



# Sierra

Newsletter of the Coulee Region Group

MARCH 2022

"Some options for climate-resilient development have already been forfeited due to past societal choices. ... The extent and magnitude of climate change impacts are larger than estimated in previous assessments." - IPCC 6th Assessment Report

## March 15 at 7 p.m. ONLINE

### The Fight for Clean Water in Wisconsin

Guests: Johnson Bridgewater, River Alliance of Wisconsin, and Jamie O'Neill, Viterbo University

Register: [tinyurl.com/CRSC-0315Water](https://tinyurl.com/CRSC-0315Water)

From nitrates and phosphorous to PFAS and lead, contaminants in Wisconsin's waters have become an increasing threat to health, farms, businesses and wildlife. Johnson Bridgewater, current organizer with River Alliance of Wisconsin and former director



of the Oklahoma Chapter of the Sierra Club, will talk about the statewide clean water referendum initiative and weigh in on recent developments regarding PFAS regulation in the state. Jamie O'Neill, Event Planner and Outreach Coordinator with the College of Engineering, Letters and Sciences at Viterbo University, will discuss the upcoming Agnes W.H. Tan Science Symposium (March 25) which will focus on clean water issues. Join this important online discussion by registering at <https://tinyurl.com/CRSC-0315Water>. The program is free and open to anyone.

## Mar. 25 Science Symposium

Where does our drinking water come from and why does that matter? As contaminants are making their way into our drinking water, we are finding it hard to keep them out. With bottled water being less sustainable and also containing contaminants, we want to come together to learn the science behind how to keep our water clean. This symposium strives to empower attendees with scientific knowledge and inspire hopeful paths towards cleaner water. The conference begins with a Thursday, March 24 talk by Erin Brockovich. There will be in-person and virtual options. Learn more at [www.viterbo.edu/agnes-wh-tan-science-symposium](http://www.viterbo.edu/agnes-wh-tan-science-symposium)

## The Big Share

Support the important work of the Wisconsin Sierra Club by participating in The Big Share on Tuesday, March 1. The Big Share, hosted by Community Shares of Wisconsin (CSW), is an easy portal to supporting 70 state nonprofits dedicated to building an equitable and just community and protecting our environment. CSW and its members envision a future where all voices are heard, where we all have clean water and air, where all neighbors have access to family-supporting jobs, and all communities in Wisconsin are safe and thriving.



On Tuesday, March 1, from 4 to 5 p.m., the Wisconsin Sierra Club will join with partners and fellow Community Shares member groups to talk about collaborative efforts, including the environmental and social justice impacts of fossil fuel infrastructure and equity and access issues surrounding transportation policy in Wisconsin. Watch the livestreamed discussion at [www.facebook.com/events/1055416265325165](https://www.facebook.com/events/1055416265325165)

## WHAT'S IN OUR DRINKING

**Friday, March 25**  
**9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.**

IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL OPTIONS

AGNES W.H. TAN  
SCIENCE SYMPOSIUM

VITERBO UNIVERSITY

## March 15 Deadline for High School Award!

The Coulee Region Sierra Club seeks to promote environmental stewardship through enduring, fair, and equitable action. Protection of air, water, land, wildlife habitats, and the climate is a primary goal. CRSC believes that all people of all ages can help protect the natural environment for present and future generations through active engagement. New for 2021-2022, CRSC will recognize the achievements of and award \$150 to a high school senior who demonstrates leadership, action, and environmental stewardship, and who understands the importance of civic engagement in protecting our environment.

Eligible students are those graduating from high school in 2022 who reside in the CRSC region: Crawford, Grant, Jackson, La Crosse, Monroe, Richland, Trempealeau, and Vernon counties. The application includes essays and submission of a portfolio. **The deadline for applications is March 15, 2022** with the award to be given by the end of April, 2022.



For more information and an application form, visit [www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/coulee/education](http://www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/coulee/education)

Funding for these environmental grants and awards 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. To learn more about donating, please email [CRSierraClub@gmail.com](mailto:CRSierraClub@gmail.com).

## More March Events

**March 3:** Women Supporting Mental Health training for Vernon, Crawford, and Grant county women hosted by Wisconsin Women in Conservation from 10 a.m. to noon online. [www.wiwic.org/upcoming-events](http://www.wiwic.org/upcoming-events)

**March 3:** Restoring the Driftless - Science, Studies and Strategies for Improving Our Region's Fisheries 9:40 a.m. [tu.myeventcenter.com/event/Restoring-The-Driftless-Day-2-59832](http://tu.myeventcenter.com/event/Restoring-The-Driftless-Day-2-59832)

**March 3-5:** Aldo Leopold Weekend including speakers and activities. Hosted by Mississippi Valley Conservancy [www.mississippivalleyconservancy.org/events/aldo-leopold-weekend](http://www.mississippivalleyconservancy.org/events/aldo-leopold-weekend)

**March 10:** Wisconsin Women in Conservation Educator Spring Meetup 10 a.m. online [www.wiwic.org/upcoming-events](http://www.wiwic.org/upcoming-events)

**March 10:** "What IS a climate action plan?" at 6 p.m. online. Host: Citizen Action of Wisconsin Driftless Co-op [secure.everyaction.com/NIOwVs1WY0GeXLx7XJ\\_29w2](http://secure.everyaction.com/NIOwVs1WY0GeXLx7XJ_29w2)

**March 16:** Clean Water Referendum at noon ONLINE <https://www.youtube.com/user/EnglishLutheran>

**March 24:** "What's in our drinking water?" 7 pm ONLINE [www.viterbo.edu/agnes-wh-tan-science-symposium/symposium-schedule-and-presenters](http://www.viterbo.edu/agnes-wh-tan-science-symposium/symposium-schedule-and-presenters)

**March 27-30:** National Bike Summit hosted by the League of American Bicyclists. Online option. [bikeleague.org/summit](http://bikeleague.org/summit)

## March 1: The Salty Facts

UWL Students for Sustainability will host a March 1 program about salt pollution in surface water featuring Shawn Giblin, Wisconsin DNR, and Allison Madison, Wisconsin SaltWise at 7 p.m. on the UWL campus AND online. Join by zoom: Program ID 923 0299 3225 and password: saltyfacts

**come learn the salty facts!**

All the salt applied to sidewalks, parking lots, and roads ends up in our freshwater where it stresses native freshwater organisms and pollutes our drinking water.

**3/1, 7:00pm  
Centennial 2213**

Shawn Giblin, WI DNR, will present the results of a regional chloride monitoring project investigating the extent of salt pollution in surface water. Allison Madison, WI Salt Wise, will discuss salt reduction successes and address actions that students and citizens can take to catalyze salt reduction work on campus and in the local community.

## Celebrating TED 22 with SMRT

By Barbara Richards, Viroqua Transit Equity Day (TED) began in 2018 sponsored by The Labor Network for Sustainability (LNS) to promote transit options for environmental, economic, and accessibility reasons. TED is celebrated annually on February 4, the birthday of Rosa Parks who ignited the Montgomery Bus Boycott in December, 1955. SMRT is Scenic Mississippi Regional Transit which operates four commuter bus routes weekdays in Crawford, Vernon, Monroe and La Crosse Counties.

As a member of the Wisconsin Sierra Club's Transportation Team I wanted to support TED 22. I contacted the central office of SMRT and got a positive response from Charlie Handy. I found a visual and some text on the LNS website, composed a poster, and had it printed and laminated at Proline Printers in Viroqua. I ordered roses from Quillin's to place on a bus seat with the poster on February 4. I also purchased a gift card for each of the five drivers as front-line worker "thank you".

The logistics were handled in a marvelous way. My friend who lives in the same home as I uses SMRT for medical appointments in La Crosse and as a link to long distance bus and train routes in La Crosse. She, being quite gregarious, has made friends with the drivers. Carl, in particular, has become a good friend. She decided to call him and let him know about the plans. The result was that he stopped by our house the week before the event to discuss the logistics of getting roses and posters to each of the buses the morning of February 4. We had a final meeting at the Running, Inc office in Viroqua. They handle the day to day operation.

As my friend was traveling on February 4 she was able to share in the experience directly and hear the driver, Carl, giving information to passengers about the special day as they boarded.

I was also able to have some schedules printed at Running, Inc for a poster display at the Viroqua Co-op and also on the electronic bulletin board at the McIntosh Memorial Library in Viroqua.

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## Transit Equity Days in La Crosse

La Crosse celebrated five days of talking and thinking about transit equity from January 31 through February 4. A coalition of groups including Coulee Region Sierra Club, La Crosse Area Transit Advocates, and the La Crosse MTU hosted educational displays, media events, a collection of riders' stories, and "Ride with Your Rep" ride-alongs to help elected officials learn more about how public transportation is an important tool in the goal of increasing equity and decreasing carbon emissions. Thanks to La Crosse Mayor Mitch Reynolds and La Crosse County for releasing proclamations in support of Transit Equity Day and the City of La Crosse for its resolution of support.

Statewide, the Wisconsin Sierra Club worked with the state Coalition for More Responsible Transportation and the AARP to plan and prepare actions including a Transit Equity Day proclamation from Governor Tony Evers. Regionally, CMRT partners met with other transit advocates from Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan through the RE-AMP Network And all groups worked under the founding organization - the Labor Network for Sustainability.

If your city, town, or county would like to organize TED events in 2023, email [crsierraclub@gmail.com](mailto:crsierraclub@gmail.com).

### An Invitation to Get Involved!

If you can help with any of these upcoming or on-going projects, email [crsierraclub@gmail.com](mailto:crsierraclub@gmail.com).

Staff a CRSC table at the La Crosse Earth Fair on April 24 any time between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m.

Report on environmental activities and events in your community for our newsletter.

Help produce the newsletter or be a back-up editor as needed.

### Spring Elections

The spring non-partisan election will be held on Tuesday, April 5, but in many communities, absentee-in-person voting will start March 21. Your in-person absentee voting locations and dates are based on where you live and what your municipal clerk's office offers. View your options at [myvote.wi.gov](http://myvote.wi.gov) where you can also check your registration and learn what's on your ballot. In some communities, a referendum on clean water will be on the ballot. Remember, that DROP BOXES WILL NOT BE ALLOWED DURING THE SPRING 2022 ELECTION. If you have questions, contact your local municipal clerk.