

Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters: Yes, Walker tried to kneecap the Department of Natural Resources

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Third Entry in 'Walker's Wisconsin' Series

MADISON – As part of its [Field Guide to Taking Back Wisconsin](#) campaign, Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters released its third entry in its [Walker's Wisconsin](#) series today. The series recounts Gov. Scott Walker's extreme anti-conservation agenda and outlines just how far he's taken our state, once considered a conservation model, to somewhere that's hardly recognizable.

Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters will update the Walker's Wisconsin series via media releases, website, and social media every two weeks until Wisconsin elects a new governor in November. Walker's Wisconsin concentrates on five categories – air, climate change, democracy, land, and water.

To read more, visit the Field Guide at conservationvoters.org/field-guide.

[CLIMATE CHANGE](#)

Walker picked on wind turbines rather than fossil fuels

In an era dominated by fossil fuel energy – well documented to have negative human health impacts from exposure to soot, mercury, and other toxins – wind power is a safe and reliable source of clean and renewable energy in Wisconsin. In a

2014 report, the Wind Siting Council concluded that wind turbines do not have a direct and negative effect on human health. Yet, in a gift to the fossil fuel industry that pays for his elections, Walker proposed \$250,000 in his 2015-17 budget for the Public Service Commission to study the health effects of wind turbines on humans, duplicating recent studies and ignoring the true threat: fossil fuels.

DEMOCRACY

Walker tried to kneecap the Department of Natural Resources

In his 2015-2017 budget, Walker tried to convert the Natural Resources Board into an advisory entity with no oversight capabilities. The seven-member board represents a diverse geographic and professional cross-section of people. It helps direct the agency and is responsible for providing public input on natural resources decisions. Without it, Walker's appointee would alone set policy for the agency, further centralizing Walker's power over our natural resources. Thanks to huge public outcry, the move was pulled from the budget.

LAND

Walker underfunded state parks, then hiked fees

Walker has increased fees for state parks and zeroed out state funding for them, a model that has failed in other states. Wisconsin State Parks are often the first place people experience the outdoors, and act as economic engines that bring in tourism dollars. Walker's 2015 budget resulted in a \$1.4 million deficit for the state parks. He then hiked fees in his next budget. Wisconsin now has the highest fees for daily state parks admissions in the Midwest. The financial burden to access the state's most beautiful places has a ripple effect that targets lower income families and makes the outdoors inaccessible for many Wisconsinites.

WATER

Walker reduced the 'boots on the ground' fighting run-off pollution

In his 2015-17 budget Walker tried to reduce staff funding to county soil and water conservation departments by \$800,000, falling well short of the program's required \$9,379,800. County soil and water conservation departments provide essential testing and monitoring services across Wisconsin. These departments assist farmers with designing and constructing manure storage facilities, help establish

conservation cropping practices, and aid in nutrient management planning. The county departments also help landowners find cost-share funds for conservation work. Without full funding for county conservationists, Wisconsin communities lose their first defense against water pollution. While the Joint Finance Committee increased funding by \$675,000 per year, the funding was still \$1 million short of its required budget.

Walker praised frac sand water thieves

In 2014, Walker visited the frac sand mining company Hi-Crush's new facility in Trempeleau County where he praised them for "maintaining a positive relationship with the Wisconsin communities surrounding their facility." He also said that we can "balance our strong commitment to maintaining clean water, clean land, and clean air with an operation investing in Wisconsin." It was an ironic visit since Hi-Crush essentially stole water. The facility paid \$52,000 in penalties for operating two high-capacity wells on its site without state permits and operating one well at a higher pumping rate than its permit allowed. Of course, the company's executives donated \$10,000 to the Walker campaign.