

THE RECYCLER

Newsletter of Recycle Rutherford, Murfreesboro, Tenn.

Spring 2022

Meet Rutherford County's New Solid Waste Director

Monday, May 2, 2022, 7:00 p.m.

www.recyclerutherford.org

Bishop Wagener is Rutherford County's new solid waste director, and **you can hear him speak and get to know him on May 2, 2022, 7:00 p.m., at Recycle Rutherford's annual meeting.** The meeting will be a Facebook Live event, but it isn't necessary to be a Facebook user to attend and view. **Click on the link at www.recyclerutherford.org**

PLEASE NOTE: *This is a date change from the previously announced meeting date. We are meeting a week later to accommodate our speaker's schedule.*

Wagener joined the county last fall on November 22, replacing Mac Nolen, who had been in that position since 2008. The solid waste director is a key position in the county, **overseeing the Solid Waste Department and thus county recycling and convenience centers and the county landfill and working with the Public Works Committee on solutions to the issues our growing county faces with Middle Point Landfill**, which is projected to close in less than seven years.

The new director brings considerable experience and expertise to the position. For the past three years, Wagener worked for the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC), Division of Solid Waste Management, in the Materials Management Programs, according to the announcement of his hiring. In his TDEC role, he **provided technical assistance to local county governments, including Rutherford County, to improve waste reduction and recycling capabilities.**

"I am dedicated to leading the county toward a future that includes safe, friendly, and quality disposal, while maximizing waste reduction and recycling for my neighbors," Wagener stated.

He has more than 25 years' experience in

commercial and residential construction. He earned a B.S. degree in Geology and in 2018, a Master of Science in Professional Sciences with a concentration in Environmental Geosystems, both from Middle Tennessee State University.

**Celebrate Earth Day Saturday, April 23!
Bring your 12-16 oz. plastic coffee bags to our booth for recycling. See page 4.**

Born in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, Wagener moved to Murfreesboro in 1985. Asked to discuss what influenced his career choices, he replied, "I am a natural problem solver. I also love to learn and teach others. These traits helped me become successful in the construction industry. My love for the environment and thirst for knowledge about Earth's processes helped me excel in my study of geology and my work with TDEC. Once I was at TDEC in Solid Waste Management, I was able to identify an issue that combined both my love for problem solving and my concern for the environment. That issue is solid waste management for Rutherford County citizens.

When Wagener talked with Recycle Rutherford's board, he mentioned that Mayor Bill Ketron's goal of zero waste in the county got his attention. Responding to the question of what else attracted him to the position, Wagener said, "I have a strong belief in and commitment to serving my community. This opportunity opened the door for me to use my skills in my home county. I also like the idea of being at the front of a paradigm shift for our community as we continue to move toward the goal of zero waste."

Wagener is open to questions and to input. "It is important for me to remind others that I am their servant in this endeavor. I appreciate all forms of thoughtful criticism and learn from all feedback. I cannot push forward changes of these magnitudes without input and support from my fellows."

Viewers can ask questions in the "chat" during the program. Or if you prefer, you can submit a question prior to the meeting to recyclerutherford@yahoo.com; send by midnight Sunday, May 1, to be included.

Can Threatened Species Be Saved?

“When we save wildlife, we save ourselves,” says Collin O’Mara, president and CEO of the National Wildlife Federation (NWF), in an article in a recent edition of *Parade*. According to author Kathleen McCleary, **some 20 animal species were recently declared officially extinct, and almost a million others face that same fate**, thanks to warming temperatures, deforestation, development, overfishing, and other things we humans are causing. O’Mara compared biodiversity to an airplane, saying, “If you start taking out screws one at a time, you don’t know which one is going to make the wing or engine fall off, but eventually the system is going to collapse.”

McCleary explains that butterflies, bees, birds, and even some small mammals help pollinate more than 1,200 crops, impacting one of every three bites you eat. More than half of all plants depend on wildlife to disperse their seeds. Predators such as wolves and tigers help prevent erosion by eating the animals who feast on vegetation. Oysters filter ocean water, keeping it clean for underwater grasses and other marine life.

Specific examples help illustrate the situation. Polar bears are disappearing because the arctic ice that makes it possible for them to hunt seals is melting at an alarming rate and could completely disappear by 2035. Polar bears are an “indicator species.” If they are in trouble, their entire ecosystem is in trouble. Diminishing numbers of polar bears mean that the overpopulation of seals can threaten fish populations, an important food source for people.

Cute little Atlantic puffins live in the Gulf of Maine, one of the fastest-warming bodies of water on our planet. The warmer water in the spring speeds up the growth cycle of the tiny juvenile fish that puffins feed their babies. By the time the baby puffins are ready to eat, the fish are too big to swallow, meaning that the babies can starve to death while surrounded by fish! This is an alarming example of how climate change throws off the timing of ecological systems and illustrates the unpredictable ways that rising temperatures can impact species, including us.

Saltmarsh sparrows live in tidal marshes along the East Coast. More than 80% have vanished since 1998. The bird’s reproduction cycle is tied to the moon and tides. They lay and hatch eggs and raise chicks in 28 days. Rising sea levels flood the marshes, drowning the nests. Marshes are also lost to development. The sparrows, which also are pollinators, reflect the health of the tidal marshes, which are one of the best buffers against extreme weather events like hurricanes. The salt marshes soak up water that otherwise might flood coastal homes.

Almost 90,000 tigers roamed Asia a century ago; today there are fewer than 3,900. Causes include habitat loss, poaching, and climate change. Tigers are an “umbrella species,” says Colby Loucks, NWF; “If you protect their habitat and what they need to survive, you protect all the species underneath them.” Tigers prey on herbivores that can denude ecosystems. Restoring and preserving the tiger habitat will help protect at least

nine major watersheds, which provide fresh water for more than 800 million people.

Some Things You Can Do to Help

Support Monarchs: Plant several kinds of pesticide-free native milkweed that flower at different times. Avoid tropical milkweed, which is invasive, or milkweed that’s been treated with insecticides to be aphid resistant. **Go to saveourmonarchs.org to request free seeds.**

Go Native: A garden with plants that grew naturally in the region before human settlement and intervention conserves water and is likely to attract pollinators. A native oak can support the caterpillars of 500 species of moths and butterflies, providing food for songbirds. Encourage local schools, governments, and parks to plant more native species. **Enter your zip code into nwf.org/nativeplantfinder for a list of native plants for your area.**

Cut Down on Plastic: Every year, 8 million metric tons of plastic pour into the world’s oceans—a garbage truck of plastic waste every minute. Three kinds of plastic—fishing debris, filmlike plastic (like on store-bought veggies), and latex (such as balloons) cause the majority of deaths among marine life (dolphins, whales, seals, seabirds, sea turtles, etc.) Say no to plastic bags, swap out plastic wrap for reusable food storage bags, and don’t release balloons. **Visit repurpose.global to calculate your own annual plastic footprint.**

Use Your Buying Power: Contact manufacturers and retailers when you buy something with excess plastic packaging to suggest they make changes; social media is an effective way to bring attention to the issue. Ask stores to stock more local goods, cutting down on shipping. **Visit Parade.com/plastic for tips to reduce plastic use.**

Eat Smart: Consuming protein that leaves a small carbon footprint can make a significant difference. Swapping beef for fish even twice a week is a good move. According to the international advocate Oceana, “Fish is one of the most climate-smart and nutrient-rich sources and requires no fresh water and grazing space. If you like oysters, buy those farmed by small businesses, leaving the ones in the wild to stabilize shorelines and act as natural filters. (A wild oyster can filter 10 or more gallons of water a day.) Consider using plant-based protein in your diet. **Visit Parade.com/salmon for 50+ creative dishes.**

Be Bird Friendly: Be aware of the plight of the loon, which is disappearing in the Northwest U.S. as rising temperatures and increased precipitation, along with more people and construction around lakes, send them farther north in search of the right conditions for breeding and raising young. “They are emblematic of the beautiful, pristine lake ecosystems of the North,” says Brooke Bateman, director of climate science for Audubon. “Knowing that generations after us will never hear that same call unravels your sense of place.” **Go to Audubon.org/climate/survivalbydegrees and enter your zip code to see how climate change may impact the birds in your area.**

Vote for Officers and Board

In the absence of in-person meetings, we are again voting on officers by mail. In normal times, we voted at our annual meeting in April for officers and board members for the coming year. All officers are up for election to a two-year term this year, and all agreed to serve another term.

Please mark the ballot below, cut, fold, and return in an envelope. If you would like to be more involved, please consider serving on the board and nominate yourself. The board meets most months on the first Monday. Our county is facing multiple challenges; you can have a voice in the important decisions facing us.

Recycle Rutherford Membership Form

I enclose my annual dues to support Recycle Rutherford and receive the newsletter.

\$25.00 supporter \$15.00 student \$100.00 patron

I am contributing \$_____ in addition to dues.

I prefer the newsletter to be emailed and am providing my email address.

PLEASE PRINT:

name _____ amount enclosed _____

address _____

city, state, zip _____

telephone: day _____; evening _____

email _____; volunteer interest _____

Please make check payable and mail to Recycle Rutherford, P.O. Box 1804, Murfreesboro, TN 37133-1804

Recycle Rutherford 2022 Ballot

Following are the nominees for **officers and board members to serve 2022-2024**. If you wish to **vote for** the slate of officers as listed, please **circle YES** at the end of the list. If you wish to **nominate other(s)** to serve as officers, **circle NO** and list the individuals you are nominating in the space provided. The Bylaws allow up to twelve (12) board members; if you wish to **vote for the slate as listed and also nominate additional board members, circle YES**, and write in the name(s) in the space provided.

Officer Nominees

President Rachel Cornett Vice President Bonnie Black
Secretary Suma Clark Treasurer Rick Racker

Board Nominees

Linda Hardymon Glenn Himebaugh Diane Parker Beth Spivey

CIRCLE ONE: YES NO

I wish to nominate _____ to serve as _____.

I wish to nominate _____ to serve as _____.

I wish to nominate _____ to serve on the board.

I wish to nominate _____ to serve on the board.

Please mail this form to Recycle Rutherford, P.O. Box 1804, Murfreesboro 37133-1804 by May 31, 2022.

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Celebrate Earth Day Saturday

For the first time in two years, Earth Day will be an in-person event on the **Historic Public Square in downtown Murfreesboro, Saturday, April 23, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.**

This year's theme is "You have the power to be the change: What does Earth Day mean to you?" As part of the 2020 merger with Murfreesboro Electric Department, Middle Tennessee Electric recognized the importance of Earth Day and is proudly carrying on the tradition of being the presenting sponsor and coordinator for this annual event.

MTE will have booths with information about the Tree Wise program, ProSolar program, energy efficiency, electric vehicles, member services, the EV Car Club, and more. The vegetation management team will be giving away 500 redbud seedlings, and MTE's senior leadership team and board members will be there to engage with the community and answer any questions members may have.

Recycle Rutherford will have a booth to provide information and to accept plastic layered coffee bags to send away for recycling. Just bring them to the booth. If you can help some in the booth, please email recyclerutherford@yahoo.com.

Murfreesboro Parks and Recreation and the Smyrna Outdoor Adventure Center have partnered to offer a free Kids Zone geared for children of all ages and will have inflatables, yard games, and hands-on activities.

Dates to Remember

Annual Meeting—Recycle Rutherford:

Monday, May 2, 7:00 p.m.

Speaker: Solid Waste Director Bishop Wagener

Go to www.recyclerutherford.org for link

Earth Day Celebration 2022:

Saturday, April 23, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Sponsored by Middle Tennessee Electric

2020-22 Officers and Board

Recycle Rutherford holds elections each April at the annual meeting; in general, officers and part of the board are elected in even years for two-year terms, and approximately half the board is elected in uneven years, providing for staggered terms.

The officers are listed below with the board members, who are elected each April and serve staggered terms. The date indicates when the term of each ends. The board meets monthly on first Mondays at 6:15 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church, 210 N. Spring Street.

Rachel Cornett, president
Bonnie Black, vice president
Suma Clark, secretary
Rick Racker, treasurer
Glenn Himebaugh, past president

Board Members:

Linda Hardyman, 2022
Diane Parker 2022
Beth Spivey, 2022

Reminder: To renew your membership, please see the form on page 3. Dues are only \$25 per year. We don't want to lose you!

For more information, go to www.recyclerutherford.org

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Printed on paper with recycled content.



P.O. Box 1804
Murfreesboro, TN 37133-1804