



# Dane County Office of Energy & Climate Change Introduction

Photo: Holger Link  
via Unsplash





◀ Madison Gas and Electric proudly sponsored "Energized Bucky" as part of Bucky on Parade. Energized Bucky spent his first few months in front of the (Madison/Dane) City County Building.

We can slow and reduce climate change. We can reduce flood damage, protect forests, protect public health, promote equity, increase economic development; we can increase the quality of life across the globe, we can even save lives. We can reduce climate change. In fact, we can do more to slow and reduce climate change than most people on this planet. There are several reasons for this, but a big one is because we are part of the community that is Dane County (and you can be part of it whether you live in Dane County or not).

Dane County has experienced and continues to experience rapid growth, and the need for infrastructure investments provides opportunities for new solutions to be put in place. Dane County has tremendously strong climate leadership among its elected officials. And Dane County has a wealth of leaders and experts in many areas critical to mitigating climate change. Many of them helped to develop and write this report.

We in Dane County must do our share to mitigate the GHG emissions we cause, but we must also take advantage of the unique opportunities in Dane County to educate, inspire, and support the actions of other jurisdictions.

Without question, global warming will increase natural disasters including flooding, drought, and heat waves, increase the spread of vector-borne diseases, increase sediment and nutrient loading in our lakes and streams, and create a multitude of other adverse impacts. Our efforts to address climate change locally provide us with multiple major opportunities to increase equity, create a healthier environment, realize major economic development opportunities, reduce utility costs, create jobs, increase resiliency, and bring communities together.

The epic flooding in western Dane County in August 2018 turned deadly when unofficial recorded rainfall totals as high as 15.33 inches fell in a 24-hour period,



▲ Cheryl Mitchell takes a break while biking the Lower Yahara River Trail boardwalk bridge as part of an Outdoor Afro event. Outdoor Afro is a national not-for-profit organization that celebrates and inspires African American connections and leadership in nature. Cheryl, an Outdoor Afro leader from Milwaukee, has helped organize Wisconsin events including this one in Dane County. The mile-long boardwalk bridge is one of the longest non-motorized bridges in the US. *Photo: Diane Schwartz, Outdoors 123.*

and more than 8 inches fell in multiple locations within three hours. One life was lost, and it took more than 80 heroic rescue missions by first responders to prevent more deaths. Homes, businesses, and governments suffered more than \$155 million in damages. We can expect to see more extreme rainfall events in the future due to global warming.

The Fourth National Climate Assessment report predicts that all regions of the United States will see somewhere from a 50% to 300% increase in heavy rainfall events by the end of this century, depending on the success of our carbon reduction efforts. Over the next two decades we can expect increases no matter what we do, and while heavy rainstorms will increase everywhere, the Northeast

and Midwest can expect the most. The report also points out that the number of largest heavy rainfall events will show the biggest increase.

The good news is that there are many solutions that will help mitigate climate change. There are solutions that everyone in Dane County can be a part of, solutions that will both reduce GHG emissions and make our communities more resilient and better able to adapt to the extreme weather that will inevitably come with climate change.

