



Sierra

Newsletter of the Coulee Region Group

APRIL 2015

APRIL MEETING

**Tuesday,
April 28**

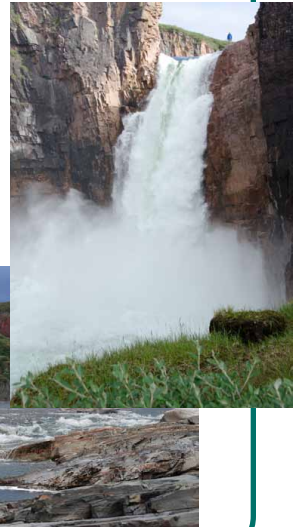
7pm at the
**HoChunk
Three Rivers House
at 8th & Main**

ALL ARE WELCOME!

The Arctic and the Hood River

Presented by: Pat Wilson, past Sierra Club Coulee Region president

In July, 2013, Pat Wilson and four friends made a three-week canoe trip down the Hood River. All 185 miles of the trip were above the Arctic Circle in Nunavut, Canada. The trip revealed the great beauty of the Arctic, including Wilberforce Falls, the highest waterfall north of the Arctic Circle. It also revealed how global warming is changing the arctic. Some of the wildlife seen was expected, and some was unexpected. Pat and his group had some challenges on the trip, though not as great as the challenges to the members of explorer Sir John Franklin's party in 1820, where only 9 of 20 members returned from the expedition. The Hood River is named after Officer Robert Hood, who died on the expedition. Come and learn about the Hood River.



We had another great speaker this past month. Jeff Skrade shared the movie "Alaska Gold" and information concerning the Pebble Mine project. He asked that we write to our Congressional delegation asking for EPA involvement. If this mine were approved, it would have a huge effect on the environment, water quality and wildlife and greatly affect the salmon runs and the fishing industry. Check out this web site for background: <http://www.savebristolbay.org/about-the-bay/about-pebble-mine>.

At a local level, the Public Service Commission (PSC) recently dealt a blow to the Coulee Region by verbally approving the ATC Badger Coulee transmission line that will run through the Town of Holland, parallel to the previously approved CapX2020 project. These huge 345kV lines will transmit dirty coal energy from the Dakotas to Chicago without any assurances that clean power will be allowed online.

As many stated at public hearings and through letters, this line will disrupt the State's natural assets, building developments, family farms, schools and property values wherever it is located for no proven need or reason. Almost 100 communities asked that a study be conducted to show Wisconsin ratepayers the benefits they would receive in coming years if the combined amount they would be asked to assume for transmission expansion (not just Badger Coulee) were applied instead to accelerated energy efficiency with impacts on job creation, net carbon emission reductions and energy self-sufficiency. Those

resolutions were ignored by the PSC.

Even a former PSC commissioner, Eric Callisto, wrote that Wisconsin needs to plan better for future: "I think we should slow down...and open up a generic investigation...[to] evaluate placing a fair and transparent value on distributed generation, and at least start down the discussion path of the role of regulated utilities in a future with

flat load growth, increased distributed generation and more robust consumer involvement in energy choices."

Wisconsin residents should continue to ask questions and demand better planning!

Marilyn Pedretti

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Coulee Region Transportation Study

Please attend Public Involvement Meeting #2 of the Wisconsin DOT's Coulee Region Transportation Study. It will cover expected future conditions in the study area. There are two opportunities to attend the meeting:

- **Wednesday, May 13, 5 to 7 p.m.**
at La Crosse Central High School Cafeteria
- **Thursday, May 14, 5 to 7 pm.**
at Eagle Bluff Elementary School Gymnasium

Thank you to all who attended the first public meetings on March 11 and 12. The turnout was good and many written and oral comments were turned in supporting the City of La Crosse's progressive transportation vision. Please add these new meetings to your calendar and try to attend. For more information, go to <http://www.wisconsin.gov/projects/swregion/couleeregion/index.htm>

Second Annual Mayor's Neighborhood Conference

**Transportation in the Next American City
Saturday, April 11, Myrick Center
in Myrick Park, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.**

The keynote speaker is Charles Marohn of Strong Towns. This is a wonderful opportunity to find out more about transportation issues and solutions for the future, and to make your views known on the subject. For more information, go to: <https://www.cityoflacrosse.org/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=1392>

Viterbo University Conference on Water Ethics

1. *An American Water Ethic* by Cynthia Barnett
Thursday, April 16, 7 p.m. Viterbo University Fine Arts Center Main Theater
2. *Water Songs* featuring Waubesa
Dorene Day & Larry Long
Friday, April 17, 7 p.m. Viterbo Fine Arts Center Lobby



Coulee Region Sierra Club

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Spring Highway Cleanup

Our adopted highway is River Valley Drive in the La Crosse River marsh. The first of 3 annual cleanups will be **Tuesday, May 6, at 6 p.m.** Meet at the city water well building near the intersection of County Highway B and River Valley Drive on the north side of La Crosse. Wear old clothes and bring work gloves. Orange vests and garbage bags are provided. We'll work for an hour to 90 minutes. There's a traditional stop at Rudy's Drive-in after the cleanup. For more information contact Maureen Kinney: 784-9324 or maureen@johnsflaherty.com.

La Crosse Earth Fair: Spring into Green for 2015

**Myrick Park and Myrick Park Center
Sunday, April 26, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.**



Check out the Sierra Club booth at the La Crosse Earth Fair at Myrick Park. The celebration includes green vendors, children's activities, live music, farmer's market, presentations, and more!

See <http://earthfairlacrosse.com> for more information.

Coulee Region Group Sierra Club

Be sure to check out our updated website at <http://www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/coulee>. If your old link to our website doesn't work, please update to the link as shown. And, we'll be adding to the site over the next few months.

Thanks to Rick Komperud for his dedicated work on it over the past years, and to our intern, Jene Carlson, and Pat Wilson for updating the site.

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Upcoming Sierra Club River Touring Section Canoe Trips

May 2-3 Root River (Minnesota)

Class I; Car Camp. Enjoy a weekend paddling the Root River in unglaciated SE Minnesota near Lanesboro. Dolomite cliffs overlook the valley with springfed tributaries and abundant wildlife. Learn about the region's early history and its effect on the river valley. Camping is free but canoes/kayaks need to be licensed. For details, contact: Sue O'Brien, Winona, 507-452-3164, sueob1@gmail.com

May 23-25 Bois Brule

Class I-II; Car Camp. Join us for 3 day trips on the Bois Brule River near Superior, WI. On Saturday, we'll paddle from County S to Highway 2. Sunday, we'll paddle from Pine Tree Landing to Highway 13, including a series of Class II rapids. On Monday, we'll paddle from Highway 13 to Lake Superior, with fairly constant Class I rapids. We'll learn about the work to protect this trout stream. Helmets required for rapids.

Camping is available at the DNR campground south of Brule WI in Douglas County. The trip leader will reserve as many sites as possible. This is a busy weekend so please share your site with fellow Sierrans. Trip leaders: Pat & Bobbie Wilson, La Crosse,

608-788-8831, 608-397-2531 (cell), pbwilson@centurytel.net and Kevin & Carol Olson, Baraboo, 608-356-8992, olsonfam44@centurytel.net

Spring Cleaning of the Marsh

Saturday, April 25, 9 a.m to 1 p.m.

We'll be cleaning from La Crosse St. to West Ave. to Gillette St. to Hwy 16, including the skate park. Sign-in will be in the gun club shelter in Myrick Park. Wear gloves and protective footwear. Feel free to bring your own bags, or use those provided. A lunch is provided by WisCorps. Co-sponsored by WisCorps and Friends of the Marsh.

Spring Birdwalks in Myrick Park and Hixon Forest

The annual spring weekday morning bird walks start on April 28 this year. Walks start at 6:30 a.m. and last until about 8 a.m., or whenever you want to leave.

Marsh bird walks: Tuesday Mornings, April 28, May 5, May 12 - Meet at Myrick Center.

Hixon Forest bird walks: Thursday mornings, April 30, May 7, May 14. Meet at Lower Hixon Trail parking lot.