



Sierra

Newsletter of the Coulee Region Group

OCTOBER 2023

"The world is not a problem to be solved; it is a living being to which we belong." - Joanna Macy



National Drive Electric Week

National Drive Electric Week

Sunday, October 1 from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m.
La Crosse City Hall Parking Lot, 400 La Crosse St.

The Sierra Club is a national sponsor of National Drive Electric Week. Transportation emissions are a major contributor to global heating. It's crucial for us to transition from fossil fuel-powered transportation as quickly as possible. These education and outreach events help those with EV experience answer questions from those considering getting an ebike or electric car.

On Sunday, October 1, you can Ask Me About My EV from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. at the La Crosse City Hall Parking Lot, 400 La Crosse Street. This event will feature electric cars and ebikes. Learn more at driveelectricweek.org/event?eventid=4066

National Solar Tour

Hosted by the American Solar Energy Society for over 28 years, the purpose of the National Solar Tour is to promote renewable energy awareness and increase the adoption of solar energy. The National Solar Tour centers around neighborhood discussions about solar, recommendations on installers, financing, local laws, and other considerations and hesitations around installing solar panels, purchasing electric vehicles, and making energy efficiency upgrades. There are two Coulee Region tours.



On Saturday, October 7, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. in Trempealeau, the TREMPMS (Trempealeau Renewable Energy Municipal Producers) will offer tours of homes and businesses. To learn more, please visit www.nationalsolartour.org/tourmap/tour-trempealeau-and-meet-the-tremps/Tour

The Solar La Crosse Tour, October 6 through 8, in La Crosse, includes an event hosted by Solar on La Crosse Schools (SOLS) on Friday, October 6 with information about and a tour of the solar installation at Hamilton Elementary School, 1111 7th St. S. from 3 to 4 p.m. On Saturday, October 7 and Sunday, October 8, several residents with solar installations will be available to talk with visitors about their experiences. For more information, visit <https://cr-sierra.blogspot.com/p/solar-la-crosse-tour.html>.

ELECTRO | EXPO

ELECTRIFY YOUR LIFE

SATURDAY
OCTOBER 21
1:00 - 5:00PM

WESTERN TECH COLLEGE
220 SOUTH MAIN VIROQUA

1:00 PM

Keynote:
Nick Hylla

Midwest
Renewable Energy
Association
Why electrify?
What's in it for all
of us?




Electro Expo in Viroqua

The Vernon County Energy District (VCED) is a grassroots organization whose goal is to help people take control of their energy needs, use, and production. Producing renewable energy locally helps reduce carbon emissions, retains energy money in the community, and supports good-paying local jobs.

On Saturday, October 21 from 1 to 5 p.m. at Western Technical College, 220 South Main in Viroqua, VCED will host an Electro Expo featuring keynote speaker Nick Hylla of the Midwest Renewable Energy Association. Learn more at <https://tinyurl.com/VCEDElectroExpo>

Environmental Education Grants

For spring 2024, CRSC will offer grants of up to \$200 each for environmental education projects to schools or community organizations involving young people at the elementary and middle school level within the CRSC region: Crawford, Grant, Jackson, La Crosse, Monroe, Richland, Trempealeau, and Vernon counties.

Applications may be completed online, emailed or mailed. The deadline for applications will be early in 2024 with awards by January 31. For more information, visit sierraclub.org/wisconsin/coulee/Education

Funding for CRSC environmental education programs is possible thanks to an annual grant from the Paul E. Stry Foundation, shared dues from Sierra Club memberships, and donations made by community members. Email us at CRSierraClub@gmail.com or call us at 608-315-2693 to learn how to donate.

CRSC Board Nominations

The Coulee Region Sierra Club will hold elections for four seats on its board of directors in December. The board meets monthly to plan events, coordinate with the state Sierra Club, and network with local and regional partners and allies on Sierra Club issues.

If you would like to nominate someone, including yourself, please email the name and contact information for the nominee along with a paragraph describing the nominee's qualifications for the board to CRSierraClub@gmail.com by November 19, 2023.

Qualifications include Sierra Club membership and past work or interest in outdoor activities and/or environmental issues. The board is especially interested in adding members who live outside of the La Crosse area, but anyone is welcome to nominate. If you have questions, please email or call 608-315-2693.

A Walk in the Refuge

For the first time in a long time, CRSC members met in person to walk in and learn about the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge on Brice Prairie in Onalaska on Tuesday, September 26. With intermittent rain threatening to dampen our outdoor plans, the group started indoors at the beautiful LEED certified Visitors Center. Katie Julian, Visitor Services Specialist, talked about the purpose and history of the refuge, noting the importance of the entire refuge system for the health and well-being of migrating animals, from birds to insects. The map room at the center is a great place to better understand how modern human activity has impacted life on the prairie.

After answering our questions, Katie led our group on a walk along one of the asphalt paths at the Center, pointing out sleeping bees; prairie grasses with strong, deep roots; plants with fragrant leaves and seeds; and invasive species. While we were walking, several sandhill cranes glided to a stop a bit further up the prairie.



Katie also explained how the prairie is part of the larger support system. The river, Lake Onalaska and smaller water bodies, the island habitats, and the prairie are interwoven and affected by climate change. The refuge is currently seeking acorns and nuts to plant from oaks and hickories that have survived flooding. They also encourage all watercraft to observe a voluntary waterfowl avoidance area. Any time a migrating bird is flushed from its resting and feeding place, it loses precious time and energy. A map of the avoidance area is at the Refuge website along with more information about the area. We thank Katie for taking time to guide and talk with us! See www.fws.gov/refuge/upper-mississippi-river for more information.

Oct. 9 Indigenous Peoples' Day

The Ho-Chunk Nation, the City of La Crosse, and the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration will host an Indigenous Peoples Day event on Monday, October 9 beginning with a City Hall ceremony at 10 a.m. and followed by a day of activities at Riverside Park. See more at tinyurl.com/1009IndigenousDay

Fall Highway Clean Up

Our fall clean up of River Valley Drive will be Tuesday, October 3. Meet at the La Crosse Pumping Station near the intersection of River Valley Drive and Gillette Street (Highway B) at **5:30 p.m.** to get gloves, vests, and bags.



Bring your camera! Not only is this section of roadway near the beautiful marsh but you might find something interesting during the clean up. Call Pat with questions: 608-788-8831.

More October Events

10/3 & 12: Prairie Seed Harvest at Boscobel Bluff State Natural Area 9 am - 3:30 pm **MUST REGISTER:** tinyurl.com/mvc-prairieseeds23

10/ 4, 11, 18, 25: Enviro-Wednesdays at The Nature Place, La Crosse. 7 pm <https://tinyurl.com/npenvirowed>

10/ 4, 11, 18, 25: Jackson in Action Hiking for Fitness. 5:15 pm. **MUST REGISTER:** www.jacksoninaction.org/hikerfitness

10/ 5, 12, 19, 26: Native Gardens Volunteers at The Nature Place, La Crosse. 9 a.m. to noon <https://tinyurl.com/npnatgardeners>

10/ 7: Prairie Stargazing Walk. 7 p.m. at Tunnellville Cliffs near La Farge. **MUST REGISTER:** tinyurl.com/mvc-starwalk1007

10/10: Sustainability Chat with Viroqua's Community Conservation at 2 p.m. ONLINE tinyurl.com/1023SusChat

10/13: Science Cafe: Disease, Monsters, and Math 6 pm JavaVino, La Crosse <https://facebook.com/LaCrosseScienceCafe>

10/14: Mindfulness in Nature workshop. 1 to 4 pm at the Kickapoo Valley Reserve. **MUST REGISTER:** tinyurl.com/kvrmindful1014

Oct. 2-8: Week Without Driving

From America Walks: People without a car or unable to drive should be able to get to where they need to go safely and effectively. But every day, Americans who can't drive – approximately 25 percent of the population – face significant barriers to mobility such as inadequate sidewalks, poor transit, lack of connectivity and dangerous roads. The needs of non-drivers are too-often disregarded in transportation infrastructure and policies. Our goal should be a transportation system designed to support all individuals, regardless of ability, age, or income, that will strengthen our communities and enhance our quality of life.

In 2020, Disability Mobility Initiative began documenting the experiences of non-drivers in the State of Washington. In 2021 and 2022, they challenged elected officials and other decision-makers to a Week Without Driving – with profound effects on those who participated. For 2023, Disability Mobility Initiative is partnering with America Walks to take Week Without Driving national.

Learn more and sign up for the challenge at <https://tinyurl.com/23WWDpledge>

10/14: Nature's Best Hope with Douglas Tallamy at 9:30 am ONLINE <https://tinyurl.com/natbesthope>

10/15: Evening Sky Prairie Walk at Tunnelville Cliffs State Natural Area. 7 p.m. **MUST REGISTER:** tinyurl.com/mvc-tunnelvilleskywalk

10/15-24: Wisconsin Sierra Club Wolf Awardness Week activities. Register for details - <https://tinyurl.com/wiscwolfwk23>

10/18: Coulee Audubon talk - Chimney Swifts 7 pm The Nature Place, La Crosse <https://couleeaudubon.org/html/events.html>

10/24: Prairie Seed Harvest at Sugar Creek Bluff State Natural Area 9 am - 3:30 pm **MUST REGISTER:** tinyurl.com/mvc-prairieseeds23

10/25: Fungi & Trees in the Kickapoo Valley. 6:30 p.m. at the Kickapoo Valley Reserve. <http://kvr.state.wi.us/Events/Calendar>

11/ 1: Wisconsin Sierra Club Chapter Awards Ceremony 6 pm ONLINE <https://tinyurl.com/wisc-23awards>

The CRSC board meets monthly and members may attend. Email CRSierraClub@gmail.com or call 608-315-2693 for the Zoom access information. The next meeting is October 24 at 6:30 p.m.