



Sierra

Newsletter of the Coulee Region Group

APRIL 2024

"I think that 1.5 C has moved from 'ambitious goal' to 'magical thinking.' And the scientists are telling themselves a story to stave off despair." - Barbara Moran, "Many scientists don't want to tell the truth about climate change," WBUR

PLEASE VOTE APRIL 2!

Tuesday, April 9, 6 to 8 p.m. Spring Into Energy Savings!

Save Money, Protect the Environment

The Nature Place, Myrick Park, La Crosse

Learn about how you and your family can benefit from the largest climate investment in US history! Sign up to learn about the benefits available to help you install energy efficient appliances and solar panels, reduce your home's energy usage, buy electric vehicles, and much more – all with major cost savings!

Guest speakers: Maxwell Johnson of Wisconsin Conservation Voters and Mackenzie Mindel, chair, City of La Crosse Climate Action Plan Steering Committee.

This is an in-person event that is free and open to everyone. Please register so we can be sure to have enough materials: <https://tinyurl.com/SpringIntoEnergySavings>. The event is co-sponsored by Citizen Action of Wisconsin, Citizens Climate Lobby - La Crosse Chapter, City of La Crosse, Coulee Region Sierra Club, and Wisconsin Conservation Voters.

Tuesday, April 23, 7 p.m. online Climate Action on the Mississippi

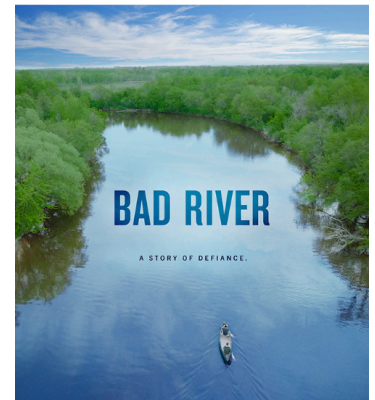
with La Crosse Mayor Mitch Reynolds

tinyurl.com/CRSC-MayorReynolds-042324

La Crosse Mayor Mitch Reynolds is co-chair of the Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative, an organization that collaborates to heal and protect the health and sustainability of the Mississippi River system. Globally, he's worked with river city mayors from around the world on challenges and solutions. Locally, he has championed a community-wide climate action plan to reduce carbon emissions and address and mitigate adverse effects of drought, floods, and storms. We'll hear from Mayor Reynolds about his work and plans, with time for questions and answers during this online program. To register, call 608-315-2693 or visit tinyurl.com/CRSC-MayorReynolds-042324.

BAD RIVER FILM - April 29

A special screening of the film BAD RIVER will be held on Monday, April 29 at 5 p.m. at the Rivoli, 117 4th St. North, in La Crosse. Doors open at 4 p.m. It is free and open to all, *but registration is required*. To register, call 608-315-2693 or fill out the form at <https://tinyurl.com/BadRvrFilmInLaCrosse>.



Co-sponsors include Citizen Action of Wisconsin, Coulee Region Sierra Club, Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, and The Rivoli Theatre & Pizzeria.

The film is also being shown on April 5 in Sparta. See https://www.spartacinema6.com/movie/Bad_River for details.

BAD RIVER chronicles the Wisconsin-based Bad River Band and the Band's ongoing fight for sovereignty, including the battle over siting of the Enbridge Line 5 fracked oil pipeline.

Read more about the film at www.badriverfilm.com and about line 5 at sierraclub.org/wisconsin/line-5



Know Your Co-op, Own Your Co-op!

On March 14, the Coulee Region Sierra Club and the Wisconsin Chapter Sierra Club joined several other organizations to present a program about grassroots citizen action. Guest speakers included

- Dean Eakles of the Wisconsin Network for Peace and Justice
- CRSC board president Kathy Allen who gave background on Dairyland Power Cooperative and Nemadji Trail Energy Center (NTEC)
- Lee Sandok Baker with the League of Women Voters of Douglas County who talked about Neighbors Against NTEC,
- Dr. Cameron Kiersch, Assistant Professor in Viterbo University's School of Nursing and

member of Healthy Climate Wisconsin discussing health effects of fossil fuel use and climate change

- Samantha Laskowski from Vernon County Energy District describing their neighbor-to-neighbor efforts to educate and motivate, and
- Forrest Jahnke of Crawford Stewardship Project who talked about efforts to rein in Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations

If you are a rural electric co-op member, we encourage you to attend your co-op's annual member meeting! Learn more about the March program at <https://www.facebook.com/CRSierraClub>



The Wisconsin Conservation Congress (WCC) and Wisconsin DNR will offer their annual opportunity for public input on a variety of natural resource-related questions with an in-person opportunity April 8, 2024, at 6 p.m. in each county or online starting at noon April 10 to noon on April 13, 2024. Get the spring hearing questionnaire and find out how you can attend your county's event at <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/about/wcc/springhearing>.

The Wisconsin Natural Resources Board will meet on April 10 at 8:30 a.m. to consider several proposed rulemaking documents, a proposed land sale, and donations. The public is able to watch the meeting on the DNR's YouTube channel. Learn more at <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/newsroom/release/90111>.

The deadline to register for public appearance requests and to submit written comments is 11 a.m. on Wednesday, April 3, 2024. Remote testimony from the public via Zoom may be accepted.



The Green Goose Chase is a mission-based game meets scavenger hunt for ALL AGES that runs from April 19 through April 28.

Download the app then create or join a team. Your team will complete missions by snapping photos, texting in answers, or submitting GPS location tags. Each mission is tied to at least one of the Good Life Goals. As you complete missions, your team will accrue points at a chance to win great prizes!

Learn more about how to form a team, how to complete missions, and what great prizes are available at the Green Goose Chase site: <https://www.sustaininstitute.com/greengoosechase>.

Earth Fair Tablers Needed!

CRSC will table at the La Crosse Earth Fair on Sunday, April 28 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. We are looking for a few people to help table for one or two hours. You don't need special knowledge or skills! We will set up the table and give you the information and materials needed to talk to our friends and neighbors about the club's activities, goals, and advocacy! Please call us at 608-315-2693 or email CRSierraClub@gmail.com to help with this important outreach effort.

April 27 - Highway Cleanup

It's time to clean up the CRSC stretch of River Valley Drive! We'll meet on Saturday, April 27 at 9 a.m. at the pumping station just west of the Gillette Street and River Valley Drive intersection to get bags, gloves, and safety vests then pick up trash until about 10:30. See you there!



Better Bike Parking Promotes Sustainable Transportation *by Cassi Gersbach*

Everyone has an inherent right to freedom of mobility, which is the ease of moving freely, forward and unrestricted. Bicycle and pedestrian mobility are personal investments that are good for mental, physical, and ecological health.

But how can we satisfy our freedom of mobility when our investments are not properly protected? Bicycle theft rates are running rampant downtown, on campus, and in residential areas of La Crosse. Students are getting their bikes stolen in broad daylight right between their classes, property owners are getting robbed directly out of their backyards, and inadequate bike locks are getting snipped and dipped. Investing time and money into a bike is a financial and ecological choice of transportation.

To work towards a carbon neutral future, we need to protect our investments in electric bikes, and eco-friendly modes of transportation.

James Longhurst, has a PhD in history and policy. He's a history professor at UWL with an emphasis on urban and environmental policy, including transportation and bicycle history, is a member of the Committee on Transit and Active Transportation of the La Crosse Area Planning Committee. He points out, "Better bicycle parking infrastructure is in the interest of the government. It means fewer vehicles on the road, which means less

money spent on construction, structure, and maintenance. The addition of more cars and increasingly heavy vehicles results in roads deteriorating faster, which accumulates government expenses. Ultimately, money spent on bikes saves money."

We can try renovating unused areas of parking ramps and installing secure entrances, which could repurpose existing negative spaces. We could also invest in protective bike cages which would add security and encourage more to live in the neighborhoods. Progressive implementation of bike security ensures freedom of mobility and protection of investment and ecological concerns for the future.

The Bike-Ped Advisory Committee is now revising the City's 2012 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan to improve bicycle infrastructure, education, safety, and security for those of all ages and abilities. Now is the time to offer input via survey on the Forward La Crosse website: <https://forwardlacrosse.org>

As we work toward a decarbonized future, it is time to use an open mind and provide freedom of movement for everyone. To create a necessary change, we need people who care about investing their time, money, and future on sustainable and secure bike infrastructure. Through constructive public forums, anyone can voice their ideas and solutions for a safer community.

Viroqua Plastic Free

Viroqua Plastic Free is a local organization devoted to educating people about the dangers single-use plastics present to the environment and to human health.

The group has recently concluded their *Choose to Reuse* cloth shopping bag campaign during which local businesses offered for sale their recycled cotton shopping bags at a minimal mark up from the wholesale cost. The goal was to offer cloth shopping bags at a price everyone could afford. Nearly 400 bags have been distributed.

Their on-going Plastic Conspiracy events have included "Beyond the Myth of Plastic Recycling," "How Plastic Is Making Us Sick," and "Are You Being Greenwashed?"

Their most recent project is a Zero Waste Event Initiative. They are partnering with the Viroqua Chamber of Commerce to assist in zero waste events by supplying organizations with reusable dishware, napkins and utensils for their gatherings.

VPF meets every other Wednesday afternoon from 3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. in Room 207 in the Landmark Center in Viroqua. Visitors are always welcome. Email us at viroquaplasticfree@gmail.com for the next meeting date.

Check out their website (viroquaplasticfree.org) and our Facebook Group and Facebook page.

May 1 - Chapter Fundraiser

On May 1, the Wisconsin Chapter will host its annual, online celebration of sustainable production and grassroots activism. This year, we'll take a journey around the state to feature several local vendors who have a close connection to the Chapter's work to protect land, water, and wildlife and stop the worst impacts of climate change. In addition to some great conversation, we'll play trivia and share some favorite recipes. This event is free, with opportunities to donate during the evening. Find out more and register here: <https://tinyurl.com/wisc24-ignk>

Solar For Good

RENEW Wisconsin's Solar for Good initiative fosters the expansion of solar power among mission-based nonprofits and houses of worship in Wisconsin. Grant applications open April 1 and will close on May 1. Learn more about the grants at: www.renewwisconsin.org/solarforgood/





Drive Electric Earth Month is a national campaign to share information about electric vehicles

during the month of April. In addition to being better for the environment, electric vehicles are more fun to drive, more convenient to fuel and less expensive to operate than gasoline vehicles.

There are two DEEM events scheduled in the Coulee Region. Check <https://driveelectricearthmonth.org> for updates.

On Saturday, April 20, the Vernon County Energy District will host a **Drive Electric B-Earthday Event** from 9 a.m. to noon at the Viroqua Food Co-op. Vernon County Energy District is celebrating its fourth anniversary, so, in addition to electric cars, there will be cake!

On Sunday, April 28, visit the **Ask Me About My EV** display at the La Crosse Earth Fair from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Myrick Park. The EVs will be in the lower parking lot next to The Nature Place and the Rod & Gun Club Shelter.

More April Events

4/ 3: Wisconsin frogs and toads at The Nature Place, Myrick Park, La Crosse. 7 p.m. <https://natureplacelacrosse.org/calendar/enviro-wednesdays-3-2024-04-03/>

4/ 6: Baby animals at Wildcat Mountain State Park. 1 p.m. <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/events/88276>

4/ 7: When the Sky Turns Dark - Understanding Eclipses at the La Crosse Public Library. 2 p.m. <https://www.lacrosselibrary.org/event/when-sky-turns-dark-35901>

4/ 7: Indigenuity - Learning the Lessons of Mother Earth with Daniel R. Wildcat at Pearl Street Books in La Crosse. 4:30 p.m. <https://www.pearlstbooks.com/events>

4/10: Upper Mississippi River Refuge Centennial - a Lunch & Learn event at the Refuge, N5727 Cty ZB, Onalaska and online. 11:30 to 1. <https://tinyurl.com/UMRWFCentennialLWV>

4/11: Crafting Bows and Arrows with Stone Age Tools at the La Crosse Public Library. 5:30 p.m. <https://www.mississippivalleyconservancy.org/events/crafting-bows-arrows-stone-age-tools>

4/13: Work Play Earth Day at Wildcat Mountain State Park. 9 to noon. <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/events/88616>

4/20: Earth Day Cleanup at Castle Mound State Park Shelter. 11:30 a.m. <https://www.blackrivercountry.net/event/earth-day-cleanup/>

4/20-27: Earth Week at the Kickapoo Valley Reserve <http://kvr.state.wi.us/Events/Annual-Events>

ATTENTION: High school juniors and seniors

\$300

Environmental Stewardship Award

The Coulee Region Sierra Club (CRSC) will recognize and award \$300 to a high school junior or senior who has demonstrated leadership, action, engagement and understanding of the importance of environmental stewardship.

Application includes:

- Environmental resume
- Short essay
- Brief portfolio



Submit application by:
July 1, 2024

- Eligible students must reside in the CRSC region which includes Crawford, Grant, Jackson, La Crosse, Monroe, Richland, Trempealeau, and Vernon counties.
- For more info, visit sierraclub.org/wisconsin/coulee/Education or tinyurl.com/CRSC-Students.

The Coulee Region Sierra Club is offering a \$300 award for a high school student graduating in 2024 or 2025 who demonstrates leadership, action, and environmental stewardship, and who understands the importance of civic engagement in protecting our environment.

Applicants need not be Sierra Club members. They should live in one of the Coulee Region's counties: Crawford, Grant, Jackson, La Crosse, Monroe, Richland, Trempealeau, or Vernon. This is not a scholarship! Any eligible student may apply no matter their postsecondary plans.

The application includes essays and submission of a portfolio. The deadline for applications is July 1, 2024 with the award to be given by the end of July, 2024. Learn more at <https://sierraclub.org/wisconsin/coulee/education>.

CRSC Board News

The CRSC board meets monthly to plan club events, discuss advocacy campaigns, and seek ways to connect with the chapter and regional organizations on our priorities. Email us at CRSierraClub@gmail.com or call 608-315-2693 for access information. The next board meeting will be Tuesday, May 7 at 6:30 p.m. on Zoom.