



# Sierra

Newsletter of the Coulee Region Group

MAY 2024

*"If this project prompts us into doing more for each other instead of just for ourselves, wouldn't that be something?"*  
- Mary Mazzio, about her film BAD RIVER.

## Tues., May 21, 7 p.m. online Climate Action in a River City (rescheduled)

with La Crosse Mayor Mitch Reynolds

[tinyurl.com/CRSC-MayorReynolds-Climate](https://tinyurl.com/CRSC-MayorReynolds-Climate)

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.

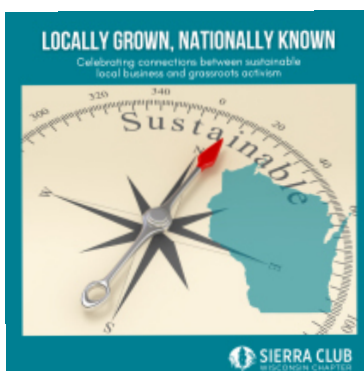
We'll hear from Mayor Reynolds about his work and plans, with time for questions and answers during this online program.

To register, call 608-315-2693 or visit [tinyurl.com/CRSC-MayorReynolds-Climate](https://tinyurl.com/CRSC-MayorReynolds-Climate)

This event is rescheduled from April. If you registered for the April program you don't need to register again.

## MAY 1 CHAPTER FUNDRAISER

Join us online on Wednesday, May 1 at 6:30 p.m. for the annual fundraiser, Locally Grown, Nationally Known fundraiser for the Wisconsin Chapter Sierra Club!



This year we will take a journey around the state, meeting with some Wisconsinites who not only share our vision for sustainability, but have put it into action! Guests include the proprietor of a vegan restaurant, a candlemaker, a food co-op, a sheep farm that uses guard dogs and a home weatherization service. We'll

connect the dots between these unique ventures and our advocacy efforts, play a few rounds of trivia, and more.

To learn more and register, visit <https://tinyurl.com/wisc24-lgnk>.

Chances to donate will be shared during the evening. Or make your gift in advance at <https://teamsierrawisconsin.org/rally-bound.org/LGNK2024>

## Sat., June 1, 8:30 - 11:30 TRANSIT 2 TRAILS 4 ALL

MTU to La Crosse River Conservancy Trail  
with Cassie Steiner-Bouxa, WI Sierra Club

The Sierra Club's national [Transit 2 Trails 4 All](#) campaign aims to highlight lack of access to local, state, and national recreation and wild areas for nondrivers, and advocate for more cleaner, safer transportation options.

CRSC is hosting its first ever T2T event with Wisconsin Sierra Club's Senior Campaign Coordinator, Cassie Steiner-Bouxa on Saturday, June 1, National Trails Day!

We'll meet at the Grand River Station Transit Center, 314 Jay Street, La Crosse a bit before 8:30 a.m. and catch the MTU #5 bus to get to the trailhead near Stoney Creek Inn. Then, we'll hike on the Mississippi Valley Conservancy's [La Crosse River Conservancy](#) trail before we catch the 11:10 a.m. bus back to the Transit Center. NO BUS EXPERIENCE NECESSARY! We will have guides available and send details when you register.

Email us or call 608-315-2693 for more information. Register so we can send details and contact you if plans change at [tinyurl.com/LaXT2TRegister](https://tinyurl.com/LaXT2TRegister) or by calling.

## EARTH MONTH Events

### **April 9 - Spring into Energy Savings**

Thank you to co-sponsors, Wisconsin Conservation Voters, Citizen Action of Wisconsin, Citizens' Climate Lobby, and the City of La Crosse) and presenters (Maxwell Johnson and Mackenzie Mindel) for our program about financial incentives in the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and the city's community-wide climate action goals. Thanks also to our attendees and to The Nature Place for hosting!



You can find information on IRA incentives from WCV at <https://conservationvoters.org/priority-campaigns/clean-energy-plan>. Find more information about the Carbon Free Challenge at <https://brightaction.app/westernwi/lacrosse>.

Our **April 23 talk with La Crosse Mayor Mitch Reynolds** had to be postponed because of a schedule conflict. We will now host the talk on May 21.

Our **April 27 highway clean-up** on La Crosse's River Valley Drive was the first of the year. Thank you volunteers!

The **April 28 La Crosse Earth Fair** ran into stormy weather which meant tablers in tents, like CRSC, and the Ask Me About My EV event were canceled. We will try to reschedule the EV event at a later date.

On **Monday, April 29, BAD RIVER**, the new documentary about the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa was shown twice at the Rivoli Theatre and Pizzeria in La Crosse. The film highlights the band's ongoing struggle against Enbridge's Line 5 pipeline. Co-sponsors included CRSC, the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, the Rivoli, Citizen Action of Wisconsin Driftless Co-op, the La Crosse Ho-Chunk Nation La Crosse Youth and Learning Center, La Crosse Public Library, UWL ALANA, UWL Students for Sustainability, and Viterbo Student Sustainability Club.

The film is now available to stream online. See <https://www.badriverfilm.com> for details.

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## May 4 - Valley Conservation Day

On Saturday, May 4, the Coon Creek Community Watershed Council (CCCWC) and partners will host a FREE Conservation Day at Coon Valley Dairy Supply (S688A WI-162, Coon Valley). Events kick off at 9 a.m. with an artisan market featuring over 50 local vendors. The Conservation Fair will run from noon to 4 p.m. This event celebrates the watershed and its conservation traditions. The Coon Creek Watershed was home to the nation's first large-scale conservation demonstration project in the 1930s, which changed agricultural practices across the country. Learn more: <https://cooncreekwatershed.org/coon-creek-conservation-day>.

## May 7- Sierra Club Book Club

"My desire is not to leave readers feeling hopeful, but to leave you feeling efficacious."

Join the Wisconsin Chapter's book club at 7:00 for a discussion of **A Field Guide to Climate Anxiety: How to Keep Your Cool on a Warming Planet** by Sarah Jaquette Ray. Drawing on a decade of experience leading and teaching in college environmental studies programs, Ray has created an "existential tool kit" for the youth movement that is re-energizing global environmental activism (and more seasoned advocates). Combining insights from psychology, sociology, social movements, mindfulness, and the environmental humanities, Ray explains why and how we need to let go of eco-guilt, resist burnout, and cultivate resilience while advocating for climate justice. RSVP at <https://tinyurl.com/may24-bookclub> to receive the meeting link.

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## May 19 - Building Community

Echo Valley Hope and Building Unity will host a free, inclusive, educational and community-building event at Eckhart Park from 2 to 5 p.m. on Sunday, May 19. Participating organizations include: Crawford Stewardship Project, Vernon County Energy District, SOUL of Wisconsin, River to Ridge, Valley Stewardship Network, Driftless Palestine Solidarity, Driftless Green Burial Alliance, Threshold Care Circle and more. Speakers will start at 3:00, followed by open discussion and questions and answers. Please bring a chair. Food available from Jovita's Kitchen, an authentic Mexican food truck. Find event updates on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/events/397788679839534>

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## More May Events

5/ 1: Adventures in Ornithology - Borneo at Myrick Park Nature Place, 7 p.m. [tinyurl.com/myrick0524](https://tinyurl.com/myrick0524)

5/ 4: Tree Planting at Plum Creek Conservation Area in Crawford county 10 to 4 <https://www.mississippivalleyconservancy.org/events/volunteer-wild-tree-planting>

5/ 4: Spring foraging class (\$) in Viola at 9 a.m. [driftlessfolkschool.org/classes/spring-foraging-may-2024](https://driftlessfolkschool.org/classes/spring-foraging-may-2024)

5/ 9: What to Do About PFAS 6:30 p.m. ONLINE [tinyurl.com/WILWV-PFAS0524](https://tinyurl.com/WILWV-PFAS0524)

5/11: Wildflower Hike in Black River Falls 9:30 a.m. [tinyurl.com/brfflowerhike](https://tinyurl.com/brfflowerhike)

5/15: Friends of the Black River meeting 6:30 p.m. Lunda Ctr [tinyurl.com/fobr052](https://tinyurl.com/fobr052)

5/18: Wyalusing bird hike, 6 a.m. [tinyurl.com/wyalusingmaybird](https://tinyurl.com/wyalusingmaybird)

6/ 1: National Trails Day at Kickapoo Valley Reserve [kvr.state.wi.us/Events/Annual-Events](https://kvr.state.wi.us/Events/Annual-Events)

## **BAD RIVER Review** *by Emily Grandy*

Bad River (dir. Mary Mazzio) is a powerful new documentary chronicling the Wisconsin-based Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa's ongoing fight for sovereignty. The film centers on the Tribe's battle against Enbridge, a negligent, rapacious Canadian oil company and their Line 5 pipeline, which transports crude oil through the Great Lakes Region, including the Bad River Reservation.

The band sued Enbridge in federal court, arguing that there is a profound risk of a catastrophic rupture that could send oil pouring into the reservation's complex watershed. Any spillage would not only jeopardize essential habitat including the only remaining extensive coastal wild rice wetland in the Great Lakes Basin, but it would inevitably end up in the Great Lakes. This is not some idle threat: the most shocking footage showed the extent of erosion around the pipeline leaving full sections dangerously exposed.

The film's well-orchestrated series of historical footnotes captures not only the ongoing and continuous trend of exploitation of indigenous people and their land, but the immeasurable resilience of Native people.

It is a painful, heartbreaking history. And yet, Native resistance continues to lead in the fight against injustice and devastating environmental degradation. It is a story so universal, yet so particular to the Lake Superior watershed.



5/ 4: Event at Myrick Park, La Crosse 6:30 to 11:30 a.m.

5/11: Hike at Sugar Creek Bluff 7 to 9 a.m. [tinyurl.com/sugcrkbrd](https://tinyurl.com/sugcrkbrd)

5/11: Event, Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge [tinyurl.com/tnwrbrd24](https://tinyurl.com/tnwrbrd24)

## **People, Places, and Participation First** *by Cassi Gersbach*

As a senior at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, I have lived here for the last four years without a car, and that has made me grateful for all that I have experienced and the challenges I have overcome. As the spring semester wraps up, I look forward to taking some time to discover myself, new cultures, countries and environments as I solo backpack across Europe.

This has been a dream of mine—to take only the things I can carry and set off to discover what life has to offer. I am most excited to experience and use the convenience of a well-connected public transportation system. I'll be able to carry everything I need on my back and only move forward. As much as one can plan every step of the process, reality will never be as predictable. And to me, that is the beauty of the discovery.

I plan to get an EU rail pass and make my way north, capital by capital, starting with Geneva, Switzerland. By having access to such an accessible transportation system, I will be able to travel through eleven countries without needing a vehicle. I'll have my rucksack, my own two feet and an entire continent ahead of me.

My love for traveling sparked during my semester abroad in New Zealand in 2023. I studied at the University of Waikato in Hamilton, New Zealand and loved it so much that I extended my trip an extra month to see the Southern Island by van. Although New Zealand is a very rugged country with less public transportation between villages, I felt the freedom of movement within each city. Each city that I stopped at along my van tour was beautiful and very walkable. Because it is a tourist country, the cities put emphasis on aesthetics and social welfare. The cafes were lovely, and there were murals in every city depicting the rich culture or the art of the land.

As I travel, I will find myself more dependent on community welfare than ever before. As I have grown up in the United States, I have realized how divided we can be from the communal enjoyment of the cities. Reliable public transportation and beauty is a must when it comes to an enjoyable city. In the US, our intercity transportation lacks heavily for a fully “developed” country. Places that prioritize the good of the community and the individual's well being find themselves creating a safe space for arts, community, appreciation and happiness. When it comes to the simple things like transportation and pedestrian friendly cities, every country should prioritize the needs of the people first.

As I reflect on my time in La Crosse over the last four years, I realize that the extent of my travels are just a glimpse into its developmental history. Even with some flaws, La Crosse is on its way towards ergonomic sustainability because of the passion in the community. I have come to appreciate those who advocate for social welfare and for the importance of public transportation and infrastructure. As I witness the uphill battle that citizens and policy makers put into La Crosse's foundation, I am that much more grateful for the people who put the effort to make the community more like the seemingly glamorized cities in Europe and New Zealand. People who advocate for transportation, who attend sustainability events, and who prioritize art and happiness know that every little effort matters to turn our city into an ideal place for ourselves and our future.

So, thank you for every effort you put into making your city better, and thank you for letting me share.

*[We thank Cassi for sharing her thoughts with us this semester and wish her well on her Grand Adventure!]*



**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](https://sierraclub.org/wisconsin/coulee/Education) or [tinyurl.com/CRSC-Students](https://tinyurl.com/CRSC-Students).