



Sierra

Newsletter of the Coulee Region Group

NOVEMBER 2016

"The creation of a thousand forests is in one acorn." - Ralph Waldo Emerson



The John Muir Chapter of the Sierra Club is honoring **Marilyn Pedretti** with the 2016 John Muir Chapter Merit Award. **You're invited to join other Sierra Club members at the award ceremony on Saturday, November 19, 2016** at Brocach Irish Pub, 7 W Main St., Madison from 3 to 5 p.m. Contact Pat Wilson (pbwilson[at]centurytel.net) if you're interested in carpooling.

A Chapter Merit Award recipient may be an issues champion who has effectively battled environmental challenges; a consistent leader in the environmental movement (i.e. organization leadership roles, organization builder); or one who actively carries the Sierra Club message to decision-makers and the concerned publics.

Marilyn has been an inspiring leader for the Coulee Region Group, including six years as Chair (2010-2015) as part of eight years on the Board (2008-2015). Marilyn brought energy and enthusiasm to the role, encouraging the group to remain active. She also served as political chair for the group and was the group issues chair for agricultural issues. Marilyn also participated in Chapter activities, including Chapter Board member.

Marilyn has also made a strong commitment to preserving the environment in her personal life. She lives in an energy efficient house she designed and built herself using straw bale construction techniques. A good share of the construction material came from the La Crosse Habitat for Humanity ReStore, where Marilyn volunteers every week. The house is off the grid, using photovoltaic electrical generation with battery storage. Marilyn is currently putting her energy into growing organic produce on her property, which she sells through a CSA she set up and through a roadside produce stand. Meanwhile, she's trying to convince her brother who's a farmer to use more organic practices in his farming.

Marilyn served six years on the La Crosse County Board of Supervisors, where she actively advocated for environmental issues. That included serving on the Joint Oversight Committee on Sustainability that created the "City of La Crosse and La Crosse County Strategic Plan for Sustainability" (tinyurl.com/suslaxplan) The plan endorsed "The Natural Step" model for sustainable community development. La Crosse City and County were the first city/county pair in the US to adopt "The Natural Step". Marilyn also chaired the Planning, Resources, and Development Committee of the La Crosse County Board.

Congratulations, Marilyn!

DATES TO REMEMBER!

Saturday, November 5 - Herbal Remedies from Community Food Forest (tinyurl.com/laxffherbal)

Tuesday, November 8 - Election Day (absentee in person voting M-F now through November 4)

Tuesday, November 15 - EPA listening session on water quality issues (in Eau Claire - see inside)

Tuesday, November 15 - Truck of supplies for Dakota Access Pipeline Water Protectors leaves La Crosse

Saturday, November 19 - John Muir Sierra Club Volunteer Appreciation and Awards event in Madison

Saturday, December 3 - Transportation Equity State Summit (in Milwaukee - see inside)

Tuesday, December 20 - Coulee Region Sierra Club Winter Gathering 6 p.m. (see inside)

Tuesday, January 31 - Film and discussion for Sierra Club members and guests (see inside)

NOVEMBER 15 EPA LISTENING SESSION ON WISCONSIN WATER QUALITY

Members of the public are invited to share their thoughts and concerns about the implementation of the Clean Water Act and Safe Drinking Water Act in Wisconsin with the **Administrator of US EPA's Region V, Robert Kaplan**. Administrator Kaplan will give a brief description of the US EPA's role and current activities in Wisconsin, then he will hear from the public. Depending on the number of individuals that want to speak, each person will be requested to limit their remarks to three minutes. This event is sponsored by the Sierra Club – John Muir Chapter, Midwest Environmental Advocates, River Alliance of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Lakes Association and Clean Wisconsin. **RSVP/More info:** tinyurl.com/eparsvp Email [pbwilson\[at\]centurytel.net](mailto:pbwilson[at]centurytel.net) if you want to car pool.

Wisconsin has vast water resources, but they are more vulnerable than ever. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is not doing its job in protecting drinking water for residents of Wisconsin. Throughout Wisconsin people are facing devastating water problems—from salmonella, rotavirus, or other problems in the wells of people living in Kewaunee County to molybdenum in Caledonia to vast concerns about lead, nitrates, and more throughout the state. The Center for Investigative Journalism found that 47% of private wells could be contaminated by one or more pollutants and 60 municipal water systems in Wisconsin do not disinfect their water. (Sign the petition: tinyurl.com/protectwiwater)

This is our opportunity to raise these concerns with the person responsible for oversight of the Clean Water Act and Safe Drinking Water Act.

5-7 p.m. – Chippewa Valley Technical College, Room 30,
Business Education Center, 620 West Clairemont Ave., Eau Claire



Regional Transportation Equity forums are complete. Peter Skopic of the Wisconsin Public Interest Research Group facilitated the La Crosse area session in early October. Information about transportation options in our area was available and attendees discussed their concerns about current state transportation budget priorities. As the state's new transportation budget is being written, it's important for these concerns, stories, voices, and opinions to be heard. The

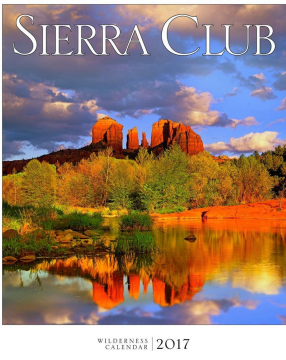
future of our state depends upon a multimodal, equitable, accessible, affordable, modern transportation system that serves all citizens including those who don't or prefer not to drive.

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. **More info/Registration at transportationequitysummit.eventbrite.com/**

A FREE bus will go from Madison to the conference in Milwaukee and back to Madison. The Sierra Club will coordinate rides and car pools to Madison (occupants may then take the conference bus) for those registered by Nov. 21. You may register after that but conference meals and ride assistance are not guaranteed.

We are also seeking agencies, officies, and organizations to help promote and promote registration for this event. There is no cost for partnership. Partners will receive a packet of flyers, posters, and handouts. If you know of anyone interested, please ask them to complete this form: <http://tinyurl.com/summitpartners>

Please contact CRSierraClub@gmail.com for more information.



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)

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

January Film & Discussion

Sierra Club board member Bil Katra will host a film & discussion evening on Tuesday, January 31, 2017. The film *Dear President Obama, The Clean Energy Revolution is Now!* (www.dearpresidentobama.com) will be shown.

Since 2008, under President Obama's watch, the drilling and fracking



industries have boomed across the United States. Today more than twenty million people live within a mile of at least one oil or gas well. Pro-drillers contended this rush would create a newfound "energy independence" in the U.S. In fact, as oil and gas prices have plummeted in the past year forcing industry to shut down rigs and lay off workers, in fact all the boom did was slow progress towards investing in new renewable energy sources.

The film takes a cross-country look at drilling, highlighting its variety of contaminations, the stories of its victims, the false promise of an economic boom, with a focus on clean energy solutions that would allow us to proceed towards a future that does not rely on yet another dirty fossil fuel extraction process. Interviews with scientists, economists, health professionals, geologists and whistleblowers provide the core information we think will convince the current President and those that will follow to join the "anti-drilling" majority growing across the United States and call for fossil fuels to be left where they belong, in the ground.

More details will be available in our December newsletter.

GOTV FOR OUR ENVIRONMENT!

Before each election, the Sierra Club's volunteer-powered Political Committee evaluates candidates' voting records and commitments to conservation. In Wisconsin, the club has endorsed Democratic Party candidates for national and state races. (<https://sierraclub.org/wisconsin/endorsements>) This weekend, endorsed candidates are doing a Get Out the Vote push - calling and door knocking.

IF YOU CAN HELP BETWEEN NOW AND NOV. 8 please contact Stevan Stankovich at 317-372-0134

Sierra Club @sierraclub · 8h

The choice in this election is clear: It's a climate denier vs a climate champion. Be a #ClimateVoter.

Help Needed!

We are seeking a Coulee Region Sierra Club member to represent our group at the John Muir Chapter state council. The council meets every other month, sometimes online, to discuss national and state plans and programs. If interested, email [pbwilson\[at\]centurytel.net](mailto:pbwilson[at]centurytel.net).

We would like to find a Sierra Club member to help welcome and integrate new Coulee Region Sierra Club members into our group. Interested? Contact Pat!

Board Nominations

Three of our seven board members will be ending their terms in December. Would you like to run for the Sierra Club board and help keep this important organization going in the Coulee Region? Do you know someone who would be a great board member with good ideas and a dedication to Sierra Club goals?

Board members meet monthly, sometimes via email. Email CRSierraClub@gmail.com BY NOVEMBER 20 to nominate yourself or someone else.

Enviro-Education Grants

The Coulee Region Sierra Club is offering **grants of \$50 to \$200 for environmental education projects** involving young people at the elementary and middle school level.

The application and more details are available at our website (sierraclub.org/wisconsin/coulee) and blog site (cr-sierra.blogspot.com). **The application deadline is DECEMBER 1.** Please spread the word about this opportunity!



EXPLORE, ENJOY, AND PROTECT THE PLANET



The world is still watching and we stand firm with Standing Rock Sioux!

The Water Protectors at Standing Rock in North Dakota are seeking donations of money, goods, and food to allow them to continue their encampments near the Dakota Access Pipeline. Monetary donations can be made online at StandingRockSoux.com. Donations of fresh, canned or bulk foods; warm clothing in all sizes; winter sleeping bags; generators; canvas tents; personal and feminine hygiene products; school supplies and more. See the Sacred Stone Camp wish list at sacredstonecamp.org/supply-list/ A truckload of donated supplies from the La Crosse area will leave on November 15. If you wish to donate items, drop off points are English Lutheran Church (16th & King Streets) and UWL Cartwright Center info counter.

TRUCK of SUPPLIES for NO DAPL WATER PROTECTORS LEAVES LA CROSSE ON NOVEMBER 15

**SIERRA CLUB
- NO DAPL -
WEBINAR**

**** FRIDAY, 11/4 ****

4:00 - 5:30 pm

REGISTER HERE:
tinyurl.com/scnodaplwbnr

For more than a year, people along the proposed path of the “Dakota Access” pipeline have worked to stop its construction. The pipeline is being built by a subsidiary of Energy Transfer Crude Oil to carry oil produced by fracking in the Bakken oil field to a refinery in Illinois. Along its route, the pipeline winds under the Missouri River (twice) and the Mississippi as well as through farmers fields, wetlands, and other sensitive areas.

There are several important issues here. Climate scientists warn that we must **stop using fossil fuels** immediately to avert catastrophic climate change. This pipeline would facilitate even more fossil fuel use. Worse, it **supports increased fracking** - an extreme extraction method that strips sand from Wisconsin and Minnesota farmland, uses vast amounts of water, pollutes water

supplies, and leaves radioactive waste. In addition, **clean water is threatened by pipelines** that can rupture or leak. Tribes and others claim that the administration and **Army Corps of Engineers did not follow United States nor international law** in approving permits. And there are **issues of Native American sovereignty**. The pipeline has already desecrated sacred burial grounds on land never ceded to the US government. So-called private land in some cases is, by treaty, part of the Standing Rock reservation.

The Sierra Club asks members to call the White House, 303-816-3559, to urge President Obama to investigate potential rights violations and reject this pipeline once and for all. The National Sierra Club is also planning a national day of solidarity actions on November 15th with our partners to hold rallies around the country. For background information and up to date reporting on the situation, visit www.democracynow.org/topics/dakota_access



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.**