



# Sierra

Newsletter of the Coulee Region Group  
MAY 2016

"People of conscience need to break their ties with corporations financing the injustice of climate change." - Desmond Tutu

## Rally to ban frac sand mining, May 10

"The Sierra Club opposes the use of hydraulic fracturing (fracking). We must replace all fossil fuels with clean renewable energy, efficiency and conservation. Fracking poses unacceptable risks to our communities, our environment and our climate." *excerpt from National Sierra Club Board of Directors' statement on Fracking for Natural Gas and Oil, January 2015 (www.sierraclub.org/policy/energy/fracking)*

The Coulee Region Sierra Club will join an ad hoc coalition of area environmental, faith, health, and other organizations, The Alliance to Ban Frac Sand Mining and Address Climate Change, on May 9 and 10 to promote an end to frac sand mining in our region and state, and to educate the public about the dangers to our climate of continuing fossil fuel use.

These events coincide with a conference promoting new frac sand activities that will be held at the La Crosse Center.

Please consider joining the peaceful, family friendly rally on **Tuesday, May 10** beginning at **5:00 p.m. at the corner of Second and Pearl Streets.**

For more information, please visit the Facebook event site at [tinyurl.com/nolaxfrac](http://tinyurl.com/nolaxfrac)

"Scientists have found that inherent in the fracking process is the release of large quantities of methane, which is at least 34 times more potent than carbon dioxide as a cause of climate change." - [www.sacbee.com/opinion/op-ed/soapbox/article4530609.html](http://www.sacbee.com/opinion/op-ed/soapbox/article4530609.html)



Map of transportation options for La Crosse resulting from February 2015 planning charrette facilitated by Toole Design Group and City of La Crosse ([www.cityoflacrosse.org/filestorage/593/844/3606/5145/Transportationvision.pdf](http://www.cityoflacrosse.org/filestorage/593/844/3606/5145/Transportationvision.pdf))

## March meeting notes

At our March meeting, we welcomed Mayor Tim Kabat, who discussed the current state of La Crosse area transportation planning, and UWL Professors James Longworth and Chuck Lee, who talked about many transportation solutions identified in the 2015 City of La Crosse Transportation Vision that have not been included in the Wisconsin DOT Coulee Region Transportation Study. Thank you to our guests for a frank and informative conversation about this important issue.

Following the program, new board members were elected. Pat Wilson will chair the board this year. Maureen Kinney will be vice-chair, Danny Foote will continue as treasurer, Cathy Van Maren will be secretary, and Bill Katra will be the Conservation Chair. George Nygaard and Avery Van Gaard were also elected.

This year we will seek ways to expand our club's membership, partner with other area organizations, and provide more opportunities for members to be involved in the important work of the Sierra Club.

# Report from the chair

## **Coulee Group Elections:**

Board Members are:

Terms expiring 2017: Danny Foote, Bill Katra, Avery Van Gaard

Terms expiring 2018: Maureen Kinney, George Nygaard, Cathy Van Maren, Pat Wilson

The Board had its first meeting April 26 and elected the following officers:

Chair – Pat Wilson

Vice Chair – Maureen Kinney

Secretary – Cathy Van Maren

Treasurer – Danny Foote

Chapter Representative – George Nygaard

I want to thank the outgoing Board members – Marilyn Pedretti, Laura Siitari, and Randy Hoeltzen, for many years of service to the club. Marilyn as Chair, Laura as Newsletter Editor, and Randy as Program Chair and Outings Chair. I hope they stay active, because their contributions will be greatly missed.

## **The Coming Year:**

There's an overwhelming array of environmental issues vying for attention in 2016. The elections will be a major 2016 issue. The one big global issue is climate change, that has so many implications for us locally. Elimination of fossil fuel use is a major goal in this battle, having implications for transportation planning, oil trains, frac sand mining, air quality. Those are all areas the Sierra Club is participating in.

**The National Sierra Club's priority initiatives** are as follows, the first four directly addressing climate change. There are many ways the Coulee Group and its members can advance these goals through local action. I've listed a few ways below.

Ready for 100% - a drive for 100% renewable energy generation: For those who don't have photovoltaic electrical generation on their house, solar community gardens are becoming a more accessible option, including a recent offerings by Xcel Energy and Vernon Electric.

Beyond Oil – minimize oil use in our energy system, particularly in transportation: We can affect the amount of oil used through action on transportation planning. The current Wisconsin DOT transportation study in La Crosse is an example. We need to continue to participate in the study process, advocating the no-build option. Increase mass transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities; encourage carpooling and ride sharing; stagger work starting times; foster compact mixed use development; use smarter traffic control systems while making targeted improvements to existing roads. Expand mass transit, expand bike-ped, use better urban planning.

Beyond Coal – minimize coal use in our energy system, particularly for electricity generation. We need to continue to advocate that Wisconsin utilities move from the high dependence on coal toward more renewable sources.

Beyond Natural Gas – minimize natural gas use in our energy system: We need to continue to oppose the expansion of frac sand mines in our area, which degrade our local water and air quality while enabling more fossil fuel consumption, contributing to climate change. Fracking increases both oil and natural gas usage.

Our Wild America – protect our wild lands, both national highlights and local treasures: We need to continue to advocate protection of our local natural treasures – the Mississippi River, the bluffslands, and the wetlands. Decreased oil usage will also decrease oil trains traveling through the area, endangering safety and these natural areas. Invasive species control is a major battle that seems overwhelming at times. Witness the emerald ash borer.

Get Outside – Get people outside to enjoy, appreciate, and protect our the natural world: We need to maintain our outings program, getting people outdoors to appreciate and protect our natural world.

## DATES TO REMEMBER!

**Tuesday, May 10** - Rally to ban frac sand mining, 5 pm, 2nd & Pearl Streets, La Crosse

**Sat/Sun, May 14-15** - Root River Canoe Outing, car camp, Class I. Registration: Sue O'Brien, sueob1@gmail.com

**Tuesday, May 31** - Sierra Club Board Meeting, 7 p.m., Location TBA

**June 17-19** - Midwest Renewable Energy Association Energy Fair, Custer, WI ([www.theenergyfair.org](http://www.theenergyfair.org))

**Tuesday, June 28** - Coulee Region Sierra Club summer picnic, 3703 Brook Lane, Onalaska

**Tuesday, July 5** - River Valley Drive clean up. Meet at 6 p.m. Gillette St. pumping station. Rudy's Drive in after.

**Tuesday, Sept 27** - Sierra Club Meeting, 7 p.m. Ho-Chunk Three Rivers House, RENEW Wisconsin speaker

## Interest groups

Sierra Club interest groups connect members around the state and country. You can help steer the national club's priorities and plans. Please consider signing on to one or more of these interest groups, even if a member is already listed. Email Pat Wilson to sign on.

Agriculture – Marilyn Pedretti

Air Quality – Marty Sellers

Campaign Finance Reform -

Coal -

Coal Power Plants -

Contained Animal Feeding – Marilyn Pedretti

Cool Cities – Bill Katra

Corporate accountability

Endangered Species/Wildlife – Danny Foote

Energy – Rick Komperud

Environmental Justice -

Genetic Engineering -

Global Warming/CAFE – Rick Komperud

Grazing – Marilyn Pedretti

International Human Rights/Environment -

International Population -

International Trade -

Labor/Worker Rights -

Marine -

Mining – Danny Foote

National Forests – Rick Komperud

Natural Gas -

Oil -

Parks/Refuges – Rick Komperud

Sprawl -

State Forests/Lands – Rick Komperud

Tar Sands -

Transportation – Patrick Wilson

Waste -

Our

April 23 highway clean up was a great success! Nine CR Sierra Club members picked up 25 bags of trash. Our next highway clean up will be in July.

The Sierra Club booth at the Earth Fair was in an excellent location and had many visitors. We were also able to network with like minded groups and hope to partner with others to co-sponsor programs and outings during the coming months. If you have ideas for co-sponsoring events, please email [cathyvanmaren@yahoo.com](mailto:cathyvanmaren@yahoo.com).

The Board of Directors met on April 26. We will work to fill several open interest group positions. Watch for a list of available opportunities in next month's newsletter.

**Keep up with current events at [cr-sierra.blogspot.com](http://cr-sierra.blogspot.com).**

The fastest, most effective way to reduce your individual carbon footprint, according to the American Public Transportation Association, is to reduce private miles driven and commute via public transit. Car pooling and car sharing also reduce individuals' climate impacts. Some studies show those who participate in car share programs drive 25 to 30 per cent less than they did before joining the car share. [www.apta.com/resources/reportsandpublications/Documents/greenhouse\\_brochure.pdf](http://www.apta.com/resources/reportsandpublications/Documents/greenhouse_brochure.pdf)

**Please make sure we have  
your current email address!  
Email [pbwilson@centurtytel.net](mailto:pbwilson@centurtytel.net)**

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