



Sierra

Newsletter of the Coulee Region Group
JANUARY 2018

"There is no power for change greater than a community taking its future into its own hands." - Margaret Wheatley

Industrial Ag in the Driftless

How do we protect our communities?

Networking • Panel Discussion • Q&A • Keynote • Next Steps

Featuring Panelists:

Dr. Kevin Rodolfo - Professor Emeritus, Department of Earth & Environmental Sciences, University of Illinois at Chicago

Tressie Kamp - Midwest Environmental Advocates

Scott Dye - Socially Responsible Agricultural Project

Mary Dougherty - Farms Not Factories, Sustain Rural Wisconsin Network

Mike Mueller - Pioneer Gardens Farm, Driftless Area Back to the Land Cooperative

Saturday
January
20
2018
1:00-5:30pm

AmericInn
1700 Elm Street • Boscobel, WI

FREE & OPEN TO ALL
(Donations at door will help pay for costs)

Keynote speaker: **Dr. John Ikerd** Defending Rural Communities against Economic Colonization

Rural America is being "colonized" by multinational corporations whose main goal is maximizing profits for investors and managers. Industrializing agriculture, as we see in concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs), is the primary strategy for this colonization. The inevitable outcome is degradation of rural communities and their vital natural resources and economies. The only effective defense against rural economic colonization is the power of community—people coming together to claim their unalienable rights to a clean air, clean water, and enough good food.



Driftless Area Slope Map
Joshua Wachuta

Co-sponsors include: Crawford Stewardship Project • Midwest Environmental Advocates • Preserve Grant County Farmland • Socially Responsible Agricultural Project • Concerned Citizens for Smart Growth • St Croix County Defending our Water • Coulee Region Sierra Club • Farms Not Factories • Sustain Rural Wisconsin Network • South Central Wisconsin Farmers Union • Family Farm Defenders • Green County Defending Our Farmland • Echo Valley Hope • Wisconsin Network for Peace Justice and Sustainability • Upper Mississippi River Region Interleague Organization • League of Women Voters • Friends of the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway • Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters

For more information: tinyurl.com/Jan20-DriftlessAg • Forest Jahnke, 608-632-2183, fjahnke@crawfordstewardship.org

*"CAFOs generate large quantities of manure, both liquid and solid. The bacteria, phosphorous, nitrates and other substances in manure can contaminate water supplies. The management and disposal of this manure is the source of many of the problems that can arise from one of these facilities. To put the amount of manure generated in context, a dairy CAFO with 2,500 cows generates the same amount of waste as a city of 410,000 residents. Unlike cities, however, CAFOs do not treat the sewage they produce." - from **CAFOs: A Threat to Water in Wisconsin**, John Muir Chapter Sierra Club, June 2017 (<https://tinyurl.com/jmsc-CAFOpaper>)*

Please join us at this important regional conference organized by individuals and organizations concerned about the size and number of industrial agricultural operations moving into the sensitive Driftless region. If you can, please print and post flyers, share the FB event, share on Twitter

or other social media, organize a carpool. With former Wisconsin DNR Secretary Kathy Stepp soon to head the regional EPA office, clearly communities need to become more creative, more organized, more determined, and more self-reliant to protect our environment.

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

Tuesday, January 9 - MPower Showcase 8 am, Western Technical College (<http://tinyurl.com/2018-mpower>)

Saturday, January 13 - Snowshoe Hike 10 am Onalaska (tinyurl.com/mvc-snowshoe) PLEASE RSVP

Saturday, January 13 - Kickapoo Valley Reserve Winter Fest 10 am to evening (tinyurl.com/kvr-01132018)

January 15 through 27 - La Crosse Winter Rec Fest (www.laxwinterrecfest.com)

Monday, January 15 - Martin Luther King Jr event 7 pm Viterbo Fine Arts Ctr (

Saturday, January 20 - INDUSTRIAL AG in the DRIFTLESS conference 1 pm Boscobel AmericInn

Saturday, February 3 - PROGRESSTIVAL 2 pm Concordia Ballroom, La Crosse

Saturday, February 3 - 6th Annual LOVE THE LAND 7 pm Gays Mills (crawfordstewardship.org)

Tuesday, March 26 - Coulee Region Sierra Club meeting 7 pm Ho-Chunk House, 8th & Main



Save the Date! Tuesday, March 26!

Our next Coulee Region Sierra Club meeting will feature a talk on **From Copper to Conservation in Alaska's Wrangell-St. Elias National Park** by Margot Higgins. Margot has lived and conducted research in Wrangell-St. Elias Park for the last decade. Having graduated from the Environmental Science, Policy, and Management Program at UC Berkeley in 2015, she is currently a lecturer in the Environmental Studies Program at UWL. Please mark your calendars and plan to join us!

Think Ahead!

The John Muir Chapter hosts some amazing outings every year. Some are so popular that it doesn't hurt to reserve a space well in advance. Annual favorites locally include Black and Kickapoo River trips. Watch the calendar for new outings, too (www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/outings-events) These summer events are on the calendar now:

July 12-15 Women's Namekagon Canoe & Camp

July 27-August 5 Women's Quetico Canoe/ Portage

August 3-12 Anglers' Quetico Canoe/ Portage

August 31-September 9 Paddlers' Quetico Canoe/ Portage



Here's a phot of participants in last September's outing on the Kickapoo River (view the video at youtu.be/xwXryHDsEfI) Thanks to John Sullivan for producing this video and sharing it with us.

Enviro Education Grants!

There's still time to apply for 2018 Environmental Education grants of up to \$200. to help make sure students learn about our environment. The **application for 2018 grants** is available at tinyurl.com/crsc-2018grantapp. Teachers and organizations who work with elementary and middle school children in the Coulee Region (Crawford, Grant, Jackson, La Crosse, Monroe, Trempealeau, and Vernon county) may apply. **Deadline is January 5, 2018**

CR Sierra Club 2018 Board

Your 2018 Coulee Region Sierra Club Board members will be Kathy Allen, Bill Katra, Maureen Kinney, George Nygaard, Avery Van Gaard, Cathy Van Maren, and Pat Wilson. Thanks to those who voted.

If you have suggestions for 2018 programs, projects, events, or activities, please feel free to contact the board at crsierraclub@gmail.com.

**THANK YOU Barb and Don Frank
for hosting our
December 19 Winter Gathering!**

Looking back, looking forward. The Coulee Region Sierra Club was active during 2017 both in hosting events and actions and providing opportunities for members and friends to experience the outdoors. In 2018 we will continue to seek ways to include more members in events held around the region.

Transportation

- * The Coulee Region Group joined many other La Crosse area organizations in opposing a new highway through the La Crosse River marsh. At the end of the year, the state DOT dropped its effort to construct a new road.
- * Our March 2017 program included Mayor Tim Kabat, along with Professors Chuck Lee and James Longhurst (UWL History Department) discussing The City of La Crosse Transportation Vision - A Plan of Action.
- * We continued road cleanups on River Valley Drive, the Coulee Region Group's adopted highway, with two cleanups this year and a darned good try at holding a third (twice defeated by inclement weather!)

Activism

- * Coulee Region Group members attended April Conservation Congress meetings to talk about and vote on policies from water quality and DNR permitting processes to frac sand and other mining policies.
- * Our members commented on proposed DNR changes and some attended Conservation Lobby Day in March
- * Our club joined with other organizations to host a screening of the film, SUSTAINABLE, as a fundraiser for Midwest Environmental Advocates

Water Quality

- * Coulee Region Sierra Club members joined others in Madison on February 8 for Citizen Water Lobby Day hosted by the Sustain Rural Wisconsin Network. Attendees networked, heard from speakers, and visited with their state representatives and senators.
- * In March the Club held a well-attended media event at the Myrick Park Center to highlight World Water Day and local and state water quality issues.
- * In October, the club hosted a water quality forum in Town of Holland to discuss contamination issues in north La Crosse County. We were fortunate that local officials volunteered as panelists for the event.

Environmental Education

- * The Coulee Region Group supported and had a booth at the Progresstival in January, the Coulee Region Climate Alliance Climate Action Fair in March, the La Crosse Earth Fair in April, and the Open Streets event in September.
- * We continued our environmental grant program, providing three grants totaling \$600 to elementary and middle schools in Holmen, La Crosse, and Cuba City. These grants support environmental education projects in the schools.
- * At our September meeting, we heard from Judson Steinbach of Coulee Region Ecoscapes

Climate Change/Renewable Energy/Sustainability

- * Our club screened the film DISOBEDIENCE: The Rise of the Fossil Fuel Resistance
- * We sponsored a tour of the sustainable features of the new UWL Student Union
- * At our March meeting we welcomed members of UWL's Students for Sustainability

Green Spaces

- * The Coulee Region Group co-sponsored a canoe outing on the Black River in July and on the Kickapoo River in September.
- * The Coulee Region Group is represented by Pat Wilson on the La Crosse Park Department Environmental Leadership Forum.

Coming in 2018 Local and global environmental challenges will continue into 2018. How can each Sierra Club member get more active to strengthen our protection of our natural resources, public lands, and clean air and water. We are still seeking club members from around the Coulee Region to help report on issues and events and to help bring the Sierra Club to local events. If you would like to help - by reporting on local happenings or volunteering to table at a local event (for example, the January 20 event in Boscobel), please contact us at crsierraclub@gmail.com