



Sierra

Newsletter of the Coulee Region Group
NOVEMBER 2017

"In countries that are adding new electricity capacity as quickly as possible, renewable energy will beat any other technology in most of the world without subsidies." - Bloomberg New Energy Finance, December 2016



Photo by Avery Van Gaard

Groundwater Pollution Forum

About 70 people attended an October 24 Coulee Region Sierra Club forum on groundwater pollution in La Crosse county. Manure spills from a Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) in the Holmen-Onalaska area as well as runoff from lawns, farm chemicals, and faulty septic systems have caused problems for well owners. Lax enforcement of water quality regulations, poor oversight of CAFOs, an "open for business"

atmosphere, and reduced funding and staffing at the DNR have added to the problem.

We are very grateful to forum panelists for volunteering their time: State Rep. **Steve Doyle**, La Crosse County Board member **Mike Giese**, and La Crosse County Health Department director **Jen Rombalski**. Each addressed a different aspect of the problem and then took questions from the audience. The DNR could not spare a representative for the event.

Watch for more details in our December newsletter. In the meantime, if you have a private well, get it tested! And view handouts, maps, and other forum materials at cr-sierra.blogspot.com/p/groundwater-pollution-forum-october-24.html



Nitrate > 10 mcg/mL Spring 2017

Industrial Hog Slaughter Facility Forum

As Holmen-Onalaska residents gathered to learn about water pollution from an industrial hog farm, concerned citizens from the Westby-Viroqua area met to discuss a proposed industrial hog slaughter facility in their region. The meeting was hosted by the new group Concerned Citizens for Smart Growth (www.citizensforsmartgrowth.com/) with presenters from the Cornucopia Institute (cornucopia.org), and the Crawford Stewardship Project (www.crawfordstewardshipproject.org/)

Gayle Nielsen (CCSG) gave a presentation on the potential impact of Premium Iowa Pork locating in the Town of Viroqua, in Vernon County. This included the impact on jobs, businesses, community, and tourism, with the focus on the proliferation of industrial, factory farms (CAFOs) that will be required to locate to the region and the ensuing contamination of groundwater, air quality and general health of the population. Forest Jahnke (CSP) spoke about the susceptibility of water contamination in a sensitive karst area. Members also heard about some of the health impacts of industrial farming,

A video of the meeting is available on youtube (youtu.be/5BJzrH264mQ) And a copy of the petition is available at www.citizensforsmartgrowth.com/petition/

Environmental Education Grants

Again this year, the Coulee Region Sierra Club is offering **grants of up to \$200 for environmental education projects** involving young people at the elementary and middle school level.

The application and more details are available at tinyurl.com/crsc-2018grantapp OR email crsierraclub@gmail.com and we can mail you an application. **The application deadline is JANUARY 5, 2018.** Please spread the word about this opportunity available to those in Crawford, Grant, Jackson, La Crosse, Monroe, Richland, Trempealeau and Vernon counties.

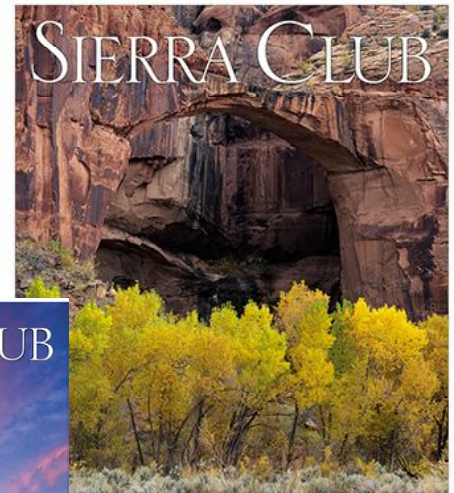
In September, we highlighted two of three 2017 grant recipients. Look for a report from the third recipient in our December newsletter.

Sierra Club 2018 Calendars!

Again this year, your purchase of **Sierra Club calendars** will benefit our club and environmental programs and protection activities. The calendars cost \$14.95 for the wall calendar and \$15.95 for the engagement book.

Get your calendar at our December gathering or order from Maureen Kinney: 784-9324/784-5678 or email maureen@johnsflaherty-dot-com.

SIERRA CLUB NOTE AND HOLIDAY CARDS are available at the online store. store.sierraclub.org/calendars--cards-c28.aspx



Connect with us online! We're on Twitter: @CRSierra, on Facebook /CRSierraClub, on our blog at crsierra.blogspot.com, and at our website: www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/coulee.

PLEASE HELP!

There are major environmental issues happening in the Coulee Region that require our attention and action, from air and water quality to protection of sensitive wetlands and recreation areas. We really need YOUR HELP to work on the water team or the Ready for 100 team or a team near to your heart. These issues need our attention now. Please consider what is most important to you - why you are a member of the Sierra Club - and volunteer to help by emailing us at crsierraclub@gmail.com. Please indicate which issue you want to work on.

Ready for 100 in La Crosse

As we reported in August, La Crosse mayor Tim Kabat signed the Sierra Club's **Ready for 100** pledge to transition the city to 100% renewable energy.

The Coulee Region Sierra Club is **seeking members for a Ready for 100 team** to help prepare suggested steps the city of La Crosse, and possibly others in the Coulee Region, can take to move quickly from fossil fuels to renewable energy.

Recent developments in Minneapolis and Madison, where agreements with utilities target renewable transitions, and Winona, where an ambitious citywide solar garden plan has been finalized, have provided real life area examples of what La Crosse could do. **Please email by November 20 if you can help!** crsierraclub@gmail.com

DATES TO REMEMBER!

- 11/ 3: Karst Landscapes & Groundwater Susceptibility in Crawford County 7 pm Prairie du Chien City Hall
www.crawfordstewardshipproject.org/
- 11/ 4: Trails by the Light of the Frosty Moon (astronomy) 6 pm Kickapoo Valley Reserve
kvr.state.wi.us/Events/Calendar/
- 11/ 9: Tundra Swan Bus Excursion to Brownsville, MN with UMRFWR naturalist \$6 Start in La Crosse
<https://goo.gl/KnnBUUp>
- 11/11: Bus tour of upper Mississippi fall migration & colors 9 am Start in Winona, MN
tinyurl.com/for-uppermsbustour
- 11/11: Slimey Alien Invaders and Their Roles in Disease Outbreaks Across the Midwest 6 pm JavaVino
tinyurl.com/1117-scicafe-slimey
- 11/15: A Photographic History of the La Crosse River Marsh 7 pm UWL
<https://share.uwlax.edu/events-calendar/event/15540/>



Join us for great food and interesting conversation!

COULEE REGION SIERRA CLUB WINTER GATHERING
Tuesday, December 19 * 6:00 p.m. * N1965 Valley Road
(Home of Barb & Don Frank - phone 608 788-3914)

Bring some food to share. The Franks will provide beverages.

YOU NEED NOT BE A SIERRA CLUB MEMBER TO ATTEND!

DIRECTIONS:

The Franks' home is in Wedgewood Valley, just off State Highway 33. From State Road & Losey, go east on Highway 33 for about one mile. Just past Hagen Road on the right, turn immediately left (north) onto Wedgewood Drive West. Stay on Wedgewood Drive West to Valley Drive.