



Sierra

Newsletter of the Coulee Region Group

JANUARY 2014

JANUARY MEETING

**Tuesday,
January 28**

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

Everyone welcome

OVERHeard and OVERhead; Regional Transmission Planning Headline News & Street Views

Speaker: Debra Severson

Citizens Energy Task Force (CETF) and Save Our Unique Lands (SOUL) have been leading the charge in Wisconsin, questioning if relying on high-voltage transmission lines to ship centrally produced energy around the country is a financially and environmentally sustainable energy policy. More importantly, they are asking whose interest this policy serves.



CapX2020 is a series of high-voltage (mostly 345 kilovolts, 120-170-foot tall) transmission line projects stretching from the Dakotas into Wisconsin. The Hampton, Rochester and La Crosse segment was approved by the Wisconsin Public Service Commission (PSC) in May 2012, in large part to enhance power transfers from states located west of the Mississippi River via transmission build. Fossil fuels have been shown to be the primary benefactor of this policy.

The proposed Badger Coulee Transmission Line is similar to a 345 kV extension cord connecting CapX2020 facilities in the La Crosse area directly to a facility in the Madison area, without planned intermediate connections. The Badger Coulee application was submitted in October 2013, but, in November, was deemed incomplete by the PSC. Much of the PSC-requested information on need and analysis of alternatives is equally relevant to CapX2020 and would negate or defer the need for the line.

Debra Severson, who serves on the leadership of both CETF and SOUL, will facilitate a discussion on issues and opportunities to get involved in efforts to "Decline the LineS," including a Jan. 2014 initiative on CapX2020 and upcoming public meetings on Badger Coulee.

According to Severson, "The PSC approved CapX2020 for \$211 million as a foundational line to enable Badger Coulee, but failed to consider the \$514-\$548 million cost of Badger Coulee. This "segmentation" of dependent lines does not account for over two-thirds of the cost to achieve the desired "transfer capacity benefits" and ignores the total environmental impact."

Chair's Report

A new year and new beginnings!

As mentioned in previous newsletters, "our group has been studying some possible ways to regenerate the group by building a campaign around an issue. At the January meeting, we'll discuss the results of that process. We'll also explore some other alternatives for continuation of the local group. One possible idea includes conducting meetings only on a quarterly basis.

The Executive Committee will discuss the options before the regular meeting at 6:00 p.m. **For anyone receiving this newsletter, we welcome your input. We are looking for ideas on how to keep the group vital!**

This will be my last newsletter as the Coulee Region Chair. It has been an honor to help lead the group these past five years. We've held some fascinating programs, conducted fun outings and

engaged in some great debates. I hope the Coulee Region Sierra Club can continue to make a difference on environmental issues important to Sierra Club members and others in the community.

Marilyn Pedretti - mjpedretti@yahoo.com

Editor's note: A big thank you to Marilyn, who despite a very busy schedule, has done a fantastic job of leading our group these past years, keeping us informed and involved.

Go paperless! Email alp@haleskemp.com for an electronic newsletter



Coulee Region Sierra Club

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Winter Fun in the Kickapoo Valley

Saturday, January 11

10:30am to 4:30pm*

Hosts/SC Trip Leaders: Kristi Rummel-King, Craig King and Elizabeth Thorson.

Escape the winter blahs—enjoy some great exercise, company and sights! **Feel free to attend just the morning hike, lunch or afternoon car tour.*

10:30 am - 1:00 pm: Snowshoeing/hiking at Round Barn Ridge in Ontario, Wisconsin. All levels of snowshoers are welcome. The King's barn is barn #6 of the historical round barns in the area. Read more about the history of the round barns, many built by Algie Shivers, an African American Settler in Cheyenne Valley: <http://csumc.wisc.edu/cmct/cheyenne/roundbarn.htm> and <http://www.explorewisconsin.com/countypages/vernon.html>

Snowshoe Equipment: Kristi has a few pairs of snowshoes to lend. Redfeather Snowshoes in LaCrosse, another supporter of the Sierra Club has offered a special discount for Sierra Club members at their warehouse in La Crosse (ORC Industries), contact Rose Jones at rjones@orcind.com or 1-800-525-0081.



1:30 - 2:30 pm: Lunch at Rivers End in Ontario.

2:30 - 4:30 pm: Amish Car Tour between Ontario and Cashton (Kaufman's Bulk Foods and Natural Elixirs, Amish Wal-Mart, Bent and Dent and the final stop, Amish Cheese Factory in Cashton).

Contact Randy Hoezlen if you are interested in attending this invigorating event: **608-769-0736* or rhoelzen@gmail.com.**

Note: Phone number was incorrect in last month's newsletter.