

# *Creating a Sustainable Future* for the **Midwest**



Partnership *for the* Earth

— • NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL • —



*“NRDC’s leadership in the Midwest represents an unwavering commitment to solving the most challenging environmental issues in the region.”*

— Susan Crown, NRDC Trustee,  
CoChair, Midwest Council

— Kelly R. Welsh, CoChair,  
Midwest Council



Since 1970, the Natural Resources Defense Council has earned a reputation for working at the front lines of environmental change, from New York and Washington, D.C., to San Francisco, Los Angeles, Beijing, and most recently, Chicago. NRDC's work in the Midwest is a vital component of our *Partnership for the Earth* campaign, which seeks to put into place lasting protections that will preserve the earth for generations to come.

Now is a critical time of transformation in the Midwest. With abundant sun, soil, and wind resources, we can be on the cutting edge of new technologies that will power America into a clean energy future. But the Midwest is also ground zero for many adverse effects of global warming. These impacts are particularly intense from both dirty energy sources and the changing weather patterns that will dramatically affect agriculture, the lifeblood of the region.

Now is the time to invest in the new clean energy economy that will create jobs, help curb global warming, and restore Midwest leadership for the twenty-first century.

By mobilizing activists, strengthening scientific debate, and advancing policies to limit global warming pollution at both regional and national levels, we are effectively leading the region toward a clean and prosperous future. NRDC is creating solutions in the Midwest that will serve as models not just for the region, but for the nation and the world.



# Transforming Energy Solutions

Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin account for 20 percent of the carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) pollution in the United States and 5 percent of the world's total pollution, making NRDC's fight against global warming in the Midwest absolutely critical. The Midwest alone is responsible for more global pollution than almost any nation on Earth. Only the worst polluting nations—India, China, Japan, and the former Soviet Union—exceed this region's output.

By fundamentally reshaping energy use and production in the Midwest, we can repower America and create jobs in our communities. The steps we take in the next few years are critical, and we must seize the opportunity to act.

## Promoting Clean Energy

Energy efficiency is the fastest, cheapest, and cleanest energy resource we have, saving consumers money on energy bills while also reducing global warming pollution. NRDC is working directly with utility companies in the Midwest to promote the economics of efficiency, and also engaging regulators to make sure that companies are rewarded for innovation with incentives that encourage energy savings.

NRDC is playing a major role in developing regional climate policies that will limit global warming pollution by charging polluters for emissions. We are working to guide the development of "cap-and-invest" policies at the regional level, while simultaneously engaging state and federal-level policymakers and opinion leaders at all levels, to ensure that smart climate policy is adopted in the states and nationally.

## Fighting Dirty Coal

Throughout their 50-year plus lifespan, coal-fired power plants spew pollution that is dangerous to our health and the climate. America is witnessing a sea change in communities' acceptance of coal as a source of power. Escalating construction costs, uncertainty regarding the cost of future CO<sub>2</sub> regulations, and the economic and environmental benefits of cleaner energy sources have prompted communities from Texas to Iowa to reject coal-fired power. NRDC is eager to stop more dirty plants from being built in the Midwest, and our challenges to dirty coal in Michigan and Ohio are just the beginning.

## Challenging Tar Sands

The Midwest has become the epicenter of oil refinery expansions designed to process Canadian tar sands, a heavy, thick sludge. Tar sands refining causes about two to three times more global warming pollution than refining conventional oil, and will result in significant air and water pollution in the region—particularly in the Great Lakes.

NRDC is actively challenging the expansion of tar sands refineries and pipelines in the Midwest. In a landmark win, we took on the state of Illinois and oil company ConocoPhillips over their subpar air permit—and won. This legal precedent will protect the air around all new and existing refineries in the United States.



# Across the Midwest

## Minnesota

**2** NRDC drove the negotiation of the groundbreaking regional carbon pollution cap with industry and energy representatives to clean up pollution and kick start the region's clean energy production.

## Wisconsin

**3** We're partnering with Milwaukee to develop green infrastructure principles, policy recommendations, and model codes that can be incorporated into greener city planning.

## Michigan

**4** We helped prevent the construction of Mid Michigan Energy's coal-fired power plant in 2009.

**5** Our lawyers successfully defended the state's tough new ballast water laws in federal court to prevent new invasive species from entering the Great Lakes in 2008.

## Iowa

**1** We have been working with the legislature and utilities to promote energy efficiency and renewable energy programs in the state.

## Missouri

**6** We forced the U.S. Fish and Wildlife service to give full legal protections to critical habitat for the Hines emerald dragonfly in Mark Twain National Forest (Missouri) and Hiawatha National Forest (Michigan's Upper Peninsula).

**7** We're challenging a permit to move hundreds of thousands of barrels of tar sands petroleum from Canada through a massive pipeline without investigating environmental impacts.

## Illinois

**8** In 2008 we took ConocoPhillips' Wood River Refinery to court over lax permits—and won. The resulting settlement lowered pollution, brought green infrastructure to surrounding communities, and established tough emissions monitoring.

**9** We made sure law became action by pushing the passage of an electric utility energy efficiency portfolio standard through the Illinois Commerce Commission to ensure utility implementation in 2008.

## Indiana

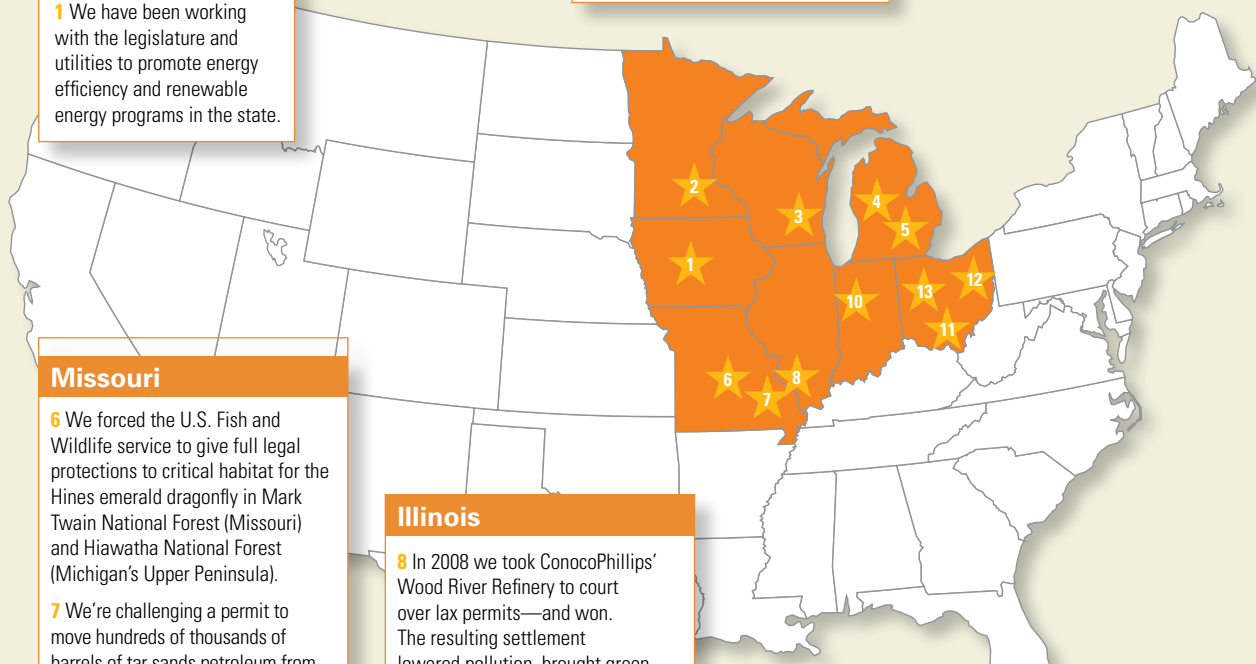
**10** We are leading the fight to block expansion of the nation's largest tar sands refinery, BP in Whiting.

## Ohio

**11** We're fighting the construction of AMP-Ohio's proposed coal plant in Meigs County.

**12** Our advocates and experts are standing up against the construction of the proposed Beard Liquid coal refinery in Columbiana County.

**13** We are advocating for robust energy efficiency policy by intervening in regulatory proceedings, participating in stakeholder groups, and working collaboratively with utilities to develop effective programs.



*“NRDC is providing the tough advocacy, experience, and vision to make the policy changes necessary to move the clean energy economy forward in the Midwest.”*

— Michael Polsky, President, Invenergy LLC

# Preserving the Great Lakes

The Great Lakes are one-fifth of the world's fresh water, with coasts that stretch across eight U.S. states. The water in the lakes and their streams, tributaries, and aquifers sustain life in the region. Midwesterners depend upon the health of the Great Lakes every day for drinking water, transportation, recreation, and employment. But pollution from many sources threatens clean water in the region and the health of America's Great Lakes.

“Living pollution”—in the form of harmful, invasive marine species—has already irrevocably altered the delicate ecology of the Great Lakes. The Great Lakes Basin provided amazing commercial transport opportunities a century ago, and the ecosystem was sliced up by the St. Lawrence Seaway and the Chicago Diversion waterways to further those needs.

Today, these canals act as superhighways that shuttle invasive species into the lakes even as shipping slows. More than 180 foreign fish, plants, and parasites have entered the ecosystem, primarily through contaminated ballast water from ships. We already mounted a successful defense against shipping company attempts to overturn state authority and Clean Water Act protections against invasive species. Our efforts upheld strong anti-invasive species laws in Michigan and New York.

NRDC's policy experts are extending our campaign to protect the Great Lakes by creating a sustainable new vision for transportation that restores natural barriers to protect the Great Lakes and the integrity of their ecosystem.



## From Rooftops to Rivers: Using Green Infrastructure to Conserve Water and Save Energy



The urban landscape, with its large areas of pavement and concrete, has significantly altered the movement of water through our environment. After periods of heavy rain, water flows along paved surfaces, collecting pesticides, pet waste, and other pollutants before making its way into nearby rivers and lakes. NRDC is working with Midwestern cities to incorporate green infrastructure into their planning and development. We are working with the town of Aurora, Illinois—among the fastest growing city in the Midwest, situated on the Fox River—to improve neighborhoods and curb pollution by adding green space such as parks, vegetation strips, and green roofs. The result is a cleaner river and a greener community for everyone. NRDC is now expanding

this work to other Midwest urban communities, including Milwaukee and cities that are part of the Metropolitan Mayors' Caucus of Greater Chicago, where we are demonstrating that improved management of drinking water, waste water, and storm water can reduce energy demand while improving quality of life in urban environments. This leads to energy savings, reduced costs to utilities and customers, and decreased global warming pollution.



# Protecting Midwestern Wildlife and Wild Places

The Midwest is host to amazing biodiversity and includes many wild places—from the vast fisheries of the Great Lakes to the amazingly pristine wilderness areas of Michigan’s Upper Peninsula and northern Minnesota that are home to wild moose, loons, and more wolves than the Northern Rockies. It is also home to NRDC’s Wildlife Conservation Program, which is headquartered in Chicago. While the program has a national scope, it is increasingly active in the middle of the country. In 2008, we successfully protected habitat for the Hine’s emerald dragonfly—the nation’s only endangered dragonfly, which is

found in Michigan, Missouri, Illinois, and Wisconsin. The program is also working to save other native Midwest species such as the Great Lake’s coastal brook trout and the American bison, the region’s largest and most iconic animal. The last genetically wild bison herds have left the Midwest and can now be found only in Yellowstone National Park, where they have been subject to harsh and deadly management practices. NRDC has been at the front of the efforts to save our last wild bison.



# Partnership *for the* Earth

— NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL —

## About Our Partnership For The Earth Campaign

As a key component of our *Partnership for the Earth* Campaign, NRDC's Midwest program is advancing solutions to critical environmental problems. Our focus is in eight Midwest states— Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, and Wisconsin—where NRDC has more than 180,000 members and online activists. Through the *Partnership for the Earth* Campaign, we are

transforming energy institutions, practices, and commitments in the region, protecting the Great Lakes ecosystem from invasive species and water pollution, and laying the groundwork to expand NRDC's natural resource protection in the region's wild places.

We can ensure a sustainable future for life on Earth, but it will take a special relationship between NRDC and donors who have the environmental commitment and the financial means to make a real and lasting impact on the daunting

problems we now face. As with all NRDC programs, our Midwest initiative depends on private donations to fulfill its mission.

We are seeking an unprecedented level of funding to launch and sustain NRDC's *Partnership for the Earth* campaign. But then the need for that support is unprecedented. For more information about contributing, please contact Nancy Watson, Midwest Director of Development, at 312 651-7907 or [nwatson@nrdc.org](mailto:nwatson@nrdc.org).

*“Having NRDC in the Midwest has given our citizens and environmental organizations a tremendous new resource for enforcing environmental laws. Now we are seeing the results: protecting the Great Lakes from pollution and invasive species, making the air clear and safe to breath, moving us toward a future of clean energy and modern transportation.”*

— Noah Hall, Executive Director, Great Lakes Environmental Law Center



[www.nrdc.org](http://www.nrdc.org)

The **Natural Resources Defense Council** is America's most effective environmental action organization. Founded in 1970, NRDC combines legal and scientific advocacy with the grassroots power of 1.2 million citizens in strategic campaigns to curb global warming, create the clean energy future, revive the world's oceans, save endangered wildlife and wild places, stem the tide of toxic chemicals, and accelerate the greening of China.

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