



Sierra

Newsletter of the Coulee Region Group

APRIL 2018

"It is horrifying that we have to fight our own government to save the environment." - Ansel Adams

PLEASE VOTE

APRIL 3!



Conservation Congress April 9



Just a reminder that Wisconsin's annual **Conservation Congress hearings** (dnr.wi.gov/About/WCC/springhearing.html) are coming up on April 9 at 7 p.m. The La Crosse county hearing will be in the Onalaska HS auditorium. Check the link for other counties.

There are several questions this year of interest to the Sierra Club - you can find these and how the organization recommends its members vote in the latest edition of the John Muir chapter's newsletter, which just came out. (<http://tinyurl.com/jmcnews0418>) To find the location of the hearing in your county, to view the questionnaire in advance, or to learn how to write a resolution, check the link.

Also, if you've never been to a hearing before, you should know that you don't have to stay the whole time - you can complete your questionnaire and leave if you're pressed for time. If you have any other questions, please feel free to send us a message at crsierraclub@gmail.com.

April 29 La Crosse Earth Fair

The **10th annual La Crosse Earth Fair** will be held at **Myrick Park from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday, April 29** with a **Recycling Fair at nearby Emerson Elementary School**. The Coulee Region Sierra Club will have a table at the fair encouraging attendees to learn about environmental issues. The fair will feature activities for children, hands on workshops, guided hikes, other educational activities. Attendees are encouraged to walk, ride their bikes, or take the shuttle.

A **Recycling Fair** will be held from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the nearby Emerson Elementary School parking lot. Dynamic Recycling will accept most electronic items for a small fee. Cell phones will also be accepted for recycling. In addition there will be document shredding, flag retirement, scrap metal collection, and child car seat recycling.

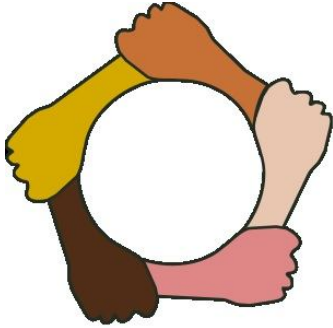
The Sierra Club spring highway clean up (April 28 at 9 a.m.) is part of the annual Earth Day clean up. See more about high way clean up on page 3 and more about the Earth Fair and related activities at earthfairlacrosse.com.



Seeking program chair

Our current program chair, Carol Miller, needs to take a break from Sierra Club duties. We are looking for a member who would like to gather ideas and help set up speakers and activities (four to six per year) for our group. If you're interested, please **email us at crsierraclub@gmail.com**.

Help us include everyone



We are still seeking Coulee Region Sierra Club members who can help keep our club informed about actions, events, issues, and opportunities around the region. Can you email a report about an upcoming program in your area? Could you send some photos of an event? Would

you like to write a column about environmental issues in your community? We are also looking for opportunities to connect members from all around the region.

To help, please email crsierraclub@gmail.com

March meeting notes

A full house greeted guest speaker, Margot Higgins, PhD, at our March 27 meeting. Following a short business meeting which included reports on local issues, state news from guest, John Muir chapter chair, Don Ferber, and information about the April 9 Conservation Congress, Dr. Higgins discussed her work at Alaska's Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. She talked about the unique history of this park and the attempt to include the indigenous populations and subsistence users in the park's management. She noted how this model was related to the management arranged for the Bear's Ears National Monument by tribal representatives along with US agencies and including tribal knowledge and science. (This plan is now in jeopardy by the Trump administration's plan to roll back the scope of the monument boundaries).

National Sierra Club board elections are going on now. Barb Frank, who has served on the national board, spoke of the importance of voting in this election. If you are Sierra Club member, you should have received your ballot in the mail. (if not, you can vote online). The latest issue of Muir View has an article about the elections including how to vote electronically, information about candidates and endorsements. Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/jmcnews0418>. Voting concludes April 25.

Next gathering, Tuesday, May 15

The **La Crosse County Landfill** is the site of our next club gathering. County Solid Waste and Sustainability Manager, Nick Nichols, will take our group on a tour of the landfill which boasts several sustainability features.

The landfill is a 350 acre complex which continually seeks to find new ways and partnerships to recycle, repurpose, and reuse materials to keep them out of the waste stream. A DNR Green Tier Program participant, the landfill captures methane to fuel a local hospital complex, chips clean wood waste as an energy source for a local power plant, collects asphalt shingles to be ground and delivered to a local asphalt manufacturer for highway construction, collects concrete and used blacktop to be ground up and used for road base, and collects over 30,000 pounds of partially used paints, household cleaners, auto care cleaners and lubricants, pesticides and more from citizens, to be beneficially reused again by someone else in the community.

Meet at 6 p.m. at the County Landfill (about 0.8 mile beyond Woodmans toward West Salem). You need not be a Sierra Club member to participate. If you would like to carpool - need or can provide a ride - or would like more information, email us at crsierraclub@gmail.com

Thank you Dr Higgins for sharing your experience and knowledge of this important issue. Also thanks to guests Don Ferber and Jim Kerler, chapter leaders. If you have ideas for future speakers or meetings, please email us at crsierraclub@gmail.com.

SunVest Solar Group Buy

Chapter chair Don Ferber introduced a new partnership that will allow state Sierra Club members to purchase and install solar panels with a substantial group by discount.

The group buy will help shift Wisconsin from fossil fuels toward clean, renewable energy. Pewaukee-based **SunVest Solar** will help members reduce upfront costs and simplify the installation process. Also, for each unit installed through the program, SunVest will make a donation to the Sierra Club-John Muir Chapter to support conservation work in Wisconsin. The program is open to homeowners, businesses, and non-profits.

Find and fill out the contact form at sunvest.com/programs/sierraclub and SunVest will respond with an initial design and on-site assessment showing production and cost estimates.

DATES TO REMEMBER! (more events posted at cr-sierra.blogspot.com)

Tuesday, April 3 - Election day (myvote.wi.gov)

Monday, April 9 - Conservation Congress meetings 7 p.m. (dnr.wi.gov/About/WCC/springhearing.html)

Wednesday, April 11 - The Importance of Frogs (Friends of the Black River) 6:30 p.m., Jackson Cty Bank

Saturday, April 21 - Woodland Stewardship for Women 9 am Kickapoo Reserve

April 23-24 - Leading the Charge (toward renewable communities) in Eau Claire

Thursday, April 26 - Pollinator Pub Crawl, La Crosse

Saturday, April 28 - Water Action Volunteer Training, 10 am, La Farge

Saturday, April 28 - **Highway Clean Up**, 9 a.m., River Valley Drive, La Crosse

Sunday, April 29 - **La Crosse area Earth Fair** 11 a.m. Myrick Park

Highway Clean Up April 28

The Coulee Region group will clean up its adopted section of roadway - River Valley Drive in La Crosse - on **Saturday morning, April 28 beginning at 9:00 a.m.** As usual, we will meet in the parking area of the water pumping station just northwest of the stop lights at the intersection of Gillette Street (Hwy B) and River Valley Drive. Gloves, safety vests, and bags will be provided.

Our club clean up is part of the general Earth weekend clean up of the marsh area. At noon, a lunch for all clean up volunteers will be served at the Myrick Rod and Gun Club Shelter.

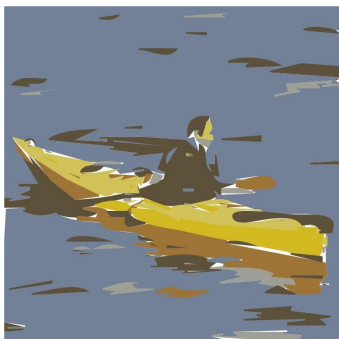
If you have questions, please contact Maureen at 608 784-9324.

Clean Water Act Monitors

The John Muir Chapter Water Team is seeking volunteers to help monitor compliance with the Clean Water Act by reading through permit papers at DNR offices. If you are interested in helping, please email us at crsierraclub@gmail.com.

Black River Trail Helpers

Efforts are underway to have the Black River designated as a National Water Trail. Friends of the Black River (www.friendsoftheblackriver.org) is seeking volunteers interested in working on the application and planning for projects needed to meet the criteria for National Water Trail designation. For more info or to volunteer, please contact info_fbr@yahoo.com.



REAP - Rural Energy Help

The United States Department of Agriculture is seeking applicants for renewable energy systems and energy efficiency projects under the Rural Energy for America Program. Loan guarantees and grants will be provided to agricultural producers and rural small businesses to help them reduce energy costs and install renewable energy systems. Eligible systems include wind, solar, hydro-electric, ocean, hydrogen, geothermal, or renewable biomass (including anaerobic digesters).

The deadline to apply for grants is April 30. Applications for loan guarantees are accepted year round. Find more information on page 10829 of the March 13, 2018 Federal Register (<http://tinyurl.com/2018reapinfo>)

CAFO/Water Quality Update

Karst geology is vulnerable to groundwater pollution. Significant portions of southwest Wisconsin have karst geology. This is similar to the geology present in northeast Wisconsin, including Kewaunee County, where more than one-third of private wells are unsafe due to high contamination levels.

In northeast Wisconsin, part of what has made it possible to begin addressing the problems was a sophisticated groundwater study that definitively nailed down the extent and source of the contamination using genetic testing. (<http://tinyurl.com/kewaukeeccontamination>)

Given the similar geology in southwest Wisconsin and the large number of people using private wells, our region should conduct a similar groundwater study to allow us to learn the extent and sources of contamination. Please let your county board members and county conservationist know that you support this kind of groundwater testing in your area. [information provided by Bill Davis, John Muir Chapter Chair]