



Sierra

Newsletter of the Coulee Region Group

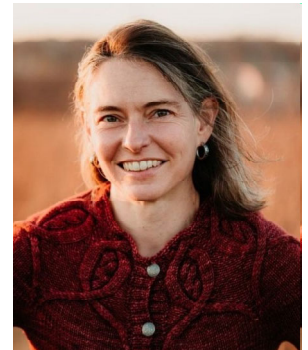
JANUARY 2023

"At best, Earth is a democracy of a single species, with eight million other species reduced to helpless spectators, excluded from participation in this corrupt political system." - George Tsakraklides, "The Human Supremacy Bubble"

TUESDAY, JANUARY 31 at 7 p.m.
Transit Equity and Climate Action
Susan Gaeddert, 1000 Friends of Wisconsin
ONLINE and by phone
Register: www.tinyurl.com/CRSC013123

Transit Equity - the right of all people to affordably and sustainably get to school, work, events, appointments, services, and a full life regardless of their age, income, race, health, or ability - is key to reducing transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions. How and why transit equity and climate action are intimately related will be the topic of our January 31 online program.

Our guest will be **Susan Gaeddert**, Community Programs Director at 1000 Friends of Wisconsin, a nonprofit organization that specializes in land use planning and transportation policy. Susan works on active transportation issues with communities across the state and manages the Active Wisconsin program and will facilitate the Community Transportation Academy in La Crosse this spring.



This program is part of La Crosse area Transit Equity Days, one of dozens of events around the country hosted nationally by the Labor Network for Sustainability. Register at: www.tinyurl.com/CRSC-013123 or by calling 608-315-2693.

Education Grant Deadline Jan. 6



CRSC offers grants of up to \$200 each for environmental education projects to schools or community organizations involving young people at the elementary and middle school level within the CRSC region: Crawford, Grant, Jackson, La Crosse, Monroe, Richland, Trempealeau, and Vernon counties.

Applications may be completed online, emailed or mailed. The deadline for applications is January 6, 2023. For more information, visit www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/coulee/Education or www.tinyurl.com/CRSC-Education

To learn more about these grants and how you can contribute, please email CRSierraClub@gmail.com.

Our 2023 Board!

Congratulations Dorothy Lenard, Carol Miller, and Avery Van Gaard who were elected to serve on the Coulee Region Sierra Club Board of Directors for 2023-2025! Also, thanks to the state chapter for helping facilitate online voting.

We are sorry to lose Nancy Hartje, our excellent treasurer, who was instrumental in creating our new high school environmental stewardship award. Thank you for your club service, Nancy!

The new board will meet in January to elect officers and set priorities for the coming year. If you have suggestions, please email CRSierraClub@gmail.com.

Seeking one or two people to help with the newsletter. Report on environmental events and initiatives in your community, help proofread, or be the backup publisher. Call or text 608-315-2693 or email CRSierraClub@gmail.com for details.

Transit Equity Days

The Labor Network for Sustainability (LNS) has sponsored Transit Equity Day on February 4, Rosa Parks' birthday, since 2018 to highlight the need to recognize affordable, accessible, sustainable public transportation as a civil right.

In the La Crosse area, Transit Equity Days will be celebrated from

Monday, January 30 through Saturday, February 4 with free fares on the MTU, displays at the Grand River Station Transit Center and La Crosse Public Library, riders' stories, Office Hours on the Bus with local elected and community leaders, and more. See www.tinyurl.com/LaXTED2023 for updates.



Many Coulee Region communities are served by the SMRT Regional Transit system and/or shared ride taxi services offered by Running, Inc., including Onalaska, Holmen, West Salem, Richland Center, Prairie du Chien, Platteville, Sparta, Tomah, Viroqua, and Westby. In addition, counties offer transit services for seniors and individuals with disabilities. While these are vital services for workers, students, employers, patients, and families, funding for public transportation is minimal, as outlined in the Wisconsin Sierra Club publication, Arrive Together: Transportation Access and Equity in Wisconsin. Read the report at www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/arrive-together-transportation-access-and-equity-wisconsin If your community is without public transit, use this event to educate your local and state elected officials about why you need it.

If your community benefits from public transit, consider hosting a local event or joining the LNS live stream on YouTube. For help, resources, and more information, see www.labor4sustainability.org/transit-equity-2023

I-94 Comments Due Jan. 17

The effort to push back on the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's (WisDOT) decision to move forward with costly, ineffective, and harmful expansion of a short section of I-94 in Milwaukee continues. Hundreds submitted testimony in person or online during two days of public hearings in Milwaukee. Many more phoned and emailed Governor Evers' office or contacted him about the issue during his budget listening sessions.

WisDOT will accept comments through January 17, so if you haven't yet weighed in, please do. The main goal of our effort is to urge WisDOT to adopt the "Fix At Six" solution a coalition of community leaders and transportation advocates presented in 2020 in response to WisDOT's published options. The Fix At Six solution would promote repairing and upgrading existing pavement within its current footprint and enhancing other transportation options, including public transit, which would benefit the communities and neighborhoods bearing the brunt of I-94 harms like air pollution, noise, and safety issues.

Read more about the issue and how you can comment at www.fixatsix.org.

2023 Sierra Club Teams Kickoff

Sierra Club Teams are the backbone of our club's activism. Volunteers from around the state meet regularly online to share information and ideas and work together on campaigns to address their teams' issues.

As part of a Sierra Club team you can amplify your voice and effect on your most important priorities. Most teams meet monthly for about an hour, but their impact can help protect a waterway or challenge a destructive policy.

Join us at the 2023 Teams Kickoff on Wednesday, Jan. 11 at 6 p.m. online where we'll greet new team members, agree how teams will operate, get an overview of issues, and set up the year's meetings and priorities.

Teams include: Beyond Coal (clean energy), Transportation, Tar Sands, Lands and Forests, Wildlife, and Water. Anyone, of any ability, experience, or expertise, is welcome to attend. This is a wonderful opportunity to network and build skills.

Register for the January 11 meeting at www.tinyurl.com/WISC-23Teams or contact Cassie Steiner at cassandra.steiner@sierraclub.org or by calling 608-256-0565.

PLASTIC!

A new bill, the Protecting Communities from Plastics Act, has been introduced in Congress by Senator Cory Booker (NJ), Senator Jeff Merkley (OR), and Representative Jared Huffman (CA). The legislation addresses the plastic production crisis that is fueling climate change and perpetuating environmental injustice.

With plastic production and consumption on track to double in the next decade, the resulting greenhouse gas emissions threaten to put our climate goals further out of reach, while expanded plastic production will drive more pollution in environmental justice communities around the United States. Petrochemical, plastic production, and waste incineration facilities, which are disproportionately located in or near Black, Brown, and low-wealth communities, release harmful air and water pollution that cause increased incidences of asthma, cancers, endocrine disruption, development disorders, and heart disease. Transitioning off of fossil fuels only to replace that demand with more fossil-based plastic production is not a sustainable solution, and will continue to perpetuate existing climate and environmental justice impacts.

The Protecting Communities from Plastics Act would directly tackle the plastic pollution crisis by cracking down on the plastic production process, building on key provisions from the Break Free From Plastic Pollution

More January Events

1/ 3: Wisconsin Sierra Club Book Club - Diet for a Small Planet 50th Anniversary at 7 p.m. online. www.tinyurl.com/WISC-DietBook

1/ 5: Volunteer at Tunnelville Cliffs State Natural Area from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. www.mississippivalleyconservancy.org/events/volunteer-wild-5

1/ 7: Wisconsin Chapter River Touring Section Annual Meeting 11 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. in Baraboo. www.tinyurl.com/WIRTS-JanMtg

1/ 7: Kickapoo Valley Reserve Winter Festival at 10 a.m. <http://kickapoovalley.wi.gov/Events/Annual-Events/Winter-Festival>

1/13-15: Winter Wonderland Triple Snowshoe Challenge at Wazee Lake Recreation Area. www.jacksoninaction.org/winterwonderland

1/16: MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY

1/16: Midwest Environmental Advocates - Recent Victories and the Road Ahead at 6:30 p.m. online. www.tinyurl.com/MEAJan16

Kudos!

Congratulations to CRSC member Diane Cain who received the state chapter's Wildflower Award given to a club member who exemplifies, "all that is wonderful in the environment and in the club." Diane and her husband own Cain's Orchard in Hixton.

Act to address the harmful environmental justice impacts of this growing sector, and moving our economy away from an overreliance on single-use plastic. It establishes stricter rules for petrochemical plants to safeguard the health of American communities and reduce greenhouse gas emissions fueling the climate crisis. The bill would also begin to shift the U.S. economy away from its dependence on certain single-use plastics, creating new nationwide targets for plastic source reduction and reuse in the packaging and food service sectors. These targets are paired with federal incentives to spur expansion of reusable and refillable systems, with an emphasis on ensuring benefits are realized in environmental justice communities.

Learn more at www.booker.senate.gov/news/press/booker-huffman-merkley-lowenthal-introduce-legislation-to-address-plastic-production-crisis

1/18: Coulee Audubon Member Meeting 7 p.m. www.couleeaudubon.org/html/events.html

1/27-29: Winter Wonderland Triple Snowshoe Challenge at Lunda Community Park. www.jacksoninaction.org/winterwonderland

2/ 1: Sustainability Chat: Public Transportation in the Coulee Region at 2 p.m. www.sustaininstitute.com/event-details/sustainability-chats-local-public-transportation

Find the schedule of Wisconsin Sierra Club water outings at www.tinyurl.com/WISCWater



If a link does not work, please copy the text of the link and paste it into your browser, removing spaces if needed. If it still doesn't work, please search on the item or event title in your browser.

2022 In Review by Kathy Allen, CRSC Board President

In 2022, we slowly and carefully started returning to in-person events, although some of our programs remained virtual. Everyone seemed busy fighting for important environmental provisions in federal legislation, and gearing up for the critical midterm elections. 2023 will be a state budget year, so keep an eye out for opportunities to advocate for Sierra Club priorities with your legislators! Here are some of our accomplishments over the past year (including links to some of our virtual programs):

January - We hosted a virtual program on the City of La Crosse's climate action plan with Ted Redmond from Pale Blue Dot. Group chair Kathy Allen coordinated and moderated a discussion on "Government and the Environment in Wisconsin" with State Treasurer Sarah Godlewski and Tia Nelson.

February - Our group co-hosted the Fox Valley group's online program, an update on CAFO expansion in Wisconsin. We also supported Transit Equity Day actions in La Crosse and Viroqua.

March - We hosted a program on the fight for clean water in Wisconsin with Johnson Bridgewater from the River Alliance and Jamie O'Neill, Event Planner for Viterbo's Science Symposium on water issues; our board representatives then tabled at the science symposium on the Viterbo campus.

April - Our group co-sponsored the SOLS (Solar on La Crosse Schools) bike tour of current and future solar sites on La Crosse schools. We also completed our first roadside clean-up of the year along River Valley Drive. Our group co-sponsored the Drive Electric Earth Day event and tabled at the La Crosse Earth Fair - in-person for the first time since 2019!



May - We hosted a tour, led by Tamra Dickinson and Todd Huffman, of La Crosse neighborhood and school gardens, including the Kane Street Community Garden.

June - Our group's potluck picnic returned, this time at Veteran's Park in West Salem - great food and conversation, with just a small downpour at the end! We also tabled at SOLS' Solar Show and Tell event at Northside Elementary in La Crosse.

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Act Now to Reduce Emissions

The United Nations encourages every individual to act now to take climate action. In the U.S., emissions in 2020 were 14.6 tons of CO2 equivalent per person, more than double the global average. To preserve a livable climate, the average emissions per person per year needs to be 2.0 to 2.5 tons of CO2e by 2030. Visit www.un.org/en/actnow/ten-actions for details about the ten ways to act shown on the following page.



July - We hosted an online screening and discussion of the film "Story of Plastic", and members enjoyed the Black River family canoe/camping trip.

August - Group representatives tabled at the La Crosse "Bluff Bash" and completed our summer roadside clean-up.

September - We awarded our first-ever high school stewardship award! And our group co-sponsored and tabled at the La Crosse "Ask me about my EV" event during National Drive Electric Week.

October - Group members completed our final roadside clean-up of the year. All three clean-ups took place as scheduled this year, and in decent conditions - no weather postponements, like in past years!

November - We co-hosted a press event outside Dairyland Power headquarters with the Chapter's Beyond Coal to Clean Energy Team, asking the company to cancel their plans for a new fracked gas plant.



December - Three Coulee Region group members received Wisconsin Chapter awards and were honored at a virtual ceremony. Diane Cain received the Wildflower Award for her work with the Chapter Wildlife Team. Current group president Kathy Allen received the Merit Award for her work on climate

and clean energy campaigns. Long-time board member Pat Wilson received the JJ & Pat Werner Award for his years of leadership and activism with the organization. Congratulations to all 2022 award winners!

Ten Ways to Act Now on Carbon Emissions

1. Save energy at home - seal and insulate, upgrade appliances, change habits.
2. Walk, bike, bus - whenever you can, don't drive. Combine errands into one trip. Share your ride.
3. Eat more veggies - eat less meat and dairy. Going vegan reduces emissions by nearly one ton a year.
4. Rethink flying - one long-haul return flight produces almost 2 tons of CO₂e per passenger.
5. Throw away less food - compost if possible.
6. Buy less stuff - Reduce, reuse, repair, recycle. Buy used. Sell or donate usable things.
7. Change your home's energy source - install solar if you can or buy green electricity from your utility.
8. Switch to an EV - EVs and plug-in hybrids, cause fewer emissions. Buy a used EV or an e-bike.
9. Make your money count - support businesses that are reducing their own emissions. Invest wisely.
10. Speak up - encourage others how to take action.