



Sierra

Newsletter of the Coulee Region Group

JULY 2021

"The worst is yet to come, affecting our children's and grandchildren's lives much more than our own." - latest draft report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (<https://tinyurl.com/IPCCJune21Draft>)



Kid-Friendly Black River Paddling Weekend is *BACK!* July 24-25

After a hiatus last year due to covid restrictions, the local Black River family paddling/camping trip is back! This kid-focused trip is offered to encourage young families, adults with kids, and the young-at-heart to join us on the water. We'll stop to play and explore, hike up a hidden waterfall, cook-out and sleep in tents on a sandbar. For more information, visit <https://tinyurl.com/SCBlkRvrTrp21>

July 20: Highway Cleanup

Please join us on July 20 at 6 p.m. for our first IN PERSON highway cleanup in more than a year! We'll meet at the pumping station just northwest of the intersection of Gillette Street and River Valley Drive. There, you will get gloves, bags, and vests. We'll pick up trash along the roadway and then, meet up at Rudy's Drive-In on La Crosse Street for some post-cleanup refreshments! If you have questions, please call Pat at 608-788-8831.



July 27: Farming While Black

The Wisconsin Sierra Club Water Team is hosting an important online discussion on Tuesday, July 27 at 7 p.m. about Sustainable Farming. The evening will begin with "Uprooting Racism, Seeding Sovereignty," a keynote address delivered by Soul Fire Farm's Co-Founder and Farm Manager, Leah Penniman. Her book, *Farming While Black*, is, "the first comprehensive manual for African-heritage people ready to reclaim their rightful place of dignified agency in the food system." Read more about the work at : www.farmingwhileblack.org and sign up for the screening and discussion at tinyurl.com/WSCFarmingProg

CAFO updates and actions

If you missed the excellent June 5 Farm/Factories/Future program, you can watch online at <https://youtu.be/TadukhpIGwE>

From Crawford Stewardship Project: Nearly 100 people made their voices heard on June 10th at the Wisconsin DNR hearing regarding the Roth Feeder Pig II operation in Crawford County. Many more have written in to the DNR directly. Noted concerns mentioned in the hearing included water quality, water quantity, air quality, tourism, property values, and much more. There was only one person in favor of the factory farm, the operator himself.

We're expecting the DNR to make a decision in the next couple weeks on whether they'll be conducting an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), which has been widely called for, or if they continue to move forward with the permitting of this facility. Despite the comment period officially ending for the permitting of the facility on June 17th, because the EIS request is a distinct determination, there should be continued requests to the DNR to complete an EIS. The Wisconsin Environmental Policy Act (WEPA), a foundational environmental statute, mandates a broader scope than what's being reviewed through the Roth permitting documents. Currently, topics like odor, air quality and socioeconomic effects would only be reviewed through an EIS, and is not something the DNR has considered up to this point.

To ensure the DNR is reviewing the proposal holistically, please write to the below individuals to request an EIS. Let them know that they cannot permit Roth Feeder Pig to grow into the largest hog CAFO in the state on one of the most sensitive landscapes in the state, without a more thorough study and analysis to inform their decision, and add conditions to protect water, air, soil, and our communities. If the DNR does not have the resources to adequately study potential impacts, they should simply not permit this operation.

Find the original request for an EIS, submitted in November by Midwest Environmental Advocates on behalf of CSP and over 200 local landowners and residents, and supported by many environmental, agricultural, good governance, and hunting/fishing organizations at crawfordstewardship.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Roth-EIS-Request.pdf

Email your request for an EIS to David.Siebert@wisconsin.gov, Todd.Ambs@wisconsin.gov and Preston.Cole@wisconsin.gov.

Grants for teachers, students

The Coulee Region Sierra Club will restart its program of grants for environmental education projects to school or community organizations involving young people at the elementary and middle school level. In addition, a new Stewardship Grant, will be added for high school seniors who demonstrate leadership, action, public engagement and understanding of the importance of environmental stewardship by all citizens and community members.

Programs and students in Crawford, Grant, Jackson, La Crosse, Monroe, Richland, Trempealeau and Vernon counties are eligible to apply.

Watch for application information and links in our August and fall newsletters!

July events

July 20 - The Sustainability Institute will host an online Sustainability Chat at 3 p.m. featuring a virtual tour of sustainability projects at La Crosse's Hamilton Early Learning Center/SOTA I, which include a solar array and food forest. Ben Burns, Hamilton-SOTA principal, and community partner, SOLS, will share their stories. Register (free) at tinyurl.com/SusChat0721

July 22 - La Crosse Area Transit Advocates will host a Ride SMRT to Viroqua day trip. Participants will ride the mid-morning Scenic Mississippi Regional Transit bus from La Crosse to Viroqua, spend the day seeing the sights, and return via SMRT to La Crosse in late afternoon. Jackie Eastwood, Transportation Planner with the La Crosse Area Planning Committee, will talk about the SMRT program during the morning ride. Read more: LaCrosseTransitAdvocates.org

The La Crosse County Comprehensive Planning Committee will focus on Farmland Preservation in July and plans a public event with area farmers to hear of their concerns and ideas. We will post the date on our social media as soon as it's available.

Many communities across the country, including La Crosse, are dealing with PFAS contamination in drinking water. But PFAS are found in many more things from makeup to household goods to bottled water to compost. The Center for Environmental Health has a single use foodware database at ceh.org/products/single-use-containers/ and Consumer Reports talks about bottled water PFAS at tinyurl.com/CRPFASWater.