



# WISCONSIN WILDLIFE FEDERATION

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Contact: Executive Director George Meyer---608-516-5545

Jim Swanson, WWF Environmental Committee Chair---715-505-0102

## Environmental Violation Penalties Plummet in Wisconsin

**Columbus:** The Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, the largest conservation organization in Wisconsin, was shocked at the dramatic reduction in the total amount of penalties for environmental violations obtained by the Wisconsin Department of Justice for calendar year 2015. The total of \$306,834 is down 86% from the ten year average of \$2,167,401, down 78% from \$1,389,139 in calendar year 2014, and the lowest total amount of environmental penalties in any one year since 1986, 30 years ago.

For specific major categories of violations are:

1. 2015 animal waste violation penalties are down 90% from the 10 year average.
2. 2015 air pollution violation penalties are down 79% from the 10 year average.
3. 2015 waterway alteration and wetland violation penalties are down 91 percent from the 10 year average.
4. 2015 hazardous waste violation penalties are down 100% from the 10 year average.
5. 2015 Wastewater violation penalties are down 97% from the 10 year average
6. 2015 Public and private water supply violation penalties are down 90% from the 10 year average.
7. 2015 Environmental repair and remediation violation penalties are down 52% from the 10 year average.
8. 2015 Solid waste violation penalties are down 100% from the 10 year average.
9. 2015 Stormwater violation penalties are down 67% from the 10 year average.

“Effective investigation and prosecution of environmental violations is critically important to protect our land and water resources that comprise the fish and wildlife habitat that is very important to the hunters, anglers and trappers that the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation represents,” stated Jim Swanson, Chair of the Federation’s Environmental Committee. “The decline in the total environmental violation penalties is alarming and warrants a thorough investigation,” continued Swanson.

“The Federation does not know whether the dramatic decrease in environmental penalty violations is the result of lack of inspections of regulated facilities by the Department of Natural Resources or follow through on discovered violations by that agency or lack of vigor in prosecution of the environmental violations by the Department of Justice but the general public deserves answers,” indicated George Meyer, WWF Executive Director. “What the Federation is not buying as an answer is that environmental violations have dropped 86% in the last ten years or 78% since 2014,” continued Meyer. Meyer served eight years as DNR Secretary and twelve years as DNR’s Enforcement Division Administrator and in both positions had direct responsibility for the investigation of environmental violations and the referral of environmental violations to the Department of Justice for prosecution.

**Founded in 1949, the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation is Wisconsin’s largest conservation organization comprised of 195 hunting, fishing and trapping clubs. A member of the National Wildlife Federation, the WWF’s Mission is supporting conservation education and the advancement of scientifically based professional management of natural resources.**