



# Sierra

Newsletter of the Coulee Region Group  
**MARCH 2018**

*"What you do makes a difference. And you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make." - Jane Goodall*

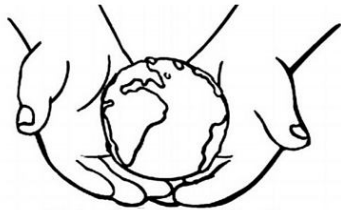
**TUESDAY, MARCH 26 at 7 p.m.**  
**MVC and hiking in the La Crosse Area**  
**with David Bange and Sue Knopf**  
Ho-Chunk Three Rivers House  
(8th & Main, La Crosse)

Representing the Mississippi Valley Conservancy, **David Bange and Sue Knopf**, will talk about several sites protected by conservation easements held by MVC. The presentation will feature visual images from each of the sites. Each site is open to the public for hiking and other recreational activities. David and Sue will also talk about habitat restoration and volunteer opportunities at MVC. Directions, brochures, and maps for most sites will be available.

The meeting will also include updates on recent state and local Sierra Club activities and refreshments. Everyone is welcome to attend. You need not be a Sierra Club member.

## March 2 Climate Action Fest

The Sierra Club will table at the fourth annual Climate Action Festival hosted by Coulee Region Climate Alliance. For more information visit the event page: [tinyurl.com/laxcaf2019](http://tinyurl.com/laxcaf2019)



The Coulee Region's 4<sup>th</sup> Annual

## Climate Action Festival

Saturday, March 2, 1:00-4:00  
at First Congregational Church  
2503 Main Street, La Crosse

Local groups and activists will be present to show what they're doing to combat climate change and to share actions **you** can take to make a difference!

<https://tinyurl.com/laxcaf2019>



*"You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you. What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make."*

- Jane Goodall

## March 30 Regenerative Ag

*Farmer to Farmer –*

## REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE:



*healthy soils, clean water and increased profits*

**Keynote Speaker – Dan Shelliam**, Windy Hill Ranch, Hazel Green, Wi.

Presentation will be followed by a panel offering additional information and resources along with an opportunity for questions.

**Saturday, March 30, 2019 – 1 - 4 pm**

Nohr Gallery, Ullsvik Hall, UW-Platteville • Free Admission  
Hickory & West Main Street • Platteville, Wisconsin

Grant County Rural Stewardship and the Sustain Rural Wisconsin Network will co-sponsor a program about environmentally sustainable agriculture practices on March 30 in Platteville. See [facebook.com/events/36775899072171100](https://facebook.com/events/36775899072171100) SRWN is a statewide coalition of individuals and organizations working to preserve the environment while maintaining the health and economic vitality of rural communities. [sustainruralwisconsin.org](http://sustainruralwisconsin.org).

Babcock Genetics, Inc., a La Crosse county hog CAFO, has applied for a renewal of its wastewater permit. There will be a **public informational hearing about the permit request starting at 10 am at Town of Holland Town Hall. W7937 Cty Hwy MH on Thursday, March 14.** More at [tinyurl.com/0314cafohearing](http://tinyurl.com/0314cafohearing)

## CRSC members meet with Senator Jennifer Shilling



From left: Avery Van Gaard (CRSC), Obbie King (La Crosse Area Transit Advocates), Sen. Jennifer Shilling, Pat Wilson (CRSC), Carolyn Dvorak (Wisconsin Bike Fed), and Cathy Van Maren (CRSC)

On February 15, members of the Coulee Region Sierra Club and other local alternative transportation advocates met with State Senator Jennifer Shilling to talk about the transportation budget.

The John Muir Chapter Sierra Club has five specific goals for this year's transportation budget:

- No new highway expansion enumerations
- \$36 million per year increase in transit spending
- 35% increase in local road funding
- Increases annually for special transportation
- Keep transit funding in transportation fund

in addition to these points, advocates expressed support for better bike/ped funding and infrastructure. Senator Shilling was very open to the discussion and mentioned that the governor has reached out to a range of transportation "stakeholders" for input on the budget. She also reminded the group that the Republican led legislature will limit the scope of improvements that can be made during this budget cycle. We thank Sen. Shilling for meeting with our group and hope to support efforts to refocus the state's transportation funding on local roads, public transportation, and bike/ped improvements.

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## Raise your voice!

CRSC continues to work on a La Crosse Ready for 100% resolution. Our January 26 Climate Conversations ended with a goal of better educating and informing our community about catastrophic global warming, the benefits of moving to renewables, and the ways individuals, neighborhoods, organizations, businesses and governments can take action.



If you live in La Crosse county, please sign the PETITION supporting this initiative: [tinyurl.com/crsc100petition](http://tinyurl.com/crsc100petition)

If you live in another community, consider 1) asking your mayor or municipality leader to sign the Mayors for 100 pledge ([sc.org/mayors-action](http://sc.org/mayors-action)) and 2) starting a Ready for 100 campaign where you live ([www.sierraclub.org/ready-for-100](http://www.sierraclub.org/ready-for-100))

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On Feb. 28, Governor Tony Evers unveiled his budget proposal for the next biennium. It includes a raise in the gas tax, a proposal for carbon-free electricity by 2050, water quality improvements and more. We will highlight details in the April edition of this newsletter.

**Sierra #1803**

Newsletter of the Coulee Region Group, John Muir Chapter, Sierra Club is published four times per year.  
Coulee Region Sierra Club, 620 S 23rd Street,  
La Crosse, WI 54601

## Thank you, CS Sherin

Living the Greener Life was the subject of a CRSC hosted presentation by Chandra Sherin on Tuesday, February 5 at the Ho-Chunk Three Rivers House in La Crosse. Highlighting scientific evidence that our stuff filled lives are causing great harm to our planet, its oceans, wildlife, natural areas, and even to the future habitability of the Earth, Chandra shared many statistics and reports.

She talked about plastic pollution in our oceans, inland waters, and lands, then noted that plastic production could actually *increase* by 40% over the next decade. Not only are plastics persistent and toxic, but they are also made from and/or with fossil fuels. As electricity production and transportation seek to move to renewable generation, the oil industry is investing big in new production facilities.

Chandra talked about changes she's made and encouraged those in attendance to consider how we can lessen our adverse impacts on the environment.

Some suggestions include being aware of and trying to limit or end plastic use, finding non-toxic alternatives to household and personal products, being aware of how our transportation choices affect greenhouse gas emissions that drive catastrophic global warming, and learning about and advocating for more sustainable practices in our communities. She has even more tips and recipes in her book, *Recipe for a Greener Life* ([wildclover.org/recipe-for-a-green-life/](http://wildclover.org/recipe-for-a-green-life/))

## Plastic Free Groups

Around the Coulee Region, local groups are working to bring awareness about and alternatives to plastics to their communities. **Greener Cashton** (facebook.com/GreenerCashton), a new group started by Jolly Joiners 4-H, will host a reusable bag making workshop on April 7 at 3 pm at Cashton HS (www.facebook.com/events/323046381651070) **Viroqua Plastic Free**

(facebook.com/pg/Viroquaaction) hosted a plastic film fest last fall and the film A Plastic Ocean in November. **In La Crosse, a plastic group is forming** with a meeting on Monday, March 4 at 3 pm at Cabin Coffee (401 Jay Street) in La Crosse. Is there a plastic awareness group in your community? Let us know! crsierraclub@gmail.com.

On the other side of this page are handouts and notes from several reduce plastic, reduce waste organizations. Copy and/or clip them to hand out at stores, restaurants, to friends and relatives to encourage others to reduce their use of plastics. Visit the web sites to find more resources. See also myplasticfreelife.com

## Enviro Lobby Day - March 27

Wisconsin Conservation Voters is hosting an environmental lobby day at the State Capitol in Madison on Wednesday, March 27. Citizens from around the state will hear from speakers, learn about issues, have a chance to meet with their legislators, and network with others about issues of clean water, clean energy and public lands. Some Coulee Region members may be able to take a bus to and from the day long event. For event information, see conservationvoters.org/events/conservation-lobby-day and for bus availability (Eau Claire-Black River Falls-Tomah-Wis Dells-Madison and back) see https://secure.everyaction.com/7CT2CkaWZkGQuXJzBru49Q

## Voices for the Earth speak at WEF

In case you missed the forceful, moving statements of notable environmental activists and scientists at the January 2019 World Economic Forum (WEF) at Davos, Switzerland, here are links to several videos from the event.

Special address by **Greta Thunberg**, 15 year old Swedish climate activist. https://youtu.be/M7dVF9xylaw

Sir David Attenborough, **The Garden of Eden is No More**. https://youtu.be/xuudPum21nE

**What are the Top Ten Global Risks in the next Ten Years?** https://youtu.be/HaUCEcWGdys

Panel discussion led by Al Gore, **Safeguarding the Planet**. https://youtu.be/JA6hxnk7R0w

Panel discussion, **Taking Action for the Ocean**. https://youtu.be/t91KX0T81E4

## Incentives for going green

**March 7** is the deadline for the **Mpower program sponsored by the Sustainability Institute** at Western Technical College. The Mpower program guides and supports businesses in assessing their current practices and making



changes that save money and energy. For more details, see <http://sustaininstitute.com/mpower/>

**Focus on Energy** provides rebates and free stuff for residential households in participating utilities' territories. Homeowners may receive \$20 for recycling an old appliance, order \$40 worth of free energy saving items, or qualify for hundreds of dollars back on updated heating, cooling, or renewable energy systems. Incentives are available until the funds for the year are exhausted so don't delay. Find more at <https://focusonenergy.com/residential>

**RENEW Wisconsin's Solar for Good** initiative fosters the expansion of solar power among mission-based nonprofits and houses of worship in Wisconsin.

In partnership with local philanthropists Cal and Laurie Couillard, RENEW Wisconsin awards grants to nonprofit organizations to assist them in installing solar PV. Solar for Good also offers small grants for technical assistance and helps publicize funded projects to spread the word and educate Wisconsin about the benefits of solar.

**The Spring 2019 grant-funding cycle will begin Friday, March 1, 2019.** Completed applications, including proof of tax-exempt status and solar site assessments or proposals are due by 5:00pm Friday, April 12, 2019. Winning grantees will be announced on or before May 1, 2019. Read more and get an application at: [www.renewwisconsin.org/solarforgood/](http://www.renewwisconsin.org/solarforgood/)



# the Last plastic Straw

HELP END PLASTIC POLLUTION!

Please only serve straws upon request.

Learn more at: [thelastplasticstraw.org](http://thelastplasticstraw.org)

[f TheLastPlasticStraw](https://www.facebook.com/TheLastPlasticStraw) [n noplasticstraws](https://www.instagram.com/noplasticstraws) [#NoPlasticStraws](https://twitter.com/NoPlasticStraws)



**PLEASE ONLY SERVE STRAWS UPON REQUEST**

- Consider providing paper straws.
- List on your menu: "Straws available upon Request"
- Let Staff and Patrons know that you are part of the global movement to eliminate single use plastic waste and helping to save the planet One Sip at a Time!

INFORMATION+RESOURCES AT: [thelastplasticstraw.org](http://thelastplasticstraw.org)

## TAKE THE 4Rs PLEDGE

<https://www.plasticpollutioncoalition.org/take-action-1>

**REFUSE** disposable plastic whenever and wherever possible. Choose items that are not packaged in plastic, and carry your own bags, containers and utensils. Say 'no straw, please.'

**REUSE** durable, non-toxic straws, utensils, to-go containers, bottles, bags, and other everyday items. Choose glass, paper, stainless steel, wood, ceramic and bamboo over plastic.

**REDUCE** your plastic footprint. Cut down on your consumption of goods that contain excessive plastic packaging and parts. If it will leave behind plastic trash, don't buy it.

**RECYCLE** what you can't refuse, reduce or reuse. Pay attention to the entire life cycle of items you bring into your life, from source to manufacturing to distribution to disposal.

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

As one of your regular customers, I am asking you to join with Ikea, Costco, Whole Foods and other retailers either by 1) offering a \$.05 or \$.10 credit per bag for customers who bring their own and/or 2) introducing a .15 cent fee on single-use plastic bags. Charging for disposable bags and rewarding the use of reusable bags works. It saves consumer dollars, saves retailer dollars, saves the environment, and promotes cooperation between public and private sectors. I would love to help with this in any way I can. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely, \_\_\_\_\_

Phone/Email: \_\_\_\_\_

[http://www.bagitmovie.com/get\\_involved.html](http://www.bagitmovie.com/get_involved.html)

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

As one of your regular customers, I am asking you to join with Ikea, Costco, Whole Foods and other retailers either by 1) offering a \$.05 or \$.10 credit per bag for customers who bring their own and/or 2) introducing a .15 cent fee on single-use plastic bags. Charging for disposable bags and rewarding the use of reusable bags works. It saves consumer dollars, saves retailer dollars, saves the environment, and promotes cooperation between public and private sectors. I would love to help with this in any way I can. I look forward to hearing from you.

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**Refuse** UNNECESSARY STUFF

**BYOR** **ReTake** YOUR OWN REUSABLES

**ReConsider** YOUR HABITS

**takeout without**

Join the campaign to **reduce restaurant waste!**

**FILL YOUR STOMACH. NOT THE LANDFILL.**

[www.takeoutwithout.org](http://www.takeoutwithout.org)

**takeout without** **TAKE ACTION!**

**10 (of the many) things a restaurant can do to significantly reduce waste**

1. Join [www.takeoutwithout.com](http://www.takeoutwithout.com)
2. Use reusables instead of disposables for everything possible
3. Use compostable, safe options for your required disposables
4. Reduce the amount of packaging to what is only absolutely necessary
5. Sell smart & safe solutions (reusables) such as bottles, containers, straws, bags etc.
6. Incent your customers to bring/use reusables by offering a discount or something for free
7. Recycle and compost on site
8. Donate surplus food to a community meal service or directly to those in need
9. Applaud yourself! Change comes from **without**
10. Pass this on to others and encourage them to be a TOWO champion

## Push is on for Green New Deal

The Green New Deal (GND) is non-binding legislation that has been introduced in the US House and Senate. It calls for immediate bold action to drastically cut greenhouse gas emissions by replacing fossil fuel systems with renewable energy, rebuild our crumbling infrastructure, and prioritize economic justice and protection of transitioning energy workers and vulnerable communities. GND is a response to decades' of research summarized in a recent report by the International Panel on Climate Change warning we have about 12 years to make drastic cuts to carbon emissions or risk tipping the planet into climate instability that may affect the ability of humans to survive.

The US has been a leader in greenhouse gas emissions, per capita and by country, for most of the century. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration reports that in the past ten years, the costs of global warming driven "billion dollar events" like fires, floods, and storms is more than \$850 billion with more than 5,500 deaths. Recently, Morgan Stanley has concluded that the costs of damages from similar events may be \$54 TRILLION by 2040. As global warming increases, the frequency and severity of these storms will increase. And as sea levels rise, far more people living in heavily populated coastal cities will be affected.

The Sierra Club endorses the GND. "It would mobilize vast public resources to help us transition from an economy built on exploitation and fossil fuels to one driven by dignified work and clean energy. Climate change and inequality are inextricably linked. We cannot tackle one without addressing the other. A Green New Deal would take on both.

"GND would upgrade our infrastructure, revitalize our energy system, retrofit our buildings, and restore our ecosystems. In so doing, it would cut pollution while creating millions of family-sustaining jobs, expanding access to clean air and water, raising wages, and building climate resilience. To counteract inequality, those benefits would go first and foremost to the working class families and communities of color that have endured the brunt of the fossil fuel economy."

GND legislation priorities include:

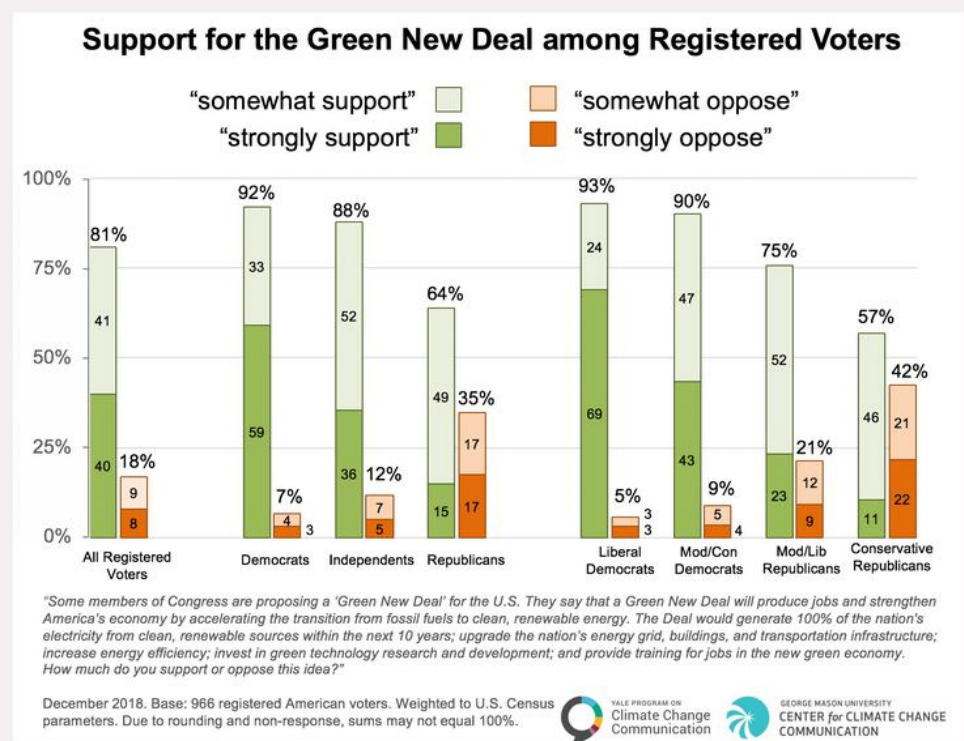
- \* swift transition to a clean energy economy
- \* replace lead pipes, clean toxic waste sites, and reduce toxic pollution from fossil fuel processing and use
- \* ensure quality jobs in weatherization, infrastructure upgrades, renewable installations, new businesses
- \* help climate-exposed communities rebuild and upgrade to meet climate change consequences already coming due to our failure to act so far
- \* lower costs for families, businesses, and governments

The Sierra Club encourages members to learn more about the climate crisis and GND legislation. Contact your US Senators and US Representative to talk about your concerns and ask what they will do to take real action on global warming. Learn more at <https://www.sunrisemovement.org/gnd>

Locally, GND supporters met with US Rep. Ron Kind's La Crosse aide on Friday, February 8 to deliver a letter urging him to co-sponsor the GND (there are currently 84 House co-sponsors). Rep. Kind invited GND supporters to meet with him at UWL on February 22 but that meeting was canceled because of a snow storm. A rescheduled meeting is promised. We will post date, time, location as soon as it is arranged.

In the meantime, please call Senator Tammy Baldwin and Senator Ron Johnson. Call Rep. Kind. Talk to your friends, neighbors, and co-workers.

The survey results show overwhelming support for the Green New Deal, with 81% of registered voters saying they either "strongly support" (40%) or "somewhat support" (41%) this plan.



Yale program on Climate Change Communication [climatecommunication.yale.edu/publications/the-green-new-deal-has-strong-bipartisan-support/](http://climatecommunication.yale.edu/publications/the-green-new-deal-has-strong-bipartisan-support/)



Coulee Region Sierra Club  
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La Crosse, WI 54601

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**DATES TO REMEMBER!** (links to events at [cr-sierra.blogspot.com](http://cr-sierra.blogspot.com))

- Mar. 2 **4th Annual Climate Action Festival** 1 p.m. First Congregational Church, La Crosse
- Mar. 2 **Nature photo workshop** 10 to noon Upper Mississippi Wildlife and Fish Refuge
- Mar. 2 **Washburn Garden Expo** 10:30 a.m. Lincoln Middle School, La Crosse
- Mar. 4 **Plastic Free La Crosse** 3 p.m. Cabin Coffee, 401 Jay St, La Crosse
- Mar. 7 **Panel discussion on La Crosse River Marsh** 7 pm 1400 Centennial Hall, UWL
- Mar. 14 **Public Info Hearing on reissue of CAFO permit for Babcock Genetics** 10 am Town of Holland
- Mar. 19 **Absentee In Person voting begins** in some municipalities (check with your clerk)
- Mar. 26 **Coulee Region Sierra Club program** 7 pm Ho-Chunk Three Rivers House, 8th & Main
- Mar. 27 **Conservation Lobby Day in Madison**
- Mar. 30 **REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE conference** 1 pm Platteville
- Apr. 2 **Election Day**

## **VOTE!**

On Tuesday, April 2, Wisconsin voters will choose a new Wisconsin Supreme Court Justice. This is a very important election for those concerned about everything from industrial agriculture to air and water quality to wetlands protection to access to public lands, gerrymandering, and more.

**In many Wisconsin municipalities, the “absentee in person” option allows voters to cast absentee ballots in their clerk’s office beginning Monday, March 18** This is useful for those who have a heavy schedule or may find it hard to travel to their polling place on election day. Contact your municipal clerk for details and hours.

You may register or update registration online (or start the process) up to 20 days before an election. You may register in your clerk’s office most other times and at the

polls on election day. More details about registration, voting, clerk’s hours, absentee in person voting and more may be found at [myvote.wi.gov](http://myvote.wi.gov). This site will also link you to your sample ballot.

In addition to the Supreme Court contest, there may be non-partisan offices on your ballot. And in La Crosse County there is a question about fair maps: “Should the Wisconsin legislature create a nonpartisan procedure for the preparation of legislative and congressional district plans and maps?”

