



Sierra

Newsletter of the Coulee Region Group

OCTOBER 2019

"People don't seem to get that zero emissions means zero oil business, means zero natural gas business, no coal business, no internal combustion engine auto business. The number zero means it all has to go." - David Roberts, environmental reporter, Vox

Join the

Coulee Region Sierra Club Ecochallenge Team! October 2-23, 2019

The annual People's Ecochallenge gets people thinking, learning, and acting about climate and sustainability issues. Anyone may participate and everyone can benefit. You can do activities alone or with a group. It's a great way to take our concerns to another level and engage family members, neighbors, colleagues, and classmates in taking next steps.

This year's challenge includes learning activities and actions in categories including Waste, Food, Health, Transportation, Energy, Community, Nature, Water, and Simplicity. You may also create your own challenge.

Here's how it works:

1. Join our team - tinyurl.com/CRSCEco1019 and choose your challenges.
2. As you complete your challenges, log in, mark them as completed, and choose new ones.
3. You and our team earn points for every completed challenge and for referring others to the team.
4. Top teams and participants may win prizes, including money and giveaways.

The main goal of our participation is to engage and include as many community members as possible to actively work at protecting our world for current and future inhabitants. *Join us!*



October 1 Highway Cleanup!

Please join us for an hour or two as we pick up litter along River Valley Drive in the heart of the La Crosse River Marsh. We'll meet at 5:30 p.m. at the pumping station just northwest of the Gillette Street/River Valley Drive intersection. The work is easy - our club provides gloves, vests, bug spray, and bags - and it's rewarding to clean paper, plastic, metal, bottles, cans, and other debris. Bring your family and friends. A large group will make the work go quickly. NEW: Submit a photo of your most unusual find and you might win a prize! More details will be given at the cleanup. See you there!

October 3 Citizen Action Energy

On October 3, at 7 p.m. at 401 West Avenue South in La Crosse, Citizen Action of Wisconsin will kick off the first initiative of its new Southwest Wisconsin action co-op. Ben Wilson, the co-op's organizer, will announce an agreement with Associated Bank that will help people install energy efficiency upgrades that will pay for themselves in lower energy bills. RSVP to this event at tinyurl.com/CASWWI1003. If you are not able to attend, CA will hold similar events throughout the Coulee Region. Email Ben at ben.wilson@citizenactionwi.org to learn more and find out about other events in the area.

On Friday, September 20, Coulee Region residents joined millions around the world to press the case for immediate, substantial climate action. La Crosse hosted several events during the day starting with an hour long visibility event at a busy commuter intersection.

About 30 percent of US carbon emissions come from transportation, including private, often single occupant vehicles. Dealing with planning and low/no-carbon transportation options must be a priority.



At noon, UWL students held an eleven minute vigil at the campus clocktower. Carly Rundle-Borchert covered the event for the campus newspaper, the Racquet. "Throughout the course of these eleven minutes, UWL Josie Talbert read climate change fears submitted by UWL students. After each fear was read, students and community members yelled, 'Hear our fear!'" Read her article and see more photos at tinyurl.com/RacquetClimateStrike.



Photo by Kathy Allen



Photo by Carly Rundle-Borchert



Photo by Kathy Allen

At Central High School, Fridays for Future, La Crosse chapter, called a four hour strike along Losey Boulevard. A large number of students were joined by community supporters. One family traveled from Tomah to take part in the strike activities. Anna Durall, co-leader of F4F in La Crosse noted that this was the largest group they've seen so far. She also invited community members to join their climate strike every Friday from 10:10 to 10:45 a.m.



At least 200 people gathered at 5:30 at Burns Park for a rally and march to the office of Rep. Ron Kind. Students urged Rep. Kind to stand up for strong climate legislation. Nearly 300 signatures were collected online and in person. The march stretched several blocks along Main Street and around the corner onto Fifth Avenue. Outside of Rep. Kind's office, students read excerpts from "The Uninhabitable Earth" by David Wallace-Wells. The group marched back to Burns Park where the rally ended with an exhortation to make this event the first step in a new level of climate activism.



Students delivered their petition to Rep. Ron Kind's local staff on Monday, September 23. Those who were not able to sign the petition, may still contact Rep. Kind and other elected officials to co-sponsor and actively support strong climate legislation such as the Green New Deal. Read the students' letter at tinyurl.com/f4flax-kindpetition. Photos on this page by Janette Dean



Sustainable Nick Nichols!

On August 27, about 16 Coulee Region group members visited the home of La Crosse County Sustainability Coordinator, Nick Nichols. Nick talked about the energy saving features he and his wife have installed on and in their home, including solar panels, solar water heating, a south-facing greenhouse, insulated window blankets, and a clothesline. Nick's garden helps decrease the family's food-miles footprint. They also heat with wood from the area. And Nick drives a hybrid plug-in car with an electric-only range that covers his commute to and from work. They

plan to sell their Medary-area home and build a smaller, tighter, even more efficient home nearby. If your group, class, or organization would like a tour, email NNichols@lacrossecounty.org.



Environmental Education Grants

The Coulee Region Sierra Club offers grants of up to \$200 for environmental education projects for elementary and middle school age children or community organizations in Crawford, Grant, Jackson, La Crosse, Monroe, Richland, Trempealeau, and Vernon counties.

Projects must:

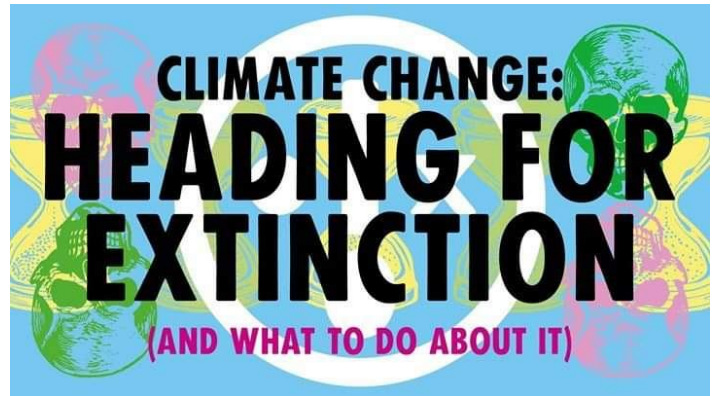
- * Provide hands-on experience for students to learn about and explore our environment.
- * Do something to promote a world that allows all life forms to live and prosper.
- * Show students that they can make a difference in their environment, urban or rural.
- * Be completed within the 2019-2020 school year.

Projects may:

- * Consist of environmental displays or creative works.
- * Benefit land, water, air, plants, animals, and/or birds.
- * Be a new project with lasting value or the potential for ongoing activity.

Applications are DUE BY January 5. See tinyurl.com/CRSCPrintApp for a print and mail application or apply online at tinyurl.com/CRSC-GrantApp. Email Maureen, maureen@johnsflaherty.com, with questions.

Successful applicants will be notified on or about mid-January. A written report will be due upon completion of the project.



At our September 24 meeting, we watched an edited version of a video of an Extinction Rebellion program that had been held in Oxford, England in April. George Monbiot facilitated the program which discussed the science of global heating and the dire warnings for human existence. Presenters also talked about how Extinction Rebellion and other international groups are making a difference by taking direct non-violent action. Their three demands:

1. **Tell the truth.** Governments must tell the truth about the urgency of the climate and related ecological disasters and work with the media and others to educate and inform citizens so the scope of the disaster is understood.
2. **Act now.** Governments must begin to take real, meaningful, immediate actions to reduce carbon and other greenhouse gas emissions and halt biodiversity loss.
3. **Beyond politics.** The current political decision-making system is broken and corrupt. XR proposes a Citizens' Assembly whose sole focus would be on listening to the science and, working with experts, decide on priorities and projects to meet the goal of living within planetary means.

View the video at youtu.be/QaFBnUyDXpk

Special thanks to guest, Debbie Dudek of Viroqua for introducing the video and leading the discussion after. Many good suggestions came up during the discussion. Clearly, the more we are able to talk about the issue AND what we can do about it, the more chance we have to move the required 3.5 percent of our population to act.

Connect with us online! We're on Twitter: @CRSierraClub, on Facebook.com/CRSierraClub, on our blog at cr-sierra.blogspot.com, and at our website: www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/coulee. We also continue to hope our members will email us at crsierraclub@gmail.com with info about events and actions happening in their parts of the Coulee Region.

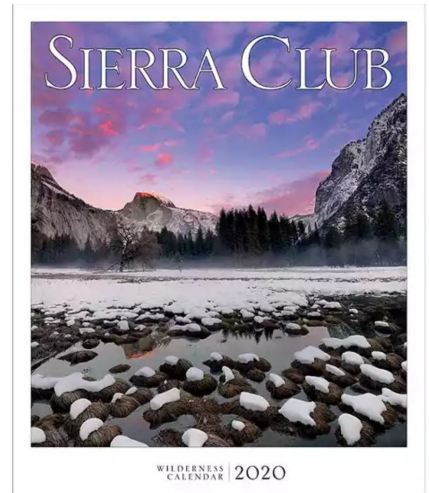


Sierra Club 2020 Calendars!

Again this year, your purchase of **Sierra Club** calendars will benefit our club and environmental programs and protection activities. The calendars cost \$14.95 for the wall calendar and \$15.95 for the engagement book.

Get your calendar at our December gathering or order from Maureen Kinney: 608 784-9324/784-5678 or email maureen@johnsflaherty.com.

SIERRA CLUB NOTE AND HOLIDAY CARDS are available at store.sierraclub.org/calendars-cards-c28.aspx



Volunteer Appreciation - Oct. 5

The John Muir Chapter will celebrate and honor its many volunteers during an Appreciation and Awards Party on Saturday, October 5 from 3 to 5 p.m. at the offices of partner organization, WISDOM, 1251 Vel R. Phillips Avenue in Milwaukee. A Coulee Region group member is among this year's award winners. Cathy Van Maren was chosen for the Merit Award for her work on the Transportation team, Ready for 100 team, and various community groups. For more information about the event and to RSVP, see tinyurl.com/JMCAwards19.

CRSC Board Nominations

Our club will hold elections for its board in December. If you're interested in being on the board, please email crsierraclub@gmail.com with a paragraph about yourself, your connection to the Sierra Club, and your goals for the Coulee Region Sierra Club if you are elected. We will include candidate statements and a ballot in our December newsletter. We particularly invite members from outside La Crosse county to consider serving on the board.

Board members meet about ten times per year and use email as necessary between meetings. Accommodations will be made for those who are not able to physically attend meetings. The board sets the agenda for the year, communicates with members and with the John Muir Chapter leadership about Sierra Club initiatives and priorities, raises and spends club money, works with allies on club priorities such as Ready for 100, water quality issues, transportation, and environmental protection.

If you need more information, please feel free to email us or call Pat Wilson, chair, at 608-788-8831.

Lesson Plans on plastics

Viroqua Plastic Free (viroquaplasticfree.org) is a volunteer organization working to raise awareness about plastic pollution, plastic health issues, and solutions to the plastic crisis. The group has hosted film screenings, provided information and demonstrations at local events, works with local businesses to reduce plastic use, and offers guidance on plastic-free living.

VPF has created a series of lesson plans for students of all ages that include what is plastic, why and how has it become a problem, where does it go when we dispose of it, how does plastic impact our health, what are the alternatives, and how can individuals respond to the plastic crisis.

The free lesson plans include Wisconsin Department of Education Academic Standards and suggested demonstrations, films, and field trips. In addition to these plans, VPF offers workshops and training for students and educators. Read more at tinyurl.com/vpf-lessons

Oct. 26 Volunteer for the Wild

The Mississippi Valley Conservancy will host a day of removing invasive species on Saturday, October 26 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Trempealeau Lakes Nature Preserve near Trempealeau. Safety equipment and tools will be provided as well as a lunch during the noon hour break. Dress in layers and wear long pants with sleeves and close-toed shoes. Bring plenty of water to drink along with whatever sun and insect protection you will need.

RSVP by calling 608-784-3606 ext. 5.

