



# Sierra

Newsletter of the Coulee Region Group  
JANUARY 2019

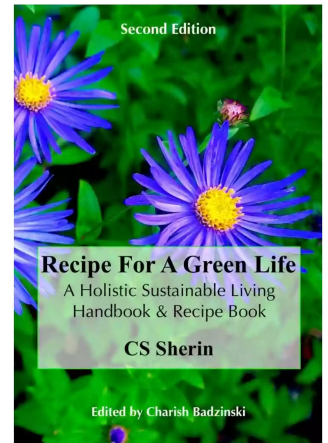
*"You say you love your children above all else, and yet you are stealing their future in front of their very eyes." - Greta Thunberg, Swedish climate activist, addressing the 24th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, Dec. 5, 2018*

**TUESDAY, January 29 at 7 p.m.**

**The Greener Life: Learn to Live More Sustainably with Chandra (CS) Sherin**

**Ho-Chunk Three Rivers House**  
(8th & Main, La Crosse)

Explore a holistic approach to sustainable living with Chandra (CS) Sherin, author of **Recipe for a Green Life**, who will address some of the most pressing issues that impact our environment, habitat, wildlife, resources, and collective health. Learn



about the importance of a holistic approach to sustainable living, and the positive impact we can have through our daily habits, choices, and do-it-yourself recipes. Discuss the most effective sustainable living choices we can make at home and with our families.

CS Sherin, MA, has called the rare driftless region home for over 25 years - with great love for all of its bluffs, rivers, marshes, forests, trails, wildlife, and beautiful prairies. She has a decade of experience in kind, plant-based conscious eating, and exploring and creating sustainable living DIY recipes for home and family, CS is an artist, nature photographer, poet, editor, research enthusiast, and owner of Wild Clover, a multi-faced creative enterprise (WildClover.org)

Everyone is welcome to this event. You need not be a Sierra Club member to participate. We will also discuss plans for 2019 including the Ready for 100 program and other national, state, and local initiatives. Refreshments provided!

## January 26 - Climate Resolutions

The Coulee Region Sierra Club will host a **COMMUNITY CLIMATE RESOLUTION DISCUSSION on Saturday, January 26 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at La Crosse's South Library** (1307 16th St. S.) This will be one of hundreds of similar events being held around the country between January 21 and 27.

Local action is having major impacts. Our goal will be to collectively envision the climate future we want and discuss ways to continue the work to make change happen. We'll explore the challenges our community faces in getting to a 100% clean energy future and how clean and affordable energy can create a more equitable and livable community.

More information about this event will be posted at [crsierra.blogspot.com](http://crsierra.blogspot.com) after January 10. If you would like to host a similar event in your community, please check out [tinyurl.com/SCClimateRes](http://tinyurl.com/SCClimateRes).

## Survey update (and invitation!)

The first results of our member survey are coming in - thanks to those who have responded! So far, wilderness preservation is the top environmental issue, followed by wildlife protection, climate change, air quality, and water quality. The most popular volunteer opportunity is helping with a work day at a natural area, with attending a march or rally in second place.

We're still looking for more responses and will keep the survey open at least through the end of January! Find it at [tinyurl.com/crscmbmsurvey](http://tinyurl.com/crscmbmsurvey).

**HELP!** Seeking one or two helpers to proofread, suggest and/or write short articles, and otherwise help make our newsletter useful and pertinent! Email [crsierraclub@gmail.com](mailto:crsierraclub@gmail.com) (subject: Newsletter) to volunteer. All work done by email, text, or phone.

## Reminder: Enviro-Edu grants!

The Coulee Region Sierra Club is offering **grants of up to \$200 for environmental education projects** involving young people at the elementary and middle school level.

The application and more details are available at [tinyurl.com/crscedugrantapp](http://tinyurl.com/crscedugrantapp) OR email [crsierraclub@gmail.com](mailto:crsierraclub@gmail.com) and we can mail you an application. **The application deadline is JANUARY 5, 2019.** Please spread the word about this opportunity available to those in Crawford, Grant, Jackson, La Crosse, Monroe, Richland, Trempealeau and Vernon counties.

## Sierra Club 2019 Calendars!

We still have a few calendars! The calendars cost \$14.95 for the wall calendar and \$15.95 for the engagement book. Please order from Maureen Kinney: 608 784-9324/784-5678 or email [maureen@johnsflaherty.com](mailto:maureen@johnsflaherty.com).

**SIERRA CLUB NOTE AND HOLIDAY CARDS** are available at [store.sierraclub.org/calendars-cards-c28.aspx](http://store.sierraclub.org/calendars-cards-c28.aspx)

## Board Elections

Thank you to everyone who voted and to those who volunteered to serve on the board in 2019! Thank you and congratulations to new board members **Nancy Hartje** and **Jake Schnepfer**. Look for more info about them and their specific interests in next month's newsletter. Nancy and Jake will join current board members **Kathy Allen**, **Maureen Kinney**, **George Nygaard**, **Avery Van Gaard**, **Cathy Van Maren**, and **Pat Wilson**.

## Solar Group Buy continues

SunVest and the John Muir Chapter Sierra Club will continue their partnership into the new year! Offering reduced group buy rates for solar panels and installations of systems, SunVest will also provide on site assessment, detailed financial information including costs and payback, and installation. The John Muir Chapter will receive a donation for every system installed through this program. For more information on the group buy, check out [www.sunvest.com/programs/sierraclub/](http://www.sunvest.com/programs/sierraclub/)

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## UWL Environmental Studies students help local organizations

Service learning projects are a highlight of the UW-La Crosse Environmental Studies capstone course during spring and fall semesters. Students work about two hours per week throughout the semester on environmentally related projects for local organizations and businesses. Recent partners include Citizens' Climate Lobby, WisCorps, Hillview Urban Agriculture Center, La Crosse Public Schools, Gundersen Health System, Keps Naturals, Coulee Region Ecoscapes, Citizens Acting for Rail Safety, Trout Unlimited, US Fish & Wildlife Service, and GROW La Crosse.

Students initiate and complete a work experience that allows them to refine their environmental interests and professionalism. They gain networking opportunities while helping to advance local initiatives they care about. Projects range from research to assisting professionals to organizing events.

Environmental Studies is an interdisciplinary minor at UWL, incorporating courses from a variety of departments on campus. The minor is based in the College of Liberal Studies though students in the minor come from all different majors in all three colleges. All ENV courses are taught in a way that helps students make connections with each other, among ideas, and within the community. The capstone course enrolls 15 students per semester.

New partnerships are welcome with organizations, businesses, or individuals working on environmental issues. The mentors meet with students at least monthly, in combination with more frequent phone or email communications.

If you have a new project idea for capstone students, please contact Alysa Remsburg at [aremsburg@uwlax.edu](mailto:aremsburg@uwlax.edu). Students will select projects for spring semester by the first week of February. All are welcome to hear students present what they learned from the partnerships during the last week of classes (May 7 and 9, 2:15 to 3:40 p.m.)

On **Tuesday, January 8**, the Sustainability Institute will host its annual **Mpower Sustainability Showcase** from **8 to 9:30 a.m. at the Lunda Center** on the Western Technical College campus in La Crosse. The Mpower Business Champions program engages, empowers, and networks businesses working toward sustainability in our area. For more information and to register for this event (free), visit [tinyurl.com/19-MPowerShowcase](http://tinyurl.com/19-MPowerShowcase)

Connect with us online! We're on Twitter: @CRSierra, on Facebook/CRSierraClub, on our blog at [crsierra.blogspot.com](http://crsierra.blogspot.com), and at our website: [www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/coulee](http://www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/coulee).

## **2018 Year in Review Pat Wilson, Coulee Region Group board president**

Looking back, looking forward. The Coulee Region Sierra Club was active during 2018 both in hosting events and actions and in providing opportunities for members and friends to experience the outdoors. The November elections and the Ready for 100 campaign received the most effort in 2018. In 2019, we'll continue the Ready for 100 efforts and will continue to seek ways to include more members in events held around the region.

### **Elections**

- September-October - We participated in the Sierra Club's effort to get environmental voters excited about this election and to turn out and vote.
- September-October - The Sierra Club put special effort into the candidacy of Kriss Marion of WI Senate District 17. SD 17 overlaps between the Coulee Region Group and the Four Lakes Group. Kriss was a strong candidate and an environmental advocate. The Sierra Club did mailings and phone calls on her behalf.
- October - The John Muir Chapter released the 2017-2018 Wisconsin Legislative Scorecard and the Coulee Region Group called attention to the three Coulee Region Group legislators with 100% scores - Sen. Shilling and Reps. Billings and Doyle - and called out the five Coulee Region Group legislators with 0% scores.
- October - The Sierra Club made endorsements for the November elections, and we publicized the candidates in the Coulee Region who received endorsement for their support for the environment.
- November - We celebrated the election of our endorsed candidates in Wisconsin's statewide races. Unfortunately, Kriss Marion did not win the election, but this is good experience for future elections.

### **Ready for 100**

- The Ready for 100 campaign is the Sierra Club's effort to gain commitments from local units of government to move as quickly as possible to 100% renewable energy sources.
- March - the Coulee Region Group participated in the Climate Action Festival, where board member Kathy Allen gave a program on the Ready for 100 campaign.
- March - the Coulee Region Group was a co-sponsor of the Local Energy Future event in Dodgeville.
- May - Coulee Region Group board members met with La Crosse Mayor Tim Kabat and city planners. Mayor Kabat is the one Coulee Region mayor who signed the Ready for 100 pledge. We met with him to offer our assistance and ideas for reaching that goal.
- September - The Sierra Club sponsored the Rise for Climate Rally in La Crosse's Riverside Park, where Coulee Region Group board member Kathy Allen spoke.
- September - The Coulee Region Group membership meeting program was on sustainability indicators for the City and County of La Crosse. This meeting was on the UWL campus, co-sponsored by the UWL Environmental Studies program.
- October - The Coulee Region Group sponsored a meeting on the John Muir Chapter's SunVest Solar Group Buy program, encouraging Sierra Club members around the state to install photovoltaic power generation on their home or business.
- October - At its October 2018 meeting, the Sustainable La Crosse Commission voted to recommend partner municipalities pursue Ready for 100 resolutions. This official first step will allow staff and elected officials to work on legislation and encourage public discussion. Coulee Region Group board member Cathy Van Maren is on the commission where she advocates for this goal.

### **Environmental Education**

- January - We continued our environmental grant program, providing two grants, to St. Rose Catholic School in Cuba City for a butterfly breeding project and Sparta Public Schools for a school forest project.
- March - The Coulee Region Group hosted a program on mining issues in Alaska by UW-L Prof. Margot Higgins
- May - The Coulee Region Group sponsored a La Crosse County Land Fill tour.
- August - We sponsored a tour of Chrysalis organic farm on the West Fork of the Kickapoo River.
- The Coulee Region Group supported and had a booth at the Progresstival in January, the Coulee Region Climate Alliance Climate Action Fair in March, the La Crosse Earth Fair in April, and the Open Streets event in September.

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## Transportation

- February – we had a Sierra Club Clean Cars Campaign media event at La Crosse City Hall with Coulee Region Group board member Avery Van Gaard speaking.
- September – The Coulee Region Group had a booth at the Open Streets Initiative in La Crosse, advocating for better pedestrian, bicycle, and public transit infrastructure.
- October - The Coulee Region Group sponsored a media event at Grand River Station Transit Center in La Crosse to publicize the release of the report Arrive Together, Transportation Equity and Access in Wisconsin which advocates for effective and efficient public transportation systems in Wisconsin. Coulee Region Group board member Cathy Van Maren contributed to the report. (Read it at [tinyurl.com/jmctransitrep](https://tinyurl.com/jmctransitrep))
- April, July, October – The Coulee Region Group did highway cleanup on our adopted highway, River Valley Drive in La Crosse.

## Water Quality

- January – The Coulee Region Group co-sponsored and had a booth at the well-attended Industrial Ag in the Driftless conference in Boscobel. The conference highlighted the water and environmental issues caused by industrial agriculture operations.
- October – Following our October 2017 water quality forum at the Town of Holland, La Crosse County formed a Water Quality Team. That team released their results in October 2018, which included further study, better education of residents about the need for proper water filtration systems, better zoning and enforcement, possible repurposing of currently farmed land, and pursuing local and state legislation to further protect groundwater.
- October – Coulee Region Group members Pat Wilson and David Boen participated in the Kickapoo River cleanup following the record flooding on the Kickapoo River.
- October – Coulee Region Group board member Pat Wilson attended a League of Women Voters program on Upper Mississippi River water issues.

## Green Spaces, Natural Areas

- July, September - The Coulee Region Group co-sponsored a canoe outing on the Black River in July and on the Kickapoo River in September.
- The Coulee Region Group is represented by Pat Wilson on the La Crosse Park Department Environmental Leadership Forum.

## Coming in 2019

Local and global environmental challenges will continue into 2019, though recent election victories give some hope for a little relief on state legislative issues. We will continue to work on Ready for 100, transportation improvements, groundwater protection, environmental education, and getting people outdoors. Please let us know if you want to work on the Ready for 100 Team, the Water Team, transportation, or other Sierra Club issues or if you have ideas for programs, events, or group activities!

*“There’s simply no debate; fossil fuels have no place in a liveable future. While Donald Trump may seek to further isolate the US on the world stage, leaders from across the globe continue to work together to tackle the climate crisis. At a time when science makes it clear that we have only 12 years to deeply cut carbon pollution to avoid climate chaos, the climate negotiations have continued to bring the world together to move towards a sustainable climate and healthy communities.”* - Michael Brune, Sierra Club Executive Director, Dec. 15, 2018, at the conclusion of the 24th Annual UN Climate Conference (COP24) Read more at [tinyurl.com/SCBrune-COP24](https://tinyurl.com/SCBrune-COP24)

What we can do: lobby local officials to make reducing carbon emissions their top priority, ask your municipality to pass a Ready for 100 resolution, urge elected representatives to co-sponsor Green New Deal legislation, encourage your groups to join more than 1,000 others who will divest \$8 trillion in assets from fossil fuels, be aware of how personal behavior contributes to carbon emissions and make changes, talk to others about it.