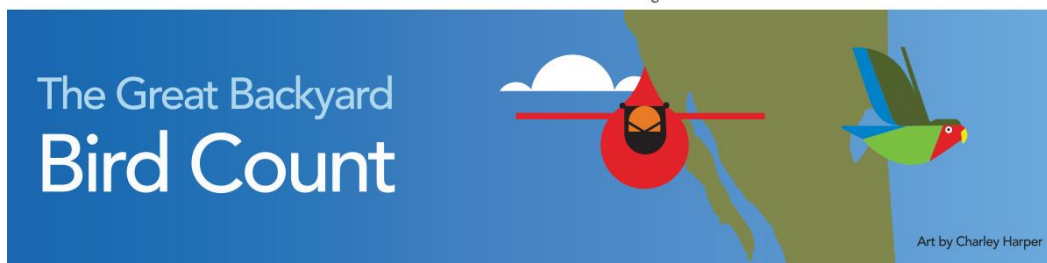
Since the program began in 2016, more than 15,000 plants have been distributed to 86 different schools and community groups, including neighborhood associations and community centers. Click on the button below for an interactive map of projects that have received plants from this program.

Find out how to apply to receive free plants from this program with the following linked PDF: <https://lwr.dane.gov/documents/pdfs/Free-Native-Plants/2021-Native-plant-application-Spring-final.pdf>. This is the application for our spring 2021 cycle. Applications are due February 1, 2021.

## Great Backyard Bird Count: February 14-17

<https://www.birdcount.org/>

February is National Bird-Feeding Month, a great reminder that putting seeds out during the harsh winter months can help your feathered friends get the energy they need to outlast the cold and snow. From February 14-17, you can also join with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society in this year's Great Backyard Bird Count, monitoring the birds you see in your backyard and elsewhere and logging your sightings to help capture data in your area. This is one of the largest citizen-science projects conducted every year; don't miss this chance to take part and learn more about birds and birding!



## Outdoor Fun During A Pandemic

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/dbca1684763b4da5bb08077a76831bfb>



As we approach the one-year mark since most of us began taking special steps to maintain physical distance from others, working or learning from home, and otherwise engaging in partial or full quarantines due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the winter has posed a special challenge beyond what we face in normal years. With many of us avoiding normal indoor socializing with those outside our households, it has been a time of creative solutions for maintaining physical and mental health by getting outdoors however we can.

In Monona, the Madison Curling Club has set up a [winter curling rink](#) to replace the indoor sport that is taking a break for this winter. Restaurants, bars, and coffee shops are utilizing [outdoor heaters](#) to create safer seating for their patrons. And Wisconsinites of all stripes are recreating outdoors, from first-timers learning to love winter sports to regular snow enthusiasts finding new ways to enjoy these cold-weather months.

To that end, Wisconsin Active Together and 1000 Friends of Wisconsin put together an [“Active Living ‘Play’ Book”](#) full of ideas for Wisconsin communities to participate in, and encourage, active outdoor time this winter. From snow art and winter sports, to outdoor fire-pit hangouts and neighborhood walks, to nature hikes and city tours, check out these suggestions to help enhance your outdoor winter time and maintain an active lifestyle throughout the coldest part of the year.

And if you’re planning to spend your time sitting outdoors with a fire pit or patio heater but haven’t yet made up your mind on what to use, check out these [New York Times](#) and [CBC](#) articles exploring the range of outdoor heaters from an environmental perspective.

## Oregon Opens First Net-Zero School in Wisconsin

<https://daneclimateaction.org/climate-action-plan/CAP-Stories/Oregon-Forest-Edge>

The Oregon School District opened their newest school this past fall, Forest Edge Elementary, part of the Terra Vessa development in eastern Fitchburg. This new elementary school has already been recognized for its environmental efforts, receiving a “Climate Champion” award from Dane County’s Office of Energy and Climate Change in recognition of its net-zero design. Net-zero means the energy used by the building is equal to or less than the renewable energy produced on-site (or in some cases, purchased from off-site sources).

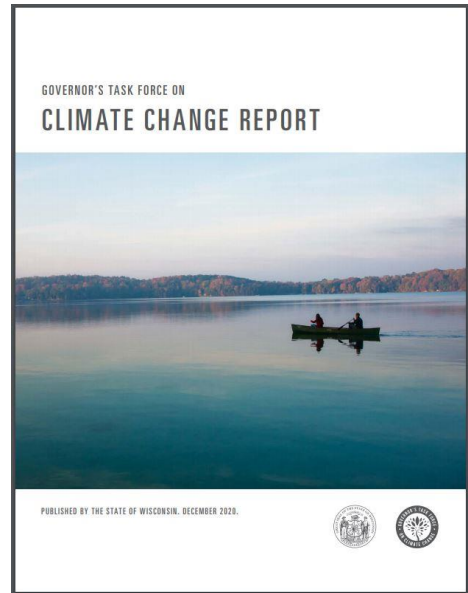
Forest Edge Elementary has extensive solar panels that produce all of the building’s electricity needs, and a geothermal heating & cooling system that provides year-round conditioning.

## Governor's Task Force on Climate Change Report

[https://madison.com/news/local/environment/gov-tony-evers-climate-task-force-eyes-policies-to-curb-carbon-and-promote-growth/article\\_f444497c-ca79-50c4-8e25-2bf54010b250.html](https://madison.com/news/local/environment/gov-tony-evers-climate-task-force-eyes-policies-to-curb-carbon-and-promote-growth/article_f444497c-ca79-50c4-8e25-2bf54010b250.html)

In October of 2019, Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers established a Task Force on Climate Change, directing the group to produce a report on climate change in Wisconsin and recommendations for how the state can rise to meet this challenge. Last December, the Task Force released its report to the public, celebrating the number of items that received broad consensus support. This was notable given the broad range of groups represented on the 32-member panel, and it points to a large number of paths to addressing climate change that can garner support across the state right now.

Follow the link above to read about this report on Madison.com, or click the image to be taken to an online PDF of the report.

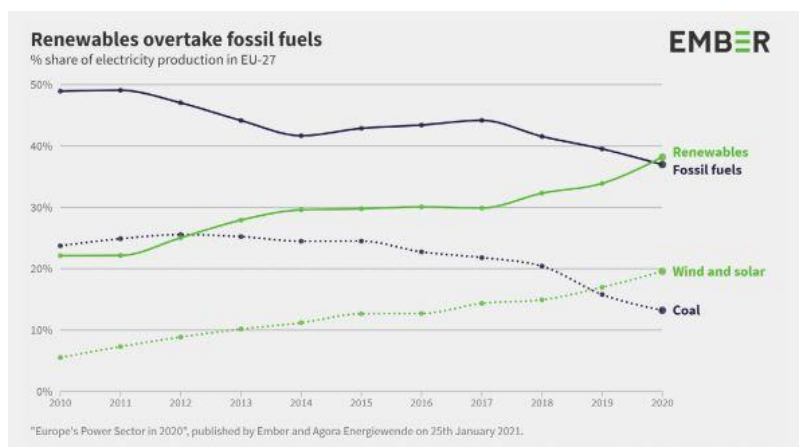


## Renewables Surpassing Fossil Fuels

<https://www.bloomberq.com/news/articles/2021-01-24/renewable-power-beat-fossil-fuels-in-eu-for-first-time-last-year>

Last May, the U.S. [Energy Information Administration reported](#) that renewable energy consumption surpassed coal in 2019 for the first time since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, marking a massive milestone for the clean-energy transition in the United States.

In an even more exciting development for clean energy advocates, the German thinktank [Agora Energiewende reported](#) that 2020 represented the first year on record in which renewable energy consumption outpaced all fossil fuels. Some of this achievement is the result of decreased overall consumption during the pandemic, but the accomplishment is significant nonetheless, and similar progress can hopefully be expected in the near future as nations look to meet their Paris Climate Accords commitments and companies increasingly place emphasis on climate-friendly practices as well.





## Upcoming Events/Deadlines

### **Great Backyard Bird Count**

*Join one of the world's largest citizen-science projects and learn more about bird observation and identification during this four-day event.*

**February 14-17**

**<https://www.birdcount.org/>**

### **Free Native Plants for School and Community Projects**

*Know of groups looking to start or add to an existing native plant garden or rain garden? Plant Dane is accepting applications for their Free Native Plants for School and Community Projects Program (spring cycle). Plants for the spring cycle are purchased by community members and donated through the Plant Dane native plant program.*

**Applications Due February 1**

**<https://ripple-effects.com/plantDane>**

### **Accelerate Sustainability Workshop**

*Partner with Sustain Dane to learn and develop the tools you need to help pursue sustainability projects at your organization. Follow in the footsteps of over 140 organizations that have successfully participated in this and the previous MPower Champions program!*

**February 25 and March 25, 8:30-9:30am**

**<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/accelerate-sustainability-workshop-registration-132865731981>**

### **Winter is Alive! a cooler world carnival**

*Come to Lake Monona to see art sculptures, performances, and narrative pieces that explore the issue of climate change and how we can align community-building and climate action for a better future. Presented by the City of Madison Arts Commission.*

**February 12 – March 7**

**<http://winterisalive.org/>**

### Share the News

Tell your friends to subscribe to Green Fitchburg on the city website  
<http://www.fitchburgwi.gov/list.aspx> > Green Fitchburg

- a. Visit Fitchburg's "Notify Me®" web page:  
<http://www.fitchburgwi.gov/list.aspx>
- b. Type your email address in the box and select "Sign In"
- c. To receive text messages enter your phone number and select "Save"
- d. Click  (to subscribe/unsubscribe to emails) and/or  (to subscribe/unsubscribe) next to the lists to which you wish to subscribe / unsubscribe (e.g. "Green Fitchburg" is the mailing list for environmentally friendly suggestions or events)

Please contact Phil Grupe, Sustainability Specialist, at [phil.grupe@fitchburgwi.gov](mailto:phil.grupe@fitchburgwi.gov) or 270-4259, if you have any questions, comments, and/or suggestions for future Green E-News topics.

