



# Sierra

Newsletter of the Coulee Region Group  
JUNE 2017

*"Evidence does not change when the administration changes." - former EPA scientists to Donald Trump*

**NEXT MEETING:  
POTLUCK! 6 pm  
Tuesday, June 27  
at Rick & Julia's:  
3703 Brook Lane  
ONALASKA**

Join Sierra Club friends for food and fun on June 27 at Rick and Julia's. From La Crosse, drive north past Menards on Hwy 53. Turn right on OT and left (north) onto Sand Lake Rd. Just past Coulee Life Church (on left) turn right onto Hanson Rd and immediately right again onto Brook Ln. Look for two story white house at end of cul-de-sac. Park on the large driveway or along the street.

Please bring a dish to pass and plan to relax on the deck with good conversation and some birdwatching. Some wine, tea, and soda will be provided. Please bring a guest! If you can, **RSVP (RandJ2010@charter.net)** to help with food and seating. Call 608 783-7778 with questions. Ride sharing is always encouraged.

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## Sierra Club on Paris Agreement withdrawal: "A Historic Mistake"

Wednesday, May 31, 2017

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Today, it was widely reported that Donald Trump intends to withdraw the U.S. from the Paris Climate Agreement. According to the terms of the Agreement, no country can begin the withdrawal process until three years after the Agreement enters into force. The Agreement, which entered into force on November 4, 2016, has been formally joined by over 145 nations, and dozens of countries -- including India, China and the EU -- have reaffirmed their commitment. A recent Yale Program on Climate Change Communication poll found that nearly 70 percent of Americans, including a majority in all 50 states, support the U.S. participating in the Paris Agreement.

In response, Sierra Club Executive Director Michael Brune released the following statement:

*"Donald Trump has made a historic mistake which our grandchildren will look back on with stunned dismay at how a world leader could be so divorced from reality and morality. Trump has abandoned the standard of American leadership, turned his back on the what the public and the market demand, and shamelessly disregarded the safety of our families just to let the fossil fuel industry eke out a few more dollars in profits. This is a decision that will cede America's role internationally to nations like China and India, which will benefit handsomely from embracing the booming clean energy economy while Trump seeks to drive our country back into the 19th century.*

*"But the world should know that state and local action in the United States is moving strongly forward even in the face of Trump's historic mistake. For every terrible decision Trump makes, grassroots activists, frontline communities, local governments, and concerned people across the country are fighting to make sure clean energy continues to grow by leaps and bounds. With our allies, Sierra Club members and supporters have helped retire more than 250 polluting coal plants and ensured more than 25 American cities have already committed to getting 100 percent of their energy from clean, renewable sources by 2030.*

*"Our resistance is sustainable and we will serve as a counterpoint to Trump's dangerous policies every step of the way. Like leaders across the world, we aren't going to wait around for our climate denier-in-chief to play catch up. As we win locally, countries across the world are already moving forward on meeting and surpassing their climate commitments. Make no mistake: the Paris Agreement was adopted after decades of climate advocacy by concerned citizens across America and around the world, and it certainly will not be derailed by the ignorance of one man."*

## Communications update

Quick and efficient communication with members is one way the Coulee Region Group increases the effectiveness of our actions. We have been moving to email and social media communication to increase speed and efficiency, save resources, and cut costs.

This is one of four newsletters that we mail annually to members who don't receive electronic communication. We'll be mailing 361 paper newsletters and emailing 457 newsletters.

If you're receiving the newsletter on paper instead of by email, there are three possible reasons. First, we don't have your email address. Second, though we have your email address, you've asked that the Sierra Club not send you email. Third, we have your email, and national & state Sierra Club sends you email, but you've specifically requested that the Coulee Region Group not send you email.

We respect all these requests. But if you'd like to receive all the local Coulee Region Group newsletters plus other reminders we send on occasion, we'd be happy to make that happen. If we don't have your email address, you can send it to Pat Wilson at [pbwilson@centurytel.net](mailto:pbwilson@centurytel.net). We don't share email addresses.

If you've indicated you don't want any email from the Sierra Club, you can change this by calling Sierra Club Member Services at 415-977-5653. If you want to change your preference not to receive email specifically from the Coulee Region Group, contact Pat Wilson at the above email address.

Online resources include our web page at [www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/coulee](http://www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/coulee) and our blog at [cr-sierra.blogspot.com](http://cr-sierra.blogspot.com). Subscribe to the blog to get new posts automatically emailed to you. Our newsletter is published online every month at [issuu.com](http://issuu.com).

## Mayors for 100% Clean Energy

Local leadership on clean energy is more important than ever. That's why the Sierra Club's Ready For 100 Campaign is launching Mayors For 100% Clean Energy -- an initiative calling on all mayors -- regardless of political party, from big cities and small towns -- to support a vision of 100% clean and renewable energy in their cities, towns, and communities, and across the country. La Crosse Mayor Tim Kabat is a signatory and now needs support to make it happen. To urge your mayor to sign, please visit [tinyurl.com/mayor100](http://tinyurl.com/mayor100).

## Sierra Club membership up!

Sierra Club membership is showing a marked upward trend since Trump's election, both nationally and locally. While we're happy with the increase, we wish the cause weren't so threatening, both at the national and state level. Household memberships for the Coulee Group are up about 20%, from 685 last year to 818 households at the end of May. This shows increased concern for the environment and faith that the Sierra Club can be effective in advancing environmental protections, or at least slowing the degradation. Thank you to our new members and supporters. We will continue to fight for environmental protections for our air and water in the state.



## Help wanted!

The Coulee Region group stretches from Black River Falls to Sparta/Tomah and all the way down to Platteville! If you know of or hear of something that other Coulee Region group members would be interested in, please email [crsierraclub@gmail.com](mailto:crsierraclub@gmail.com).

Better yet, if you would like to submit a blog post and/or an article about an environmental or outdoor activity happening in your area of the Coulee Region Group, please do! We can set you up as a regional correspondent on our blog site. Please email!

New and continuing members are also encouraged to email to learn how you can serve on an important Sierra Club committee or work group!

## Family-Friendly Black River Canoe Camping Trip July 15-16



This favorite *kid-friendly* paddling trip is being resurrected to encourage young families, families with kids and the young-at-heart

to join us on the water. We'll take it slow, stop to play/explore as frequently as desired, cook-out and sleep in tents on a sandbar and engage in creative outdoor play. We'll paddle from Irving to North Bend. The river is sand bottom with many sandbars for stopping. Contact: Pat or Bobbie Wilson at 608-788-8831 or [pbwilson@centurytel.net](mailto:pbwilson@centurytel.net).

## State Transportation Budget Doesn't Match Citizens' Plan

[some excerpts from the John Muir Chapter blog]

The results of a survey highlight how the state's transportation budget priorities are increasingly out of step with Wisconsinites' needs and preferences. The informal survey, conducted by Sierra Club and its partners in the Coalition for More Responsible Transportation, asked more than 500 people across the state to create their ideal transportation budget.

The "Citizens' Transportation Budget" would give 40% to local roads, 30% to state highways, 20% to transit, and 10% to "other" (bike/ped infrastructure and special transportation projects).

The state's 2015-2017 transportation budget spends 66% on highway projects, 32% on local roads and "other" and only 2% on transit.

Transit is the only option that can serve everyone regardless of age, income, or ability. In addition, switching from a private car to public transportation is the most effective way for an individual to reduce her or his carbon footprint.

Thankfully, planners in the Coulee Region understand the importance of regional transit for employers, workers, and residents of the area. The SMRT (Scenic Mississippi Regional Transit) bus that goes from Prairie du Chien to La Crosse, Viroqua, and other southwest Wisconsin communities has been very successful. Plans are now under way to replicate this service from La Crosse to Tomah and from La Crosse to Arcadia. Look for these new routes in 2018.

Read more about the transportation budget survey at [sierraclub.org/wisconsin/blog/2017/05/state-transportation-budget-doesn-t-match-wisconsinites-priorities](http://sierraclub.org/wisconsin/blog/2017/05/state-transportation-budget-doesn-t-match-wisconsinites-priorities). Sign the Sierra Club petition telling our legislators to support clean, accessible transportation now at [sierraclub.org/wisconsin](http://sierraclub.org/wisconsin)

## La Crosse Car Share Ends

Less than a year after it began, the Enterprise Car Share program in La Crosse has ended. There was little publicity, there were glitches in transitioning from a UWL-only to a community car share, and the cars were kept on the UWL campus (not particularly convenient for many).

With the Uber and Lyft making their way into our region and the possibility of driverless cars in the near future, there will be other ways for people to rely less on private automobiles and reduce their climate impact.

## Happy Birthday to us!



On May 28, the nation's largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization celebrated its 125th birthday. Founded in San Francisco in 1892 by Scottish-born, Wisconsin-raised conservationist John Muir, the Sierra Club's original mission was to protect California's Sierra Nevada mountains from excessive mining and logging. Among its first major achievements were protecting Yosemite National Park and establishing Sequoia National Park, home to the giant trees that are the largest living things on Earth.

Arguably the Sierra Club's most renowned preservation victory was leading the fight to prevent the Grand Canyon from being dammed in the 1960s. The ensuing years saw the organization broaden its mission to protecting clean air, clean water, and endangered species, and in the 21st century it is spearheading the effort to transition the United States from climate-disrupting fossil fuels to clean, renewable sources of energy. The Sierra Club today counts 3 million members and supporters in 64 chapters, in every state plus Puerto Rico.

## Sierra Club Water Report

The John Muir (Wisconsin) Chapter of the Sierra Club has released its third water related white paper, Water for All, Now and Into the Future ([tinyurl.com/wiscwaterpaper](http://tinyurl.com/wiscwaterpaper)).

Wisconsin is not living up to its water use goal to "Sustainably manage the quantity and quality of water in the state to ensure that water is available to be used to protect and improve our health, economy, and environment now and into the future." The white paper highlights the threats of overconsumption of water resources in Wisconsin.

- \* In 2015, Wisconsin used over 2.04 trillion gallons, roughly the volume of three Lake Winnebagoes
- \* Increasing concentrations of pollutants in drinking water due to groundwater over-pumping is putting thousands of Wisconsinites at risk
- \* Since 2000 there has been a six-fold increase in state CAFOs, which often require multiple high-capacity wells
- \* The sensitive Central Sands region is now home to over 3,000 high-capacity wells: in the 1950s there were fewer than 100
- \* The Little Plover River was listed in 2013 as one of America's ten most endangered rivers
- \* 94,000 Wisconsin households already have unsafe levels of nitrate in their drinking water
- \* Waukesha County found increasing radium levels in their drinking water as wells were drilled deeper to reach groundwater



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### DATES TO REMEMBER!

**June 1-11: Wisconsin Bike Week** ([bikeweek.wisconsinbikefed.org/](http://bikeweek.wisconsinbikefed.org/))

**June 6: Bike with La Crosse Leaders** (Mayor Kabat & Bike Fed Executive Director) ([tinyurl.com/0606laxbike](http://tinyurl.com/0606laxbike))

**June 9: Citizen Climate Lobby Call In Day** ([tinyurl.com/y8tpromo](http://tinyurl.com/y8tpromo))

**June 16-18: Midwest Renewable Energy Association Energy Fair**, Custer, WI ([www.theenergyfair.org](http://www.theenergyfair.org))

**June 25: Bike (or Bus) the Barns** in Viroqua ([tinyurl.com/6-25bbtb](http://tinyurl.com/6-25bbtb))

**June 27: CR Sierra Club summer picnic**, 6 p.m., 3703 Brook Lane, Onalaska

**July 15-16: Sierra Club Canoe Outing** on the Black River ([tinyurl.com/wiscwater](http://tinyurl.com/wiscwater))

**July 18: CR Sierra Club Highway Clean Up** ([tinyurl.com/crschwclean](http://tinyurl.com/crschwclean))

Xcel Energy is sponsoring a **FREE BUS to the Energy Fair on June 17** from Menomonie/Eau Claire/Osseo. Register: [theenergyfair.org/ec-bus-registration/](http://theenergyfair.org/ec-bus-registration/)  
Try **WISCONSIN RIDE SHARE** ([tinyurl.com/wirideshare](http://tinyurl.com/wirideshare)) to search for a ride from your area.

## Wisconsin Bike Week and more!

National Bike to Work week is in May, but the Wisconsin Bike Fed has designated June 1 - 11 as **Wisconsin Bike Week** (the weather's a bit more settled). There are events scheduled around the state including several in the Coulee Region (Sparta, Holmen, La Crosse, and Onalaska).

On June 6, you're invited to Bike with Community Leaders including Mayor Tim Kabat of La Crosse and Dave Cieslewicz, the Executive Director of the Bike Fed.

For more details, please visit the event overview page at [tinyurl.com/0606laxbike](http://tinyurl.com/0606laxbike).

On June 25, there is a **Bike (or Bus) the Barn** event in Viroqua which will take participants to two local CSA farms for food and fun. ([tinyurl.com/6-25bbtb](http://tinyurl.com/6-25bbtb))

## Highway Clean Up

The spring highway cleanup on the Coulee Group's adopted highway – River Valley Drive in the La Crosse River marsh – will be on **Tuesday, July 18 starting at 6:00 p.m.** (Contact Pat to confirm if weather conditions are iffy). Meet at the city water well building at the intersection of County Highway B (Gillette Street) and River Valley Drive. Wear old clothes and bring work gloves. Safety vests and bags are provided. We'll visit Rudy's Drive-In after the event!

For more info, contact Pat or Bobbie at 608 788-8831 or [pbwilson@centurytel.net](mailto:pbwilson@centurytel.net).



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