



Sierra

Newsletter of the Coulee Region Group

APRIL 2019

"Fossil fuel companies still have plans to expand oil production in the U.S." - Climate Liability News

PLEASE VOTE APRIL 2!

Conservation Congress April 8

Wisconsin's annual **Conservation Congress** hearings (dnr.wi.gov/About/WCC/springhearing.html) are coming up on Monday, April 8 at 7 pm. There is one event in each county. Check the link for the location nearest to you.

New this year - you may complete a ballot online. Find a copy of the Spring hearing questionnaire online or get one at the event. John Muir chapter encourages all Sierra Club members to attend. Issues include hunting and fishing, protection of natural resources, and other issues brought to the Congress through citizen resolutions.



The Sierra Club has highlighted a few issues for special attention, including 2. traps near beaver dams, 3. bag limit for river otters, 7. pellet gun caliber requirements, 50. agricultural buffer zones, 52. pilot CWD payment program, 56. deer baiting and feeding ban, 70. adequate budget for public lands, 76. minimum hunting license age, 77. mentored hunting proposal, 85. banning lead ammunition, 86. ban on lead fishing tackle. View the specifics and Sierra Club recommendations at tinyurl.com/19wcc-jmc

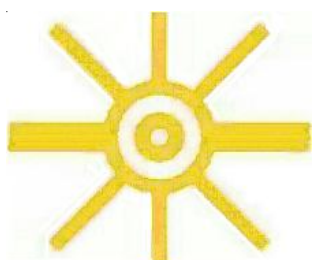
You don't have to stay the whole time - you can complete your questionnaire and leave if you're pressed for time. If you have any other questions, please feel free to send us a message at crsierraclub@gmail.com.

April 13 Imaging Carbon Free

We started our Climate Conversation in January. Let's continue by **imagining our carbon free future**. As La Crosse moves to committing to a 100% clean, renewable community wide energy, what will that mean for our systems, infrastructure, planning, buildings, neighborhoods, and transportation?

On **Saturday, April 13, from 10:30 to noon at La Crosse's South Community Library**, we'll share and imagine what

changes we'll see and what changes we can start making now for our carbon free future. We welcome your experiences, ideas, and visions. What have you done or experienced? What have you seen or read about? Let's share and gather great ideas.



April 28 La Crosse Earth Fair

La Crosse's **11th annual Earth Fair** will be held at **Myrick Park from 11 am to 5 pm on Sunday, April 28**. The Coulee Region Sierra Club will have a table at the fair highlighting our Ready for 100 initiative and other Sierra Club work. See more at earthfairlacrosse.com.

A **Recycling Fair** will be held from 10 am to 3 pm in the nearby Emerson Elementary School parking lot. Dynamic Recycling will accept most electronic items for a small fee. Cell phones will also be accepted for recycling. In addition there will be document shredding, flag retirement, scrap metal collection, and child car seat recycling.

The **Sierra Club spring highway clean up, April 27 at 9 am** is part of the Earth Day clean up. Meet at the pumping station near the intersection of River Valley Drive and Gillette. Gloves, bags, vests provided. A lunch for clean up volunteers will be available at Myrick at 11:30 am.

March meeting notes

Thanks to our March guest speakers David Bange and Sue Knopf who led us through the maps and details of the many and varied trails on land protected by the Mississippi Valley Conservancy in the La Crosse area. Their knowledge and experience of the trails along with the super maps Sue has created gave audience members a great overview, including how to get there, what to look for, and what kinds of plants and animals you can experience.

Maps of the trails were available at the meeting. You can find maps and info at mississippivalleyconservancy.org/land-protection/protected-land. If you have ideas for future speakers or meetings, please email us at crsierraclub@gmail.com.

PLEASE SIGN UP TO HELP!

Coulee Region Sierra Club will table at two large events later this spring. **We need members to sign up for a shift!** If you are able, help staff the CRSn C table at April 28 Earth Day at Myrick Park (sign up at tinyurl.com/crsc-earthfair) **OR** at the Driftless Outdoor Show, May 17-18 at Onalaska's Omni Center (tinyurl.com/crsc-driftlesstable) or call Pat at 608 788-8831. Sign up with a friend and spend a great hour telling people about the Sierra Club and its opportunities and important work in our community!

GCRS asks for Moratorium

Grant County's Chapter 90 ordinance requires those wishing to build an animal waste storage facility in excess of 7,000 cubic feet to obtain a permit.

Grant County Rural Stewardship supports a moratorium on new permits while the SWIGG (Southwestern Wisconsin Groundwater and Geology) study is being conducted. Final results are expected in 2020, but initial private well testing showed that 42% of 301 wells were contaminated with nitrates, coliform or E coli. Lead researcher, Mark Borchardt, has noted that the strongest statistical links are those connecting coliform-polluted water with nearby manure storage.

Grant County seems reluctant to slow permitting even as a new hog facility for 5,000 sows which will ship out 2,500 piglets per week at capacity, nears completion. Concerned residents would like study results before further pollution sources are allowed to operate.

Read more: facebook.com/grantcountyruralstewardship

April Budget Hearings

There are just four Joint Finance Committee (JFC) hearings this month and none is in the Coulee Region group area. You may **email comments to BudgetComments@legis.wisconsin.gov**. The governor's budget includes a focus on clean air, safe drinking water, and action on climate change. Read more about Sierra Club endorsed budget proposals at tinyurl.com/jmc19budget. Wisconsin Conservation Voters has also outlined top environmental priorities at conservationvoters.org/news/clean-water-clean-energy-gov-evers-budget-is-a-bold-vision.

State Senator Jennifer Shilling and State Representative Jill Billings will host a **state budget listening session on Thursday, April 4 at 5:30 pm at the Northside Policing Center, 713 St. James St. in La Crosse**. Other state legislators may hold sessions in their districts. Contact your Senator or Representative to ask. Comments are especially important if your senator or rep sits on the JFC.

May 11 - Wisconsin LOVES Parks

Join Coulee Region Sierra Club members for a day of appreciation for our fantastic public lands at Wyalusing State Park for hiking, paddling, conversation, and nature. More details in our May newsletter!

Political money in SW Wisconsin

As reported in The Badger Project (thebadgerproject.org), nearly \$1.5 million was spent on last fall's campaign for Wisconsin's 17th Senate District. The incumbent, Republican Howard Marklein, raised a record amount - more than \$900,000 - in his successful bid to retain this seat. The salary for this position is \$53,000 per year.

The article provides an detailed analysis of the district, the campaign to keep it, the role of "dark money" in Wisconsin campaigns, and the role of hyper partisan gerrymandering. Read more at tinyurl.com/wi17money

DNR Hearing on Babcock

Nearly 50 people attended the DNR's public hearing on water discharge permitting for Babcock Genetics in La Crosse county on March 14. All but one speaker opposed the permit, noting that Babcock has consistently failed to meet permit standards over the past decade. Speakers also noted that new research and standards should be considered, the DNR itself did not complete the permit application properly, and the protection of the environment and public health is supposed to be the priority of the DNR. Governor Evers' pledge to make this the "year of clean water" will be tested by the outcome of this process.

Ready for 100 moves forward

At its March meeting, the Sustainable La Crosse Commission approved and recommended a resolution for the City of La Crosse to move that community to 100 percent clean, renewable energy by 2050 or sooner. The process now moves to the city level. Soon, we'll ask local supporters to actively lobby for the resolution. Until then, please sign the petition: tinyurl.com/crsc100petition

The SLC will now pursue a county-wide process with similar goals. Ready for 100 is a Sierra Club initiative to help cities, towns, villages, counties, and states to pledge a transition away from fossil fuels and plan for that date-certain move. If other Coulee Region communities are interested in Ready for 100 legislation, please email us at crsierraclub@gmail.com. Read more about the national project at sierraclub.org/ready-for-100/commitments

The SLC will host a public program - **La Crosse's Renewable Energy Future - on Thursday, April 18 at 5:30 pm in the basement of the County Administration building, 6th and State.** The event will include a panel of experts, an overview of past progress, and information about next steps. It's **FREE** and **OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.**



Learn to teach safe bicycling!

Teaching Safe Bicycling is a Train-the-Trainer workshop designed to provide adults with skills to host a youth bicycle rodeo or other event to teach good biking skills. The Wisconsin Bike Fed is offering **FREE six hour training sessions** around the state including one in **La Crosse on May 2 from 9 am to 3 pm at the La Crosse County Administration Building, 6th and State.** Pre-registration is required. Visit tinyurl.com/bfw52training for more details and to register.

Climate Action Now

Green New Deal legislation continues to gain support as the true costs of delaying action to immediately reduce carbon emissions or doing nothing become more clear. Two new books, [The End of Ice](#), by Dahr Jamail and [The Uninhabitable Earth: Life After Warming](#) by David Wallace-Wells, detail the terrible consequences already "locked in" by our failure to act. New research also shows that fossil fuel companies and the US government knew as far back as the 70s that our fossil fuel habit would cause catastrophic Earth changes. When someone tells you immediate strong action to reduce carbon emissions is too expensive, ask them to read these books.



Sierra Club Water Outings!

Get your water gear out! This month marks the start of canoe/kayak outings in the Coulee Region and around the state. Here are a few of the many opportunities for canoe/kayak adventures in and near our area. Read more and learn how to sign up at tinyurl.com/jmc-rvtrips

April 6-7: Robinson, Morrison, Halls Creeks (suit req'd)
April 27-28: Grant River, Class I, Car Camp
May 11: Baraboo River, Class I, Day Trip
May 19-20: Root River (Minnesota), Class I, Car Camp
May 25-27: Bois Brule River (near Superior but led by our own Pat & Bobbie Wilson), varying sections
July 13-14: Black River FAMILY trip, boat camp
Sept. 15: Kickapoo River, Class I, Day Trip

Drawdown Eco Challenge

Learn about reducing your energy use, different renewable energy sources, ways to support a move to clean energy and more by participating in the **Drawdown Eco Challenge**. La Crosse residents may join the La Crosse team or start your own community team. This challenge runs from April 3 through April 24. It's the perfect way to involve lots of people around the community, inform, educate, and motivate! Read more about it at drawdown.ecochallenge.org or join the La Crosse team: tinyurl.com/laxdrawdown-3-24

Future events!

Tuesday, May 28 is our next CRSC meeting. Watch for details about speaker in our May newsletter.

We'll host a **summer potluck** on **Tuesday, June 25**, too. Details will be in our June newsletter.

If you have suggestions for programs, activities, field trips, visits, speakers or anything else, please email us at crsierraclub@gmail.com.