



Sierra

Newsletter of the Coulee Region Group

OCTOBER 2020

"Democracy is not just the right to vote, it is the right to live in dignity." - Naomi Klein

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 27 at 7 p.m.

Aquatic Invasive Species

**with Ellen Voss, Aquatic Invasive Species
Director, River Alliance of Wisconsin**

ONLINE/DIAL-IN (Zoom)

RSVP: tiny.cc/CRSC1027



The Mississippi River is considered a "super-spreader" of aquatic invasive species (AIS), and early detection efforts in the Coulee Region are crucial for protecting the rivers and streams we love. At our October 27 virtual meeting, Ellen Voss, the La Crosse-based Aquatic Invasive Species Director with River Alliance of Wisconsin, will give an overview of the AIS problem in our area, highlight the identifying features of some key problematic species, and teach us how to become early detectors. Flowering Rush (photo) is one of the recent problem species, but there are other invasives from snails to carp. RSVP at tiny.cc/CRSC1027 for access.

VOTE LIKE OUR ENVIRONMENT DEPENDS ON IT!

The Sierra Club is preparing for the final stand against unprecedented political threats on our environment and democracy. The future of our planet depends on it. Activists warn we need a massive voter turnout to deny the current administration a second term. Because of COVID-19, a record number of voters will use absentee ballots, but delays in reporting totals will play into the plan to disrupt and dispute the vote.

In Wisconsin, most people may register, update registration, and request an absentee ballot online at myvote.wi.gov. The Sierra Club urges all members who are able to request their absentee ballot now, online or using a mail-in form (also available at myvote.wi.gov), and vote it as soon as it arrives.

To vote an absentee ballot, you'll need a witness and the appropriate pen/pencil. Read the instructions. Have your witness watch you mark your ballot (but not who you vote for!) Fold and put your marked ballot into the official envelope. Seal it. Sign and date your envelope. Have your witness sign and put her/his complete address on the witness line. Take your ballot to your clerk's office drop box or mail it by October 25 if possible. Once submitted, track your ballot at myvote.wi.gov. Contact your clerk with questions or if you need help finding a witness. If you have trouble when voting please call Voter Protection (ACLU) at 866-687-2141. **You may also vote absentee in person.** Check myvote.wi.gov for dates.

Sierra Club Endorsements

The Wisconsin Chapter Sierra Club has announced endorsements for Congress and the State Legislature in the November 3, 2020 election. Previously, the Club endorsed **Joe Biden** for president and **Kamala Harris** for vice president.

"These candidates are committed to protecting Wisconsin families' health, air and water, and to building a clean energy economy that works for Wisconsin," said Elizabeth Ward, Wisconsin Chapter Director.

In addition to U.S. Representative **Ron Kind**, candidates for State Senate, **Brad Pfaff** (32) and

Paul Piotrowski (24) earned endorsements as did State Assembly candidates **Shawn Murphy** (49), **Kriss Marion** (51), **Emily Berge** (68), **John Baldus** (70), **Amanda White Eagle** (92), **Steve Doyle*** (94), and **Jill Billings*** (95).

The Sierra Club is launching the largest voter mobilization in our history to turn out fellow members, supporters, and the public to vote and to work for endorsed candidates. Read the whole endorsement list at tiny.cc/WISC20Endorsements

**Scored a perfect 100% pro-environment voting record and has been named a 2020 Environmental Champion for demonstrated commitment to preserving Wisconsin's environment.*

Oct. 8 - Talking Transportation

The Coalition for More Responsible Transportation (CMRT) in Wisconsin will host a webinar on **Thursday, October 8 from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.** This month's topic is **Why Transportation Matters: Communicating with Decision-makers.** Participants will be able to get advice from a local politician on what works and how to communicate, hear personal stories from transportation advocates across Wisconsin, and learn to tell their own stories. Register here for the event: <https://forms.gle/1msjmQ2ax5ZeDX7P8>

CMRT is a coalition of 25 local and statewide organizations, including the Sierra Club of Wisconsin, working to ensure taxpayer-funded transportation is responsible and not wasteful. Find out more including links to previous CMRT webinars at their Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/CMRTWI/>

CAFO Hearing - October 13

The Wisconsin DNR will host a **public hearing** on a water quality permit and application by Wild Rose Dairy, LLC to expand its operation in Crawford County on **October 13 at 2 p.m.** The hearing will be held online.

The Sierra Club has long been a foe of CAFOs. Read more at www.sierraclub.org/michigan/why-are-cafos-bad and tiny.cc/WISC-CAFO

For more information about the hearing and how to participate, see tiny.cc/wildrose1013 and for more information about the Wild Rose issue, visit www.swnews4u.com/local/public-safety/wild-rose-dairy-applies-water-quality-permit-and-expansion/

To register for the zoom event, complete the form at <https://zoom.us/j/92639454769>

The Latest on Electric Vehicles

Our September 29 program on electric vehicles (EVs) was a fun, informative event. Thanks to our guest speaker, Jeff Springer, Dairyland Power Co-op, an EV owner and regional expert, for showing us what the current and future outlook is for EVs. He previewed many coming EVs including passenger vehicles, trucks, vans, motorcycles, bicycles, delivery trucks, and construction vehicles. We discussed improving battery technology, and charging infrastructure.

Material from the presentation along with a list of links--from Sierra Club resources for potential buyers to information about encouraging communities to support and adopt EVs--is available at tiny.cc/CRSC-EVInfo. Check it out! And, if you have questions about buying or owning an EV, please email crsierraclub@gmail.com.





Don't let the sun set on this awesome opportunity. Your solar journey awaits!



GROW SOLAR
LA CROSSE

FINAL INFORMATION SESSION:
Tuesday, Oct. 6, at 4p.m.

Grow Solar La Crosse is extending its discount pricing on solar until Oct. 30th!

Join us for our last hour-long, virtual informational event on Tuesday, Oct. 6th at 4:00 p.m. to learn about the basics of solar, how it can save you money, and how the Grow Solar La Crosse solar group buy program works.

Register at: growsolarlacrosse.org

CRSC Board Elections

If you are interested in serving on the Coulee Region Sierra Club Board, please email your interest to CRSierraClub@gmail.com. Include your name, contact information (email/phone) and place of residence. Also, please include a paragraph about your past experience with the Sierra Club OR similar environmental/outdoors organizations or activities and why you would like to serve on the board. In November, we will highlight Board candidates and provide ballots. Younger members and those who live outside of La Crosse county are encouraged to apply. But all current members are welcome to self-nominate!

Online opportunities

Here are a few Sierra Club and other events coming up in October online:

Sunday, October 4 at 6:00 p.m. - Virtual Showing of Tar Sands Storytelling Project (tiny.cc/TarSandsStories)

Monday, October 12 at 6:00 p.m. - Human Rights and the Environment (tiny.cc/SCHREnv)

Wednesday, October 14 at 6:30 p.m. - Volunteer Night (tiny.cc/WISCVoINite)

Monday, October 26 at 6:00 p.m. - Free screening: Unfractured (tiny.cc/Unfractured)

Thanks - Highway Clean Up

Our stretch of River Valley Drive in La Crosse is now clean thanks to intrepid volunteers David Bange, Maureen Kinney, and Pat and Bobbie Wilson. There was surprisingly little to pick up considering that the last time we were able to clean was in November 2019. The four were able to spread out and complete the task in one and one-half hours, filling nine garbage bags!

Mushroom ID - Oct. 10

The Mississippi Valley Conservancy is hosting an **ONLINE Mushroom Identification workshop on Saturday, October 10 from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m.** Bring your foraged treasures to a virtual ID session with foraging tips from Thomas Roehl, UW-La Crosse Mycology Club. Register at www.mississippivalleyconservancy.org/events/mushroom-foraging-virtual-id-session

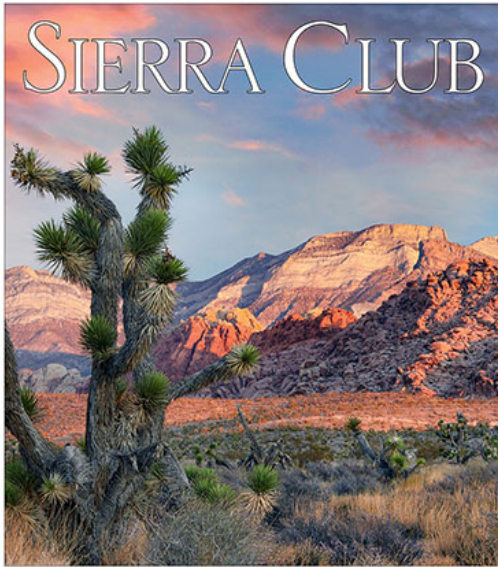
Voter Hotline 608-285-2141

A statewide **Voter Helpline**, created in 2016 by the League of Women Voters and the NAACP, will help with voter issues including getting a new voter ID, witnessing absentee ballots, navigating the state's MyVote website, and more. Voters from around the state can call or text the Helpline for assistance or visit the online portal at www.lwvdanecounty.org/

Voter Helpline employees and volunteers will provide immediate services to callers and offer help in several languages. Contact the Voter Helpline to learn how to

- * Obtain an approved voter ID
- * Register to vote
- * Request, fill out, and return an absentee ballot
- * Vote early through in-person absentee voting
- * Find your polling location

2021 Calendars



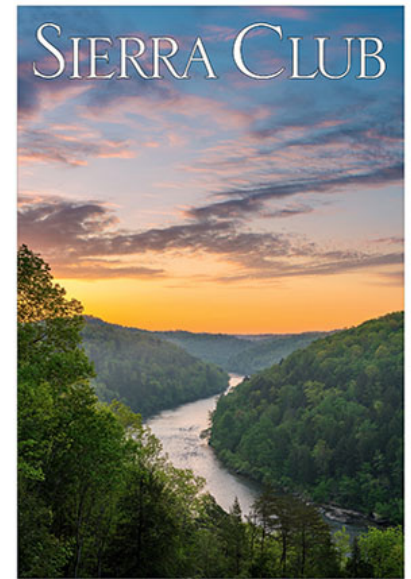
WILDERNESS CALENDAR | 2021

We won't have in-person meetings or events this fall, so calendar orders will be taken only online or by phone. Annual calendar sales help us raise funds for CRSC programs and grants.

The wall calendar (left) is \$14.95; the engagement book is \$15.95. Order from Maureen: 608-784-9324 or email maureen@johnsflaherty.com.

Get more details about these calendars and other Sierra Club items at <https://store.sierraclub.org/calendars--cards-c28.aspx>

DEADLINE FOR ORDERS THROUGH CRSC IS SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 30.



ENGAGEMENT CALENDAR | 2021

Environmental Education Grant Update

State Road Elementary School has a unique, rich, and untapped resource sitting directly in its backyard. An outdoor playground; more than 20 acres of beauty, serenity, and LEARNING FOR ALL. The school forest borders the school playground and extends to Chad Erickson Park.

Jeanie Ruprecht, a second grade teacher at State Road, is a true believer in the words of Richard Louv in *Last Child in the Woods*. Louv states that, "Passion is lifted from the earth itself by the muddy hands of the young; it travels along grass-stained sleeves to the heart. If we are going to save environmentalism and the environment, we must also save an endangered indicator species: the child in nature." Mrs. Ruprecht stated that, "We have a resource that should be enjoyed and understood by every student, if we hope to protect the natural resources that we hold so dear to us. I continue to study multiple intelligences, and the 'naturalistic' or 'nature smart' child. We must all be naturalistic minded, if we have hopes of having future generations caring for our Earth."

Mrs. Ruprecht received grants from the Coulee Region Sierra Club and the La Crosse Public Education Foundation which helped her purchase items to provide backpacks filled with outdoor exploration and identification/learning items and tents to serve as outdoor classrooms. All items will be available for check out and will be utilized by ALL classroom teachers, to allow for instruction and exploration in the beautiful "outdoor classroom."

Items purchased include 20 two person tents and 20 backpacks. Each backpack contains binoculars, a pedometer, a compass, Kids Guide to Wisconsin Birds, Wisconsin Guide to Trees, a magnifier, a first aid kit, a flashlight, an insect viewing box, a clipboard, and a whistle.

Watch our November newsletter for updates about future environmental education grant opportunities.

