



# Sierra

Newsletter of the Coulee Region Group  
MAY 2019

*"It is worse, much worse, than you think." - David Wallace-Wells, The Uninhabitable Earth: Life After Warming*

**TUESDAY, May 28 at 7 pm**

**Why Grazing? The Wisconsin DNR's  
Grazing Program with Mary C. Anderson**

Ho-Chunk Three Rivers House  
(8th & Main, La Crosse)

On May 28, the Coulee Region Sierra Club welcomes **Mary C. Anderson** who will talk about the DNR Grazing Program, grazing management objectives, and how agency personnel and farmers can work cooperatively to restore and improve DNR owned and managed grasslands. Mary C. is the first Conservation Agriculture Specialist hired by the Wisconsin DNR to help manage its growing grazing program. The DNR manages more than 80,000 acres of grassland and is adding grazing to its management toolkit.

Mary C. was raised on a small family dairy farm near Pigeon Falls. She earned a degree from UW Eau Claire in Land Use Geography. As a certified grazing planner, she has worked on western Wisconsin planning, assistance and educational services for more than 20 years. Her passion for environmental, animal, and human health, drives Mary C's commitment to promoting conservation planning and education. At home, Mary C. and her husband Bruce operate an organic beef cow calf operation (grass fed and grass finished) and sell their products directly to consumers. (We will try to record the talk and post at our website.)

## **Green New Deal Town Hall, May 7**

The Sunrise Movement is on a roll! They are touring the country to spread the news about the climate crisis we face and the opportunity the Green New Deal provides to change the course of history. The Sierra Club supports the GND and the more than 300 town halls being held around the country including the **La Crosse GND Town Hall on Tuesday, May 7 at 6 pm at Hackberry's Bistro, above the co-op, at 315 Fifth Avenue South** (food is available in the co-op). We'll hear from experts and GND supporters, discuss local actions, and find ways to make GND one of the top issues of the 2020 election. Read more at [tinyurl.com/57laxgndevent](https://tinyurl.com/57laxgndevent).



## **Wisconsin LOVES Parks, May 11**

The Sierra Club has launched a campaign, **Wisconsin LOVES Parks**, to restore and enhance state park general revenue funding to the level of five million dollars per year, allowing the parks to increase staffing and make up for years of neglect. Restoring \$5 million costs less than a dollar per resident and is well worth it.

Join Coulee Region Sierra Club members and the Bold Betties womens outdoor recreation group for statewide Wisconsin LOVES Parks day at **Wyalusing State Park on Saturday, May 11**. Meet at 10 a.m. at the main pavillion at the top of the bluff. To get there: show or purchase a state parks pass at the gate, head straight up the main road and look for the pavillion and bathrooms on your right. (If you get to the campground, you've gone a little too far!)

The hike starts at 10:10; please arrive on time! Bring comfortable shoes, sunscreen, bug spray, (*continued* >)

## WI LOVES Parks (continued)

camera, lots of water, snacks/lunch, hiking poles (optional). We'll lunch together at the main pavilion after hiking then explore by canoe/kayak. Meet at 1 pm at the park's boat landing. Bring your own vessel or rent one in advance at the concession stand at the Peterson Shelter on the Wisconsin Ridge Campground. (You can't rent a canoe at the boat landing.) Bring a life jacket, paddle, sunscreen, bug spray, water, and rain gear if needed.

**COSTS:** Annual State Parks & Forests Pass is \$28 for Wisconsin vehicle (\$13 for WI vehicle with resident age 65+). Day pass is \$8 (\$3 for resident age 65+). Canoe rental cost may also be a factor.

For more details, or questions, please call Pat Wilson at 608-788-8831 or Kim Olson at 920-321-8491 or visit [tinyurl.com/crsc-wsp511](http://tinyurl.com/crsc-wsp511)

## Sierra Club Water Outings!

Here are a few of the many opportunities for canoe/kayak adventures in and near our area in May. (The Grant River outing was delayed from April to May due to bad weather.) Read more and learn how to sign up at [tinyurl.com/jmc-rvtrips](http://tinyurl.com/jmc-rvtrips)

- May 11: Baraboo River, Class I, Day Trip
- May 11-12: Grant River, Class I, Car Camp
- May 19-20: Root River (Minnesota), Class I, Car Camp
- May 25-27: Bois Brule River (near Superior but led by our own Pat & Bobbie Wilson), varying sections

## Clean Water forum May 16

The Sustainable La Crosse Commission will host a public information session focused on **water quality issues in La Crosse County** on **Thursday, May 16** at 5:30 p.m. in the basement auditorium of the County Administrative Building, 6th & State. The event is free and open to all.

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

We're still looking for Sierra Club members to take a shift at our table at this year's **Driftless Outdoors Festival at the Onalaska Omni Center on May 17 and 18**. Shifts are short, you get in free, it's a fun event. Please sign up to help at [tinyurl.com/crsc-driftlesstable](http://tinyurl.com/crsc-driftlesstable).

We are also seeking a few volunteers to **table for CRSC at this year's OPEN STREETS event - Sunday, June 9**. The event runs from 1 to 4 p.m. and our booth will be on Main Street between 7th and 8th. It's easy and fun! Please sign up for a shift at [tinyurl.com/crsc-openstreets19](http://tinyurl.com/crsc-openstreets19)

## Regenerative Ag workshop

About 70 people gathered on Saturday, March 30 at UW-Platteville to learn about Regenerative Agriculture. Sponsors included Grant



County Rural Stewardship, UW-Platteville School of Agriculture, UW-Platteville Sustainability, Crawford Stewardship Project and Sustain Rural Wisconsin Network. The event targeted farmers and students, but it was open to the public.

Regenerative Ag practices such as no-till planting, perennial cover crops and rotational grazing help to decrease runoff of nutrients and soil to surface and groundwater, improving water quality while at the same time offering benefits to the farmer.

"Farmer to Farmer – Regenerative Agriculture: healthy soils, clean water and increased profits" opened with keynote speaker, Dan Shelliam. Dan and his wife, Kristie, farm near Hazel Green and using a series of slides, Dan described the changes he implemented for crop and beef production at Windy Hill Ranch. Shelliam said he uses many conventional practices and standard equipment, but Windy Hill Ranch switched to more thorough plans, in-depth analysis of outcomes, increased use of no-till practices, and rotational grazing in 2012. The original goals included erosion control, soil nutrient cycling, and the forage supply. Soybean, corn, and winter wheat fields are planted with one or more cover crops (radish, oats, rye, peas, and others) to keep soil in place, boost soil fertility, and enhance grazing nutrition.

Following the keynote presentation, a five-person panel took questions and offered additional insight and experience for the audience. The panel included another farmer using RA, a UW-Extension educator and three instructors representing UW-Madison, UW-Platteville and Southwest Wisconsin Technical College. An evaluation completed by attendees indicated everyone had learned something new and were interested in pursuing additional, related topics in future events.

Grant County Rural Stewardship received a grant from the Food, Faith & Farming Network to support the event. For information on future events or items of interest to rural Grant County, people can visit their Facebook page, [www.facebook.com/grantcountyruralstewardship](http://www.facebook.com/grantcountyruralstewardship)

## May 2 Bike educator workshop

Wisconsin Bike Fed and Wisconsin DOT will host a FREE training on Teaching Safe Bicycling on Thursday, May 2 from 9 am to 3 pm at the La Crosse County Administrative Building, 6th & State Street. Bring a bike and helmet and wear comfortable clothes and shoes. Lunch is on your own. Register at [tinyurl.com/laxtchbiking52](http://tinyurl.com/laxtchbiking52)

**GROW La Crosse seeks SCHOOL GARDEN volunteers!** Help children learn about gardening and nature! Visit [GROWLaCrosse.org/volunteer](http://GROWLaCrosse.org/volunteer)

## Highway Cleanup

On Saturday, April 27, we had a successful spring cleanup of the Coulee Region Group's adopted street - River Valley Drive in La Crosse. We picked up 16 bags full of trash along with an old door, a discarded ink jet printer, a couch cushion, a throw pillow, and various pieces of metal. Bud Light was by far the most popular beer of can tossers. It would be good to find the Bud Light fan doing the drinking and littering. We had some snow during the last half of the cleanup, but nothing accumulated.

This event was part of the general La Crosse River Marsh cleanup during Neighbors Day. Thanks to Sierra Club members John Papenfuss, Sue Knopf, Mike Martin, Pat Wilson, and Bobbie Wilson, as well as Mark Neumann who was part of the general marsh cleanup, and two Kwik Trip employees volunteering to help because the nearby Kwik Trip facility is probably a source of some of the litter.

The Coulee Region Sierra Club hosts a cleanup along River Valley Drive three times per year. Our next cleanup is scheduled for early July.

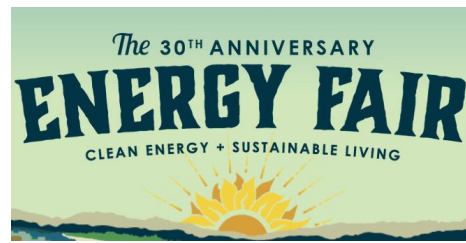
## Water quality opportunities

On **May 4** there will be a public forum on *What's in Your Water?* from 3 to 5 pm at the **Gotham Town Hall in Richland County**. The program, sponsored by **Richland Stewardship Project**, will welcome **Dr. Norlene Emerson**, Emeritus Professor of Geology at UW-Platteville Richland; **Scott Laeser**, Water Program Director for Clean Wisconsin; and **Melissa Luck**, Richland County Supervisor, Land Conservation Commission. The event is free and open to all. Read more at [RichlandStewardshipProject.com](http://RichlandStewardshipProject.com).

On **May 8** the **Speaker's Water Quality Task Force** will hold a **public hearing in Lancaster**. The hearing will be held at the Youth and Ag Building Auditorium, 916 E Elm St. Beginning at 10:30 am, the following panels will present testimony: Southwest Wisconsin Groundwater and Geology Study (SWIGG), Lafayette Ag Stewardship Alliance, Wisconsin Pork Producers Association, UW-Platteville Pioneer Farms, and Discovery Farms. Following scheduled testimony, the committee will take testimony from members of the public. More public hearings will be scheduled around the state by the task force which has been asked to make recommendations on assessing and improving the quality of surface water and groundwater. Read more at [tinyurl.com/WIWaterTaskForce](http://tinyurl.com/WIWaterTaskForce)

**Baseline Monitoring Training** is available to **Water Action volunteers** on **Saturday, May 11** at **Esofea Park** in Vernon County. "This training will equip you to become part of the Wisconsin Water Action Volunteers program." Training and equipment are provided free of charge by Valley Stewardship Network. After training, monitoring duties take about one hour per month and contribute to a region-wide database. Get more info at [valleystewardshipnetwork.org](http://valleystewardshipnetwork.org)

## The Energy Fair, June 21-23



The **30th Annual Energy Fair** will be held in Custer, Wisconsin (near Stevens Point) June 21-23. The mission is, "to promote renewable energy, energy efficiency, and sustainability through education and demonstration." **Discounts** for camping and tickets **are available until May 17**. See [theenergyfair.org](http://theenergyfair.org) for more details.

