



# Sierra

Newsletter of the Coulee Region Group

JANUARY 2017

*"Let us put our minds together to see what kind of future we can make for our children." - Sitting Bull*

## HELP US PLAN FOR 2017

With the new climate change-denying Trump administration set to make "bold" changes to the agencies and laws that are supposed to protect our environment in 2017 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 and to resist destructive change.

How can our club welcome more people, energy, and ideas? How can we connect with Coulee Region group members who live outside of the city of La Crosse area? 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, 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](http://cr-sierra.blogspot.com)) and in future newsletters.

**RUN FOR THE BOARD!** Three of our seven board members have terms expiring this spring. Please consider running for the Sierra Club board to help keep this important organization going in the Coulee Region! Board members meet monthly, sometimes via email. Email CRSierraClub[at]gmail.com BY FEBRUARY 20 to nominate yourself or someone else. We will hold board elections at our March 28 meeting.

## RESOLVE TO RESIST, ORGANIZE, GET INVOLVED

Greepeace International has offered up a great list of **2017 resolutions for climate and environmental activists**. Just as the original Sierra Club members organized to enjoy, make more accessible, and, later, to save beautiful and wild places for future generations, so now we must re-commit to their and our love for the environment. It will not be easy. So, here are their suggestions. What can you add? Discuss at [cr-sierra.blogspot.com](http://cr-sierra.blogspot.com): Resolve to ...

\* tackle our own over consumption \* fight for justice \* hold those in power accountable \* spread the word  
\* get involved in our community \* get trained on making change \* make space to enjoy the most important things

*View the full article at [tinyurl.com/2017climateres](http://tinyurl.com/2017climateres)*

### DATES TO REMEMBER! *(more events posted at [cr-sierra.blogspot.com](http://cr-sierra.blogspot.com))*

**Wednesday, January 4** - The Messenger (World Without Birds) - 7 pm Myrick Park Ctr ([tinyurl.com/lax0104film](http://tinyurl.com/lax0104film))

**Monday, January 16** - Martin Luther King, Jr event - 7 pm, Viterbo Fine Arts Center

**January 20 through 29** - La Crosse Winter Rec Fest ([www.laxwinterrecfest.com](http://www.laxwinterrecfest.com))

**Tuesday, January 31** - How to Let Go of the World (film by Josh Fox & talk) (open to all) - 6 pm (see p. 2)

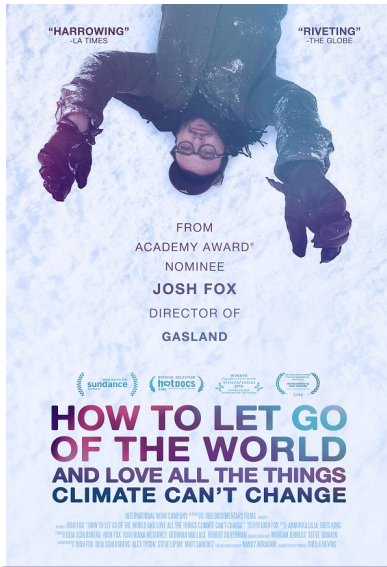
**Wednesday, February 1** - Sustainability Showcase - 7:30 to 10 a.m., Western TC ([tinyurl.com/sus0201](http://tinyurl.com/sus0201))

**Thursday, Feb 16** - Best Habitat Practices for Driftless Region 6:30 pm Myrick Center ([tinyurl.com/laxpr0216](http://tinyurl.com/laxpr0216))

**Saturday, February 25** - La Crosse Parks & Rec Habitat Improvement Volunteer Day ([tinyurl.com/laxpr0225](http://tinyurl.com/laxpr0225))

**Tuesday February 28** - Tour of sustainability features at UWL's new Student Center - 7 pm, UWL campus

**Tuesday, March 28** - Coulee Region Sierra Club meeting - 7 pm, Ho-Chunk House, 8th & Main



## January Film & Discussion

Sierra Club board member Bill Katra will host a film and discussion evening on **Tuesday, January 31, 2017 at 6 p.m.** (note new time!) We will show the new film from Academy Award nominated director (Gasland), Josh Fox followed by discussion. Refreshments will be available, too (bring a snack to share if you wish). The address is 1008 Avon Street, La Crosse. You don't need to be a Sierra Club member to attend! RSVP by January 30 if possible: <https://goo.gl/forms/aKoTpmlvJeaCpaJ33>

*In **How to Let Go of the World and Love All The Things Climate Can't Change**, Oscar Nominated director Josh Fox (GASLAND) continues in his deeply personal style, investigating climate change – the greatest threat our world has ever known. Traveling to 12 countries on 6 continents, the film acknowledges that it may be too late to stop some of the worst consequences and asks, what is it that climate change can't destroy? What is so deep within us that no calamity can take it away?*

- [www.howtoletgomovie.com](http://www.howtoletgomovie.com)

## February Tour at UWL [UPDATE!]

On Tuesday, February 28 [NOTE NEW DATE!], Sierra Club members and friends will have the chance to tour UWL's new student center with special emphasis on its sustainability features. [[youtu.be/fQ\\_Q8l7z2Do](http://youtu.be/fQ_Q8l7z2Do)] 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. You don't need to be a Sierra Club member to attend! RSVP by February 20: <https://goo.gl/forms/H9alnEcTLIOGSfpy1>

## Enviro Education Grants!

All three applicants for our second semester environmental education grants will receive funds!

**Holmen's Evergreen Elementary Environmental Education Day Committee** will use grant funds to help pay for a speaker and materials for a full day of hands-on environmental education that will help 500 elementary students learn about forests and conservation.

**Lincoln Middle School seventh graders'** grant funds will pay for a bus for a camping overnight and learning experience in Jackson County. Students will band and observe birds, help remove invasive buckthorn, and monitor water quality at Clear Creek, a Jackson County classified trout stream.

**Pre-K four and five year olds at St. Rose of Lima School in Cuba City** will set up, stock, and monitor a bird observation station with their grant funds. The station will include several bird and hummingbird feeders and baths and will help current and future students learn about birds

**Congratulations to our grant recipients!** We hope to report on the outcomes of their projects this fall. Stay tuned!

**THANK YOU Barb and Don Frank  
for hosting our  
December 20 Winter Gathering!**

## Arrive Together: Report from the Transportation Summit

Wisconsin Sierra Club blog, December 19



On December 3, 2016 three hundred Wisconsinites from all over the state gathered in Milwaukee to discuss the state's transportation priorities at **Arrive Together**, a summit about transportation equity and Wisconsin's priorities. Among the attendees were people from urban and rural areas; people with disabilities and those who are able bodied; and cyclists, transit riders and drivers. The plenary session featured Sierra Club President Aaron Mair and US Department of Transportation Director of the Office of Civil Rights Leslie Prohl. Read more at [sierraclub.org/wisconsin/blog/2016/12/arrive-together-transportation-summit](http://sierraclub.org/wisconsin/blog/2016/12/arrive-together-transportation-summit)

It's January 1st – time to look back at 2016 accomplishments and plan 2017 goals for the Coulee Region Group. The major areas of activities in 2016 were:

### **Transportation**

- \* Coulee Region Group Board members Maureen Kinney, Cathy Van Maren, and Pat Wilson were members of the Community Advisory Group to the DOT's La Crosse North-South Transportation Study, which is evaluating changes, including possible new roads in the La Crosse River Marsh, to improve transportation efficiency. The Coulee Region Group recommended a no-build strategy that improves mass transit, bike-pedestrian improvements, smart traffic signals, carpooling, and improvements to intersections. The planning process will continue in 2017. We go to La Crosse Area Planning Committee meetings to monitor progress.
- \* Our March meeting included a presentation by Mayor Tim Kabat on his transportation vision, along with "The City of La Crosse Transportation Vision: A Plan of Action" by Chuck Lee and James Longhurst
- \* Board Member Cathy Van Maren worked with state Sierra Club to set up the La Crosse Area Transportation Forum at the La Crosse South Side Neighborhood Center in October. This event advocated improved mass transit and provided information on transportation alternatives to the single occupant automobile.
- \* The Coulee Region group helped publicize the availability of the Enterprise Car Share program to La Crosse area community members. The car share program provides simple car rental by the hour, providing an alternative to car ownership. Programs like this have been shown to decrease miles driven.
- \* We continued road cleanups on River Valley Drive, the Coulee Groups adopted highway, with three cleanups this year.

### **Frac Sand Mining**

- \* Pat Wilson represented the Coulee Region Group and made a public statement at the Rally to Ban Frac Sand Mining in May at the La Crosse Center. The Coulee Region Group was a co-sponsor of the rally

### **Water Quality**

- \* Pat Wilson represented the Coulee Region Group in planning for November EPA Listening Session in Eau Claire with the Regional EPA Administrator. Pat attended the listening session and gave a report on problems with the Wisconsin DNR enforcement of the Wisconsin Pollution Discharge Elimination System permits in La Crosse County.

### **Environmental Education**

- \* The Coulee Region Group supported and had a booth at the La Crosse Earth Fair in April.
- \* The Coulee Region Group continued our environmental grant program, providing three grants totaling \$600 to elementary and middle schools in Holmen, La Crosse, and Cuba City. These grants support environmental education projects in the schools.

### **Climate Change/Renewable Energy**

- \* The Coulee Region Group supported and had a booth at the Acting Locally for Climate Sustainability Climate Action Festival sponsored by the Coulee Region Climate Alliance in March.
- \* The September program was RENEW Wisconsin on the continually improving prospects and progress for solar energy in the state. Following the meeting, the Coulee Region Group helped introduce RENEW Wisconsin the La Crosse City-County Joint Commission in Sustainability, with the goal of increased use of solar in city and county buildings.

### **Green Spaces**

- \* The Coulee Region Group co-sponsored a canoe outing on the Kickapoo River in September to get people out and enjoying the beautiful green spaces in our area.
- \* The Coulee Region Group is represented by Pat Wilson on the La Crosse Park Department Environmental Leadership Forum. The Environmental Leadership Forum advises the Park Department on the acquisition, management, and use of the park department lands intended to be left in their natural state.

- Pat Wilson, Board President, Coulee Region Group, John Muir Chapter, Sierra Club, January 1, 2017