



Sierra

Newsletter of the Coulee Region Group
AUGUST 2018

"Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?" - from A Summer Day by Mary Oliver

August 18 - TOUR CHRYSALIS FARM near Viroqua

Join us on the afternoon of **Saturday, August 18** as we visit and tour Chrysalis, the organic farm of Marcia Halligan and Steven Adams, on the west fork of the Kickapoo River near Viroqua. Marcia and Steven have farmed the land since 1985 and the farm is described in her book, "Hidden in the 13th Moon." Their house, built in 2005 with local architect Roald Gundersen (described in this Mother Earth Living article - tinyurl.com/tmen-chrysalis) uses whole trees, straw bales, local wood and stone, recycled materials, and solar panels along with other sustainable and ecologically friendly materials and techniques.



Our visit will begin at 2:00 p.m. The farm is at S4001 River Rd, Viroqua. "From La Crosse, take Hwy 14/61 through Westby, then turn left unto County Y. ****Follow Y through Avalanche, cross the bridge and turn right onto S.** After the West Fork Campgrounds below River Road will be the next possible place to turn right. It's not a crossroads, just a lane. The lane crosses a big bridge, passes a CAFO to cross a little bridge and ends at our farm." Coming from the south, go through Viroqua on 14/61 and turn right onto County Y. Follow directions from ****** above. From the east, drive to Avalanche and **follow the directions above.** *La Crosse area carpoolers:* meet at 1:00 p.m. at the Shopko South on Mormon Coulee Road. If you have questions, please contact Pat at 608 788-8831 or pbwilson@centurytel.net. **Dress for the weather and for walking outdoors.** The walking tour will include flood damage that's kept the farm out of production this year, marsh areas, woods, river, and fields. We'll also have a house tour, and Marcia will read a bit from her book and answer questions. It should be a great tour. Please come and bring your friends!

Open Streets in La Crosse, September 2

The City of La Crosse will host its second annual **OPEN STREETS** event on **Sunday, September 2 from noon to 5 p.m.** La Crosse Open Streets is a partnership between the Wisconsin Bicycle Federation and Explore La Crosse with support from Downtown Mainstreet, Inc, the City of La Crosse and the La Crosse City Vision Foundation. **The Coulee Region Sierra Club is also a sponsor.** Cars will be blocked from the route - Main Street from Eighth Street to Fifth Avenue South, Fifth Avenue from Main Street to King Street, and King to Fourth - leaving space for businesses and organizations to set up exhibits, activities, sales, educational booths, music, food, and more. The Sierra Club table will include info about the Ready for 100 initiative, a tree scavenger hunt, and much more. **WE ARE LOOKING FOR PEOPLE TO HELP TABLE!** Please email crsierraclub@gmail.com if you can help. You can read more about the event (including how to sign up for booth space) at tinyurl.com/2018laxos

VOTE!

On **August 14**, Wisconsin voters will choose candidates to run in the November statewide elections for governor, lieutenant governor, and more. If you are concerned about the direction our state is taking, now is the time to vote for candidates who can make changes. The Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters' Field Guide to Taking Back Wisconsin may be useful. Read it at <http://conservationvoters.org/field-guide/>

Environmental voters must get educated, get active, and VOTE. You may be able to vote "absentee in person" from now through August 10. Contact your clerk for details.. You may request an absentee ballot through August 9. Or vote at your polling place on Tuesday, August 14. For details and more information, myvote.wi.gov. For information about who is running, see wisconsinvote.org.

Coming in September and October

Our **Tuesday, September 25** meeting will include a presentation on the **Sustainability Indicators for the City and County of La Crosse by Anders Olson, Sustainability Analytics**. This meeting will **start at 7:00 p.m.** and is **co-hosted by the UWL Environmental Studies Department** and will be held in room **3314** of the **UW La Crosse Student Union** (near the corner of East Avenue and La Crosse Street). Parking is available on the street near but off campus for free. On campus parking is also available and the Union is easy to reach by bicycle and via the #4 MTU bus. More details will be in our September newsletter.

On **Tuesday, October 16**, the Coulee Region Sierra Club will host a special program about its **solar panel group buy program** featuring a representative from SunVest, the Pewaukee firm partnering with the Sierra Club on this statewide initiative. The program will be at the **Ho-Chunk Three Rivers House, 8th and Main, and will begin at 6:30 p.m.** More details next month. Read more about the group buy program at www.sunvest.com/programs/sierraclub/

Help!

We have several opportunities for Coulee Region Sierra Club members to step up and help keep our club strong. If you can volunteer for one or more of these openings, please email crsierraclub@gmail.com or contact Pat at 608 788-8831.

Soon we will seek **new members for the COULEE REGION GROUP BOARD**. Elections will be held in December, but now is the time to consider it. If you have some time and interest in keeping our club active locally, please think about running for the board later this year!

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: Avery Van Gaard will be stepping away from her role as our group's representative to the John Muir chapter executive committee because she has too much other stuff going on. The executive committee works on strategic planning for the chapter and communication with the state's groups and the national Sierra Club. Meetings are held six times per year (there's an online option). The CR board will review applications until this volunteer position is filled. Read about current members at this link. <https://www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/contact>

STATE WATER TEAM: The state water team meets monthly online (via conference call) to discuss water access, protection, and quality issues around the state and what the John Muir Chapter can and should do to highlight and work to improve issues.

COULEE REGION GROUP HELPERS: If you could send an email every once in a while about an event or issue happening in your corner of the Coulee Region, it would be very helpful. Our group covers a large region (from Black River Falls down to the Illinois border) and it's hard to keep up with everything. Please consider sending news to keep fellow members informed and involved. If you would like to post articles and news at our blog (crsierra.blogspot.com) please let us know!

Clean Water Act Training

As a result of the lack of enforcement of water pollution from the DNR, Sierra Club's legal Chair, Dennis Grzezinski and Water Team are hosting a training on Clean Water Act enforcement. Not only could this lead to direct enforcement (through legal or other means) of our water laws and stop pollution, but it also sends a message that citizens are watching and won't let pollution happen, even if the DNR is not enforcing our laws.

The training will be held on August 6 or 7 in Green Bay and specifically targets monitoring large point (factories, municipal sewage treatment plants, etc) sources

Topics covered:

- ◆ How to find/get pollution reports etc, including specific reports we have an inkling would be helpful
- ◆ How to read and summarize them, what to look for, etc
- ◆ How to get and identify updated information (like steps that may have been taken, etc.)
- ◆ IF there is a potential problem, what steps for a citizen lawsuit looks like

If interested, email elizabeth.ward@sierraclub.org

SAY NO TO PLASTIC group forms

A new group is forming in La Crosse county to help inform people about the environmental and economic problems with single use plastics - straws, bags, bottled water, dishes, cups and more - and encourage alternatives. Our world is being buried in plastic waste. Huge islands of the stuff circulate in our oceans, plastics break down and kill wildlife, plastics need fossil fuels for manufacture and transportation, recycling only catches a small fraction of single use plastics (and China will soon drastically cut the amount of plastic it accepts for recycling). That leaves landfills which are finite expensive facilities. We can do better and we must do better. If you are interested in joining the group, email cathyvanmaren@yahoo.com.