



Sierra

Newsletter of the Coulee Region Group
DECEMBER 2016

Alaska Sees 'Astounding' Rise in Temperature as 'Drill, Baby, Drill' Planned for Arctic - EcoWatch headline (Nov. 15, 2016)



PEDRETTI HONORED BY JOHN MUIR CHAPTER

The John Muir Chapter of the Sierra Club honored **Marilyn Pedretti** with the 2016 John Muir Chapter Merit Award for her inspiring leadership, commitment to preserving the environment, and personal commitment to and advocacy for sustainability and renewable energy. The award was presented at the November 19 Volunteer Appreciation and Awards event in Madison.

In addition to her Sierra Club Service, Marilyn served six years on the La Crosse County Board of Supervisors, where she actively advocated for environmental issues including helping to create the "City of La Crosse and La Crosse County Strategic Plan for Sustainability" (tinyurl.com/suslaxplan)

Congratulations, Marilyn!



On Saturday, December 3, the Sierra Club and partner organizations will host a statewide conference on the Milwaukee Area Technical College campus. The all day event includes breakfast and lunch, a plenary session with keynote speaker (US Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx invited but not confirmed at this time), sharing of transit stories, breakout sessions, a wrap up round table, and a social hour. Tickets cost just \$10 for the whole day (including meals) and scholarships are available. Info/Registration transportationequitysummit.eventbrite.com



HELP US PLAN FOR 2017

This year so far, the Coulee Region Sierra Club has worked to highlight issues of transportation (hosting a program about Coulee Region transportation options and sponsoring a local transportation forum) and solar energy (welcoming RENEW Wisconsin's Michael Vickerman to discuss new initiatives to move local governments to solar). In addition, we cosponsored the Coulee Region Climate Alliance Climate Fair in March, distributed information at the Earth Day Fair, and helped publicize issues about fossil fuel infrastructure and its current and potential harmful impacts in our area.

With a new climate change-denying administration set to make "bold" changes to the agencies and laws that are supposed to protect our environment in 2017 (see page 3) and stronger Republican control of our state government, now is the time to come together with other like-minded organizations and individuals to identify the most vulnerable populations, habitats, and programs and make plans to support and protect them.

What should our top priorities should be for 2017? More importantly, what can YOU do in cooperation with the club and others in our region to make a difference? What changes would you like to see in our club? **WE WELCOME YOUR IDEAS, INPUT, AND ENERGY.** PLEASE come with ideas to our winter gathering, email [CRSierraClub\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:CRSierraClub[at]gmail.com), or mail your suggestions to Coulee Region Sierra Club c/o 620 South 23rd Street, La Crosse, WI 54601. We will share ideas on our blog (cr-sierra.blogspot.com) and in future newsletters.

HUNDREDS VOICE WATER CONCERNS AT EAU CLAIRE EPA LISTENING SESSION

Coulee Region Sierra Club board president Pat Wilson and La Crosse County Board member Mike Giese traveled to Eau Claire to make statements at the Nov. 15 listening session on Wisconsin water quality issues with US EPA Region V Administrator Robert Kaplan and Region V water quality specialist Christopher Korleski.

The Listening Session was sponsored by the Sierra Club John Muir Chapter, Midwest Environmental Advocates, River Alliance of Wisconsin and other groups. There was a standing room only crowd in the lecture hall, with over 200 people from all over Wisconsin. They wanted to tell the EPA administrators about the water quality problems in Wisconsin and how it affected them, and to ask that the EPA do what it can to help.

Mike Giese and Pat Wilson talked about the problems with WDNR enforcement of the Wisconsin Pollution Discharge Elimination System permits, specifically in La Crosse County. There were complaints of polluted lakes, streams, and well water. There were complaints about CAFOs and manure spreading and karst topography. There were complaints about the proliferation of high capacity wells and the effects on water tables and stream flow. There were complaints about algal blooms and health advisories about swimming in lakes. There were complaints about sand mines and siltation in trout streams.

Most of all, there were complaints about the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and their lack of action to address any of these issues in a state that's "open for business" at any cost. The EPA was asked to step in and enforce federal clean water regulations.

The session was scheduled to last from 5 to 7 p.m. but went to 8:15 p.m. so everyone could speak. The EPA administrators thanked the group for their comments and said that this kind of session was a big help to them in doing their jobs.



La Crescent NO DAPL Nov. 15 Photo by G. Nygaard

FOSSIL FUEL PIPELINE NEWS

Many Sierra Club members joined others from Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin on November 15 in a Day of Solidarity with those who are fighting to stop the Dakota Access Pipeline. Demonstrations were held around the country at Army Corps of Engineers buildings. While the pipeline is nearly complete, the Army Corps issued a stop order while it arranges talks with the Standing Rock Sioux. However Energy Transfer Partners, builder of the line, has filed suit to end government "meddling."

Please continue to call on the White House to end this environmental disaster waiting to happen and donate to support the Water Protectors (and go if you can). Here are several ways you can help in the fight: tinyurl.com/helpnodapl. Meanwhile, in Wisconsin, the John Muir Chapter of the Sierra Club notes that, "Enbridge is upgrading their Line 61 pipeline to become the world's largest tar sands pipeline, outside of Russia."

"Now, they want to 'twin' Line 61, possible giving Wisconsin another enormous pipeline. The path will be the same as Line 61, starting at the shores of Lake Superior, traveling under the St. Croix and Namakagon Rivers, under the Wisconsin River, under the Rock River, and down south, where the oil will likely be used for export. The pipeline will threaten our water, our climate, and our future.

"The pipeline also goes through the land of thousands. The new pipeline would require a new easement, meaning it would take even more land. For many, their property values, their safety, and even their homes are at risk. Instead of protecting them, Enbridge worked with the legislature to expand the eminent domain law, making room for Enbridge, a foreign company, to take a Wisconsinite's land for their private gain.

"Landowners across Wisconsin are teaming up together to oppose the pipeline. Yesterday, the landowner group, 80 Feet is Enough (referring to the existing 80 foot easement that Enbridge owns) has kicked off their crowd-sourcing campaign to raise enough money to put billboards up across Wisconsin to raise awareness. Now more than ever we must come together and support one-another. Support their campaign now and show that environmentalists, landowners, and other stand together in opposing the new pipeline!



Join us for great food and interesting conversation!

COULEE REGION SIERRA CLUB WINTER GATHERING

Tuesday, December 20 * 6:00 p.m.

1965 Valley Road

(Home of Barb & Don Frank - phone 608 788-3914)

Bring some food to share. The Franks will provide beverages.

YOU NEED NOT BE A SIERRA CLUB MEMBER TO ATTEND!

DIRECTIONS:

The Franks' home is in Wedgewood Valley, just off State Highway 33. From K-Mart/Java Vino, go east on Highway 33 for about one mile. Just past Hagen Road on the right, turn immediately left (north) onto Wedgewood Drive West. Stay on Wedgewood Drive West to Valley Drive.

TAKE ACTION: No Place For Hate In Our Government

"President-elect Trump is naming some truly terrifying people to advise him and fill his cabinet. Their extreme positions and climate denial are dangerous not just to the environment but to our country in general and millions of Americans. We must speak out immediately. If President-elect Trump wants to uphold his word to bring the country together and be a president for all Americans, then he should publicly rebuke these advisers and declare that he will not listen to anyone that propagates hate or science-denial. Anything less is unacceptable. Stand up against hate and ignorance. Tell your senators and representative to oppose any nominee who holds these extreme views." Michael Brune, Executive Director, Sierra Club

For example, Stephen Bannon, CEO of the extreme right-wing conservative outlet Breitbart News, is known for his record of sickening and dangerous attacks against women, people of color, the LGBTQ community, immigrants, Jews, and Muslims in addition to fueling climate denialism. Noted climate denier and fossil fuel hack Myron Ebell of the Competitive Enterprise Institute is the head of Trump's EPA transition team. Ebell, who has called climate change "nothing to worry about" and has ZERO scientific training will be in charge of choosing the head of the EPA and local EPA regional offices. Alabama Senator Jeff Sessions was rejected by a Republican Senate in 1986 for a federal judgeship because of [statements and actions demonstrating racism and intolerance]. He would be in charge of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division and Voting Rights Section. Hate group leader Frank Gaffney is a noted Islamophobe, unrepentant bigot, and conspiracy theorist who has reportedly been advising the Trump administration's transition team. Gaffney is the head of the Center for Security Policy, which has been designated as a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center.

Send your representatives in Congress a message now: there's absolutely no place for hate and dangerous science denial in our government. Visit this Sierra Club contact link: tinyurl.com/scnoh8 or get specific contact information for your legislators at congress.gov. *Thank you for speaking out against hate!*



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DATES TO REMEMBER!

- Saturday, December 3** - Transportation Equity State Summit (in Milwaukee - see page 1)
- Tuesday, December 20** - Coulee Region Sierra Club Winter Gathering 6 p.m. (see page 3)
- Tuesday, January 31** - Film and discussion for Sierra Club members and guests
- Monday, February 27** - Tour of sustainability features at UWL's new Student Center (7 pm)
- Tuesday, March 28** - Coulee Region Sierra Club meeting - UWL Students for Sustainability/Board elections

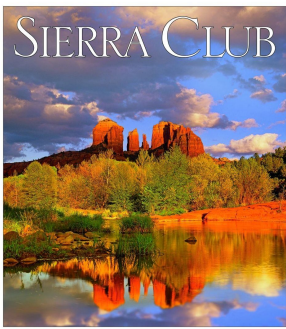
**JOIN ENTERPRISE
 Car Share for \$1 through
 December 31!
tinyurl.com/carsharelacs**

January Film & Discussion

Sierra Club board member Bill Katra will host a film & discussion evening on Tuesday, January 31, 2017 at 7 p.m. An environmental film will be shown followed by discussion. Refreshments will be available, too. The address is 1008 Avon Street, La Crosse. You don't need to be a Sierra Club member to attend!

Board Nominations

Three of our seven board members have terms expiring in February (not December as previously reported!) Would you like to run for the Sierra Club board and help keep this important organization going in the Coulee Region? Board members meet monthly, sometimes via email. Email [CRSierraClub\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:CRSierraClub@gmail.com) BY FEBRUARY 20 to nominate yourself or someone else.



2017 calendars

2017 Sierra Club calendars, our group's primary fundraiser, are now available.

These beautiful calendars (wall = \$13.95/desk = \$14.95) feature photos worth framing.

Get your calendar at our December gathering or order from Maureen Kinney: 784-9324/784-5678 or email [maureen\[at\]johnsflaherty.com](mailto:maureen[at]johnsflaherty.com)

February Tour at UWL

On Tuesday, February 27, Sierra Club members and friends will have the chance to tour UWL's new student center with special emphasis on its sustainability features. The tour will begin at 7 p.m. Meet at the building's info counter. Parking in most campus lots is free after 7 p.m. The MTU #4 goes through campus as well. If you have questions, please email [CRSierraClub\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:CRSierraClub[at]gmail.com).

SIERRA CLUB HOLIDAY CARDS are available at the online store. Use code **CARDS20** for a 20% discount. Order at tinyurl.com/sierracards16.

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