



**SIERRA
CLUB**

Palouse News

**Newsletter of the Sierra Club Palouse Group
Serving SE Washington and Central Idaho**

Winter 2022

Moscow Takes Action on Climate - Again! by Al Poplawsky

For thirty years our federal government has dragged its feet on addressing climate change, and this has led to local municipalities and states picking up the slack by making plans to eliminate the use of polluting fossil fuels. Although the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) recently passed by Congress and signed by Joe Biden is significant, local efforts are still needed.

In October, after three years of effort from citizen activists, city staff and Sierra Club staff, the City of Moscow (COM) adopted a climate action plan (CAP). This plan builds on a previous commitment made and carried out under the former city administrations of Mayors Chaney and Lambert to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from city municipal operations 20% by 2020. COM met this goal with various measures such as improving the weatherization of city buildings, conversion to hybrid and electric city vehicles, conversion to LED street and traffic signal lighting, etc. These measures all reduced energy usage and thus greenhouse gas generation, as well as saved the city money over time.

The recently adopted CAP outlines how the city will meet the dual goals of achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions for municipal operations by 2035 and then net zero emissions for community-wide activities (this means us Moscow residents) by 2050, with an interim goal of a 56.6% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2035. The strategy is to convert all of our energy usage to electric and encourage the conversion of the electrical grid to 100% clean, sustainable energy generation at the same time. Since our energy provider Avista has a goal of providing 100% clean electricity by 2045, this is very doable. In addition to the type of energy and cost-saving measures used for the 2020 effort, (See "Moscow Action" Page 2)



*Palouse Group Sierra Club,
along with Friends of the Clearwater,
enjoy a previous outing at the Palouse Divide Lodge.*

Annual Winter Snow Outing - January 21st

Come to our 2023 Winter Outing on January 21st at the beautiful Palouse Divide Lodge! This is a joint outing sponsored by our Palouse Group of the Sierra Club and Friends of the Clearwater. If you would like, you can join us to cross-country ski or snowshoe by meeting in the parking lot of the Lodge at 10:00 am on Saturday January 21st. Or if you would prefer to enjoy the day on your own, inside or out, feel free to join us at the lodge in the late afternoon or for dinner and an evening program.

Those joining us just for the day are invited to come inside before 10:00 am to warm up before heading outside. Our ski and snowshoe groups will spend a number of hours of the day on the trails through the gorgeous forest in the area. All participants are responsible for bringing their own gear, including lunch and refreshments.

We will return to the Lodge in late afternoon, then have time to rest or get together for happy hour in the conference room we have reserved, followed by a buffet dinner and an evening program. Breakfast will also be served on Sunday January 22nd before checkout.

An overnight stay with breakfast and dinner is \$85 per person. For those not staying at the lodge, breakfast is \$10 and evening dinner is \$15. There is no charge for participants who would like to hang out at the lodge during the day but are not staying overnight. A limited numbers of rooms are still available this weekend for both Friday and Saturday evenings and reservations are required, so you may want to reserve your room as soon as possible. The owner, Shirley Hathaway, is a lovely host.

Since this is an official Sierra Club Outing, trip participants will be required to sign a waiver before we head out on the trails. We will distribute a contact list of participants to help you coordinate plans and in case you want to independently arrange carpools.

We hope you can join us at Palouse Divide Lodge. A good snowpack is already developing there. --And the trails, the forest, and the views are beautiful!

For more information or to sign up for this winter outing contact:

Mac Cantrell	or	Allison Anders
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		allison@friendsoftheclearwater.org

("Moscow Action" continued from page 1) the city proposes to change its energy usage to as close to 100% electric as possible. Also, the city will encourage Avista to convert to 100% clean electricity as quickly as possible and initiate measures to sequester CO2 such as increasing carbon-sequestering vegetation on city property.

However, COM municipal operations are responsible for only 2.4 % of the greenhouse gas pollution coming from the Moscow community; thus, the critical changes need to come from each and every one of us. The COM plans to provide Moscow citizens with education and information on the conversion to electric sources of energy and the associated federal government incentive programs (Inflation Reduction Act, IRA), as well as possibly providing some incentives of their own.

However, it is doubtful that this will be enough to encourage the community to be carbon neutral by 2050, so there is discussion within environmental groups on how to further contribute to this effort. Please look for future information on this topic.

Most of us have a long way to go in our personal lives to convert to 100% electricity. The goal of carbon neutrality may be for 2050, but those of us that can must get started as soon as possible to meet the 2035 interim goal. The destructive

effects of climate change are not waiting for us. Transportation and residential energy use account for the majority of our community's greenhouse gas emissions, so what each of us does for transportation and heating and cooling at home is critically important.

Personally, Diane and I currently have one EV and one gas vehicle, but just bought a house that is painfully - 100% natural gas. I'm surprised it doesn't have gas lighting! We will need to convert to one EV with sufficient range to meet all our needs, and replace the gas boiler, gas water heater, gas cooking stove, and gas fireplace with electric or other non-fossil fuel models. This will cost money initially, but with IRA incentives and long term savings it should be very doable. I plan to address one of these gas appliances each year, probably starting with the oldest ones which are most likely to fail. When something like a gas heating system or hot water heater fails and needs immediate replacement, it is easiest to replace it with another similar, updated model which still uses fossil fuel. Thus, it is best to have plans ready to replace an aging gas appliance with an electric model just in case. We can *all* do this! Please start to give it some serious thought.



Thankful on Asotin Creek

by Lynne Nelson

My favorite Thanksgiving holiday tradition is to spend the day outdoors, preferably a long day hike, one that winds down the busy brain that generally accompanies the holiday season. A long hike allows one to leave behind the little work and life wrinkles that we have been working with and refocus attention to the 'real' world, the natural world. There is so much beauty and grace to be found in this world, and it isn't hard to access. Our holiday hike this year was the North Fork Asotin Creek, approximately 15 miles from Asotin, WA in the Umatilla National Forest. The out and back trail is an easy grade which runs on the north side of the creek, about 8 or 10 miles. This is the most popular hike, however there is a longer (20 + mile) lollipop loop over Pinkham butte for those adventurers. Along with the enjoyable and soothing scenery, one of best sightings in this canyon is big horn sheep. They are often seen on the north side of the canyon, well blended into rocky bluffs.

This Thanksgiving, our day was partly sunny with spectacular cloud contrast, fall hues and subdued light. The creek was running slightly high with that sparkling sound that mesmerizes us when we are by water. Scanning with our binoculars we spotted several ewes along one high bluff and a single, small ram very near the trail. None seemed too bothered by our presence, so we spent some time just watching the animals grazing and effortlessly climbing the sheer terrain. Someone noticed a fast-moving animal on the far left, a very large ram, angling up the canyon from the bottom toward the ewes. Then another, very large ram was spotted angling up the canyon from the right toward the ewes. The big guys were moving quickly up terrain that seems almost vertical, and they seemed to be on a 'collision' course. We settled in to watch the show. The rams met and jostled around to best position themselves next to a singled-out ewe. They pushed and shoved one another, back and forth, then the loud crack of head-butting. More jostling, another head-butting and on it went. We were so wrapped up watching the rams, that we didn't notice how dark was settling in, and how cold we were!

Shivering, back in the vehicle, we recounted our good fortune - a beautiful hike, good weather and an exciting wildlife show finale. How truly lucky we were. Forget the turkey! I can't think of a better way to have spent this holiday than on the North Fork Asotin Creek with dear friends.

Electric School Buses come to the Palouse

This October, the Biden-Harris administration awarded nearly \$1B in grants to school districts across the United States, and several Tribes and US Territories. These grants will allow the purchase of over 2,400 clean school buses in an effort to provide cleaner air around schools and in the communities. While the Moscow School District was not one of the applicants selected, the Genesee School District will receive funding for three new electric school buses. Congratulations!

Salmon Notes

by Rich Alldredge

Recently there have been several important policy developments affecting endangered Snake River salmon. In September the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) clearly stated the scientific case for restoring the lower Snake River in "Rebuilding Interior Columbia Basin Salmon and Steelhead". Based on this NOAA report the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) issued a draft proposal calling for removal of the lower Snake River dams.

In August a report released by Washington Governor Inslee and Senator Murray provided a presumptive path to replacement of four lower Snake River dams while cautioning that breaching dams is not an option until key infrastructure is in place. But time is running out for the salmon. Now is the time to push for immediate planning and implementation of projects to replace the energy, transportation, and irrigation services of the lower Snake River dams. Extinction of salmon species is not an option!

Please contact your Governor, Senators, and Representatives to ask their support in replacement of the four lower Snake River dams.

My Favorite Hike

by Jim Frenzel

One of my favorite local hikes is an 11-mile loop on Moscow Mountain, starting at the Trail Landing Parking area on Moscow Mtn Rd South (not accessible to cars in the winter.) About 1/4 mile up the road, turn right onto Lower PLT and continue to PLT. Follow PLT up the mountain to LaFortune's Flight and turn right. Stay on LaFortune's flight until just before Moscow Mtn Rd East and turn left onto Nemesis. Nemesis ends at Moscow Mtn Rd East, where you will turn left and connect to Up & Over on the right and ending at Foothill Rd. Walk a short distance down the road to connect to Gemini. Continue down the mountain on Gemini until it ends at Moscow Mtn Rd South, almost directly across from where you first turned onto Lower PLT. From there, it is a short walk back to your car. There is a great map and trail descriptions available at <https://mambatrails.org/>. Enjoy!

Executive Committee Election, Palouse Group of the Sierra Club

All Sierra Club members in the Palouse Group are eligible to vote in this election and run for a position on the Executive Committee. Please return your ballot within 30 days of receiving the newsletter.



Rich Alldredge: I have been a member of the Sierra Club for over 40 years. I have served on PGSC ExComm on and off for many years. My retirement now allows more time to devote to hiking, backpacking, XC skiing, as well as conservation issues. I am particularly interested in issues surrounding salmon restoration efforts in the Snake and Columbia River basins. I would like to continue to serve on the ExComm of the PGSC.



Lynne Nelson: I am a veterinarian and researcher at Washington State University. In addition to teaching veterinary students, my research has focused on hibernation adaptations in brown bears, and heart disease in Asiatic black bears in China and Vietnam. I have been a long time wilderness advocate, involved regionally with Sierra Club and Friends of the Clearwater. The current times and environmental challenges have rekindled my desire to become more active with our local Sierra Club chapter.

Note: Each member of a joint membership may vote, each using one of the two columns. Please tear off ballot and mail within 30 days to:

**Palouse Group Sierra Club
POB 9932
Moscow, ID 83843.**

For Executive Committee (vote for up to three):

Voter 1

Voter 2

Rich Alldredge

Lynne Nelson



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