



It's Our Nature

Newsletter of the Fox Valley Sierra Group of the John Muir Chapter of the Sierra Club Vol. 11 Issue 4

We are a Wealthy Nation

By Alan Lawrence

One of our political parties would have us believe that our country is broke and cannot afford to provide government services to the citizens, and cannot afford the cost of regulations of any sort, including workplace safety, food or product safety, or environmental protection.

It is my opinion that we have lots of wealth, if we measure it correctly. Furthermore, I believe that regulations and environmental protection are necessary for keeping us wealthy.

Our natural resources are a considerable asset for our country, and for Wisconsin. We have minerals, oil, gas, forests, cropland, water, ..., we have a lot. These are the resources that helped to grow our country so rapidly and richly. These resources have helped make our nation envied by people around the world. Some older nations have depleted their resources through centuries of harvesting. Some third-world nations have damaged their resources through abusive practices, often at the hands of greedy outside corporations. The United States is especially blessed with physical size and diversity, and has abundant natural resources of many kinds. There is great wealth in this.

The problem I see is that we are allowing these resources to be sold too cheaply. If they are worth a dollar then why should we sell it for pennies?

Our natural resources are like a bank account. We have a very full account. But we are allowing this account to be emptied, rapidly, without proper accounting. We understand dollars, but we do not understand or account for the value of our resources.

Truly, we must be able to benefit from our resources in order

to be able to measure their financial worth to us. We have to be able to mine our oil, gas, coal, iron, copper, and other resources. We have to be able to harvest our forests into lumber products. We have to be able to fish our waters, till our land into farms, and water our fields. We have to be able to take advantage of our resources. But we do not have to utilize them as though there is no tomorrow. We need for there to be a tomorrow and we need to hope that tomorrow will yet provide opportunities for the welfare of its people.

I worry about mountain top removal for the mining of coal. I worry about fracking for oil or gas, with its use of fracturing the ground below us and injections of poisonous liquids into the ground. I worry about strip mining. I worry about the production and transportation of tar sands oil and its additional effects on global warming. I worry about clear cutting of forests, in lieu of sustainable forestry. We need some regulations.

I object to the huge subsidies paid by government (aka, all of us) to build the roads and infrastructure so that private corporations can have nearly-free resource rights. These resources are valuable and should be priced as though they are valuable. Furthermore, the government (again, all of us) tends to assume most of the liability costs when things go wrong. It should not be acceptable to lease mining rights to LLC (Limited Liability Corporation) companies. And it should not be acceptable to lease these rights to companies that pay their top executives many times more than their lowest paid workers.

I regret that our governments offer mining rights for small amounts of money, providing resources practically free to companies. These resources are our wealth. They belong to the citizens, and should be managed so that they will provide for us for centuries. They should not be plundered for short-term gain.

Fox Valley Sierra Group Programs

November 10, 2011 • 7:00 PM *Canoe Camping on the Pigeon River*

Rich Krieg will give a slide presentation about his recent whitewater canoe camping trip down the Pigeon River in Manitoba. The Pigeon is often referred to as "Canada's Colorado River." If his past trips are any indication, there will be many adventurous stories to share.

December 8, 2011 • 7:00 PM *Annual Holiday Party*

Please Bring-

- A Dish To Pass, Your Own Beverage and Place Setting
- Money Donation To Bubolz Nature Preserve
- White Elephant Gift (A gift from your home that you no longer want. Do *NOT* buy a gift: recycle one! Wrap your gift in a recycled grocery bag)
- Good Spirits & A Friend

January 12, 2012 • 7:00 PM *Wildlife Rehabilitation*

February 9, 2012 • 7:00 PM *Cameron Moreland - TV 26 on Weather*

March 8, 2012 • 7:00 PM *Reclaiming Lost Lands*

Mark Dawson will explain how his company is redesigning old auto plants in Michigan.

Unless noted all programs are held at the wheelchair accessible Gordon Bubolz Nature Preserve, 4815 N. Lynddale Drive (County A) in Appleton, Wisconsin and are free and open to the public. Please join us! • <http://www.bubolzpreserve.org/>

Sierra Club Stands in Solidarity with Occupy Wall Street Protests

By Sarah Hodgdon, Conservation Director and Dave Scott, Vice President for Conservation

For the past several weeks Occupy Wall Street protesters have peacefully held vigil in support of a broad vision for financial, political, and environmental reform in America. From this creative hub of activity, a diverse group of students, members of labor unions, environmentalists, and concerned citizens have helped this grassroots protest spread to more than 1,400 events nationwide. Many Sierra Club staff and volunteer leaders have participated in and/or lent support to these demonstrations standing up for the end to corporate greed. The demands and values of the protesters are very much in line with Sierra Club's strategic priority of confronting the power of the coal and oil industries.

Volunteer leads and staff around the country have requested that we make clear where the Sierra Club stands on these protests. This memo, dated 10/14/11, is designed to provide our initial thinking and guidance.

In a vibrant democracy, peaceful protest and demonstration is among the highest form of citizen engagement in the democratic process. Since the founding of our republic, ordinary citizens have accomplished extraordinary things by joining together to express their convictions. It is our heritage to speak truth to power, and our nation's historic respect for peaceful dissent has helped the United States enact civil rights legislation, promote human rights internationally, and end unjust wars. Citizen engagement has brought this country out of its darkest hours and helped us fulfill our promises of justice and equality to millions.

The Sierra Club affirms its support for the exercise of political expression through the Occupy Wall Street protests. Corporations that pollute our air, land and water, that put greed ahead of community good, public health and the nation's economic well-being must be held fully accountable. In our work around the country, we have seen first-hand how international coal and oil companies have wrecked communities, polluted our environment, and dominated the political process. We stand with Occupy Wall Street protesters in saying "enough."

Finally, we want to make clear to all Sierra Club staff and volunteers, that you are authorized to participate in lawful and peaceful Occupy Wall Street protests in the name of the Sierra Club.

The corporate accountability message these protests are carrying fits very well with our strategic priority of confronting the power of coal and oil and contribute to our strategic priorities of building a movement and fostering key partnerships. We will shortly be providing further message guidance and support materials to help the Sierra Club add its voice to this powerful choir.

If you have questions regarding our position, please feel free to contact Bob Bingaman at bob.bingaman@sierraclub.org or 202-977-7904

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From the Chair

October 2011, By Alan Lawrence FVSG Chair

Our world has certainly been contentious this year. Our Wisconsin government has enacted, or tried to enact, legislation much more divisive than with previous legislatures. The result has been massive statewide protest rallies. Our Federal government is extremely divided and nearly shutdown this summer while one party argued that we were broke and had to cut services and cut taxes, while the other party sought to retain valuable services and pay for the services with a minor increase of taxes to the wealthiest members of our society. A downgraded federal credit rating was one result. Challenges to environmental protections are another consequence.

Elsewhere in this newsletter I state my opinion that we are a wealthy nation, and that we need to protect the environment to remain wealthy.

On the Federal level we were disappointed in September when President Obama scrapped plans to tighten smog rules, bowing to the pushback of congressional Republicans and some business leaders who argued this rule would kill jobs in America's ailing economy.

A year ago (Sep 2010) the Environmental Protection Agency supported these rules by saying "new regulations will yield more than \$120 billion in annual health benefits in 2014, far outweighing the annual cost of compliance with the proposed rules," which it pegged at \$2.8 billion in four years.

The EPA said among the benefits are the avoidance of 240,000 cases of aggravated asthma and 21,000 cases of acute bronchitis, and 1.9 million days when people miss school or work due to ozone- and particle pollution-related symptoms. Other statistics say coal plant pollution is responsible for 448 deaths in Wisconsin each year, and 24,000 in the United States.

So, the health of our people will continue to suffer because of lax regulations of air pollution. And carbon dioxide will continue to be unregulated as it contributes to catastrophic global warming.

As a nation we have a huge appetite for fossil energies, particularly oil, gas, and coal. Coal is often mined in huge scale by removing the tops of mountains and leaving environmental degradation. Gas is frequently "mined" these days with fracking, a practice of fracturing the rock underground and flooding those areas with toxic fluids. It effectively releases trapped gas that might have been elusive with traditional techniques. But it pollutes ground water and harms aquifers.

Oil, traditionally pumped from wells, is now being mined through strip mines. Tar sands contain oily solids that cannot be pumped. They are excavated and processed into liquids resembling oil. Unfortunately, the product and the process contribute much more to global warming than traditional oil, and there is more pollution byproduct. I encourage you research "tar sands" and the Keystone XL pipeline that a Canadian company, TransCanada Corporation, intends to build across the United States. This is a bad thing, and President Obama intends to approve or disapprove the pipeline soon.

In August I waited at a crossing for a very long train. I noticed that quite a few very nice cars were labeled "Winn Bay Sand". I knew nothing about that company but I suspected that it might be for special sand used during hydraulic fracturing. I did some research, and I was right.

Winn Bay Sand is a Canadian-owned company, a limited liability company, operating in Blair, Wisconsin. They have a lovely website that looks so environmentally friendly. <http://www.winnbay.com/>

The local community in Trempealeau County had people against this project and created a "Larkin Valley No Winn Project" website. <http://lvnwp.yolasite.com/>

The county board approved the mine because it might create up to 40 jobs. Only one guy voted against it. The public hearing lasted six hours, with most people speaking against the mine. (Jobs trumped the environment again.)

Currently, in northwestern Wisconsin, a huge mining operation is being contemplated. It is also a Canadian-owned company, and also a Limited Liability Corporation (LLC). Although it has not yet filed a single permit to do business, Gogebic Taconite LLC intends to open a multi-billion dollar strip mine and processing plant in the Bad River Watershed near Ashland. Many people believe a strip mine up to 22 miles long, half a mile wide, and a thousand feet deep is being planned. This will have major impacts to the environment and to the tourist region.

Although permits have not been filed, legislation is being proposed that will make it easier to build the mine. Earlier this year the draft legislation, which did not make it to the floor because of public outcry, sought to limit the permitting time to only 300 days. Normally this takes years because of extensive scientific studies that are needed, especially for a project of this scale. A mine makes a permanent scar on our planet. It makes sense to be careful. An alarming sentence in that draft said, "The applicant is not required to include a risk assessment of accidental health and environmental hazards potentially associated with the mining operation."

New legislation, introduced in October as Special Session AB-24 and SB-24 seeks to remove environmental protections, and opens a door for the huge taconite mine. Permitting would be limited to only 30 days, regardless of DNR work load and staffing and gives presumptive approval for prospecting in order to get around our existing mining safeguards. These Special Session bills are also exempt from public hearings and newspaper notice requirements.

The day prior to SB-24 and AB-24 being introduced many citizens from across Wisconsin, including myself and several from our group, traveled to Madison and met with our legislators. This issue is so important that the Wisconsin League of Conservation voters organized a special Conservation Lobby Day to discuss just this single issue with our legislators.

Now that the language of SB-24 and SB-24 are known Shihla Warner, our Chapter Director, issued this statement: "We continue to disagree with any assertion that any existing environmental law needs to be weakened to suit Gogebic Taconite's wishes. It is an outrage to see another bill introduced before they file a single mining permit. If this company needs to change Wisconsin's laws before they even face the current DNR -an agency that is under intense political pressure to streamline permitting at all costs - we wonder what they are trying to avoid."

It is no wonder that the Occupy Wall Street movement is finding so much support.

Thanks for reading my comments. As leader of our group I welcome your feedback.
Alan Lawrence, 920-730-9515 or alan_lawrence99@yahoo.com

The Rite of Passage

by Laura Menefee,

She resides in Door County in a former dairy farmhouse

Sometimes it's sudden, sometimes you sense it: one night you turn the fans off; you add a blanket to the sheet and quilt; and then...one morning...

Silence. The first morning without a cacophony of birdsong.

Fall migration has begun...

My place fledged at least seven bluebirds this year, and an undetermined number of hummingbirds. The bluebirds were gone by late August, but the baby hummingbirds stay longer to fatten up before their epic flight--which they make--without their parents!!



While only the female rears the young (the males are good for just one thing...), the mother hummingbird will leave before her fledglings on her migratory flight South. The fledglings fatten up as much as they can, constantly at the feeders, watching out for males who remain protective of "their" territory, even though breeding for the year is over. The males leave first, the adult females soon after. Then it's a sure bet that the ones left in your yard are the young of the year.

No one knows how the juveniles know where they're going, or how they get there. But one thing is known: these remarkable birds feeding at my feeders, the ones who survive a phenomenal 1500 mile first migratory flight--and live to do it again next year--will likely come back to my very house! My very yard!! to breed next summer!

These tiny, little beauties, weighing only

6 grams after doubling their weight in preparation for this ordeal, fly about 1,000 miles south from here, to the Gulf of Mexico, in 20 miles-per-day hops overland. Once they get to the Gulf, most juveniles will follow the Texas panhandle into Mexico and Central America to find a good place to overwinter. But those that fly the 525 miles over water will fly 18 to 20 hours, non-stop!!!

By the time their migratory flight is complete, they have lost 75% of their body weight!!

Many don't make it. A storm or strong headwinds over the water, or getting distracted by the lights of fishing vessels and oil rigs kill untold thousands of songbirds annually. Windows and night lighting on the migratory flight path kill billions more.

Billions of songbirds are killed annually by windows and lighting, mostly during migration.

Project Dark Skies observed by cities like Minneapolis help to mitigate this slaughter. You can help: Turn off your lights at night, including "landscape lighting," and put the "security lighting" on a motion sensor, at least during migration--August through the end of November, and again, March through the end of May. Or just ditch it entirely for the species that remain year-round. It'll cut down on your electricity bill, the night skies will become more brilliant, and far fewer birds will die because you think you need lights on all night.

As for windows--An estimated 4 billion songbirds die annually in North America from window collisions, most during migration, along migratory flight paths. Teams of volunteers fan out all over the Milwaukee city streets to check for little birds who've collided with windows, collecting dead birds by the dump truck load every year.

A very simple thing would prevent this tragedy: UV reflecting film. That's it. Simple. Doesn't block the view, we can still do our glass skyscrapers if we have to, but if the glass were covered with UV reflecting film, it

would drastically reduce collisions.

You can also try this for your home or office: hang feathers from horizontal strings tied across the windows. They move in the slightest breeze and warn birds off. I haven't tried this method, but the UV reflecting decals available at WindowAlert.com work very well for this house.

While I miss the summer birds, it is fun to watch for the new arrivals. A bobwhite juvenile spent one September day visiting.

He seemed to evince little fear of humans. I got down in the grass to feed him some chicken scratch, which he was happy to eat staying just out of arm's reach.

Keep the nectar feeders up 'til a few hard frosts. Hummingbirds know when to leave, they don't need to be "encouraged." Remember, you aren't only feeding the ones who bred in your yard all summer, but also the ones on their way down from the North. I leave mine up through October.

One frosty, October morning I was startled to see a hummingbird looking in at the windows -- as if to get my attention? Looking for something he remembered from before? It rested, tired and bedraggled looking, in the bridal veil bush.

I got that sugar water made as fast as I could and ran down the stairs for the feeders that were already put away. As soon as the water was cooled to my body temperature, I hung it out and the hummingbird didn't even wait for me to step away. I think he was here, resting up, for a couple of days, and then he was gone.



Now my feeders stay up through October. I hope yours do, too.

Fox Valley Sierra Group **OUTINGS**

December 17, Saturday

Reforestation Camp Cross Country Ski.

We will be skiing at the Reforestation Camp north of Green Bay. Hot apple cider will be served afterward!! Rich Krieg 920-660-3557

February 25, Saturday

Snowshoe at Mosquito Hill Nature Center, New London.

2 hours of snowshoeing on easy trails along the Wolf River. Rentals available for \$3. (Arrive 15 minutes early if you need to rent). Small donation for trail fee. Bring a sack lunch if you would like to enjoy refueling inside the warm building after the hike. Leader will bring hot chocolate. Nancy Brown-Koeller 920 721-5431 day, 920 830-6625 evening

January 13-16, Friday-Monday X-C Ski AFTERGLOW LAKE RESORT trip, Phelps, WI, in the Wisconsin snow belt.

We have reservations at this family run resort for the coveted MLK weekend. Stay for three nights, ski for 4 days! The Afterglow Lake Resort is located 18 miles north of Eagle River, WI.. Lodging in one side of a duplex style cabin; ski and snowshoe from your front door. Both diagonal/classic and skating tracks are available, and separate snowshoe trails. Trails are excellently maintained; the owner prides himself on his grooming.

There are other trails in the area, if you wish to venture farther. Tubing and ice-skating are also available for those who are interested, as well as a whirlpool and a sauna. And a hole in the ice for the polar plunge for the daring! Fully equipped kitchen; blankets and pillows provided. Lodging costs are about \$120 per person for all three nights. Non-refundable (unless we are able to replace you). Deposit of \$100 due to reserve your spot. (Check their web site website for more information: www.afterglowresort.com) This trip fills up fast, since we have just one cabin. There is the option of "overflow lodging" at a reasonably priced motel in Phelps - info upon request. Maureen Birk 3381 Nicolet Dr. Green Bay, WI 54311, 920-468-7252

Sierra Club outings are offered solely because of the generosity of members willing to lead outings and share the experience with others. If you are interested in learning more please contact the FVSG Outing Chair Rich Krieg at eddyout@gmail.com or 920-660-3557.

Outings - Calling all leaders!

Are you a certified Outings leader? Or do you want to become one? We are trying to identify all of our (Wisconsin based) certified Outings leaders for Groups, Inner City Outings, River Touring and Chapter and National outings. Please contact me, Eric Uram, the Chapter Outings Chair at Eric.Uram@sierraclub.org. I would like your name, contact information, and date(s) when you completed the training and certifications needed. Folks who attended the recent Outings Summit do not need to reply.

If you would like to become a leader, please let me know in your communication. The John Muir Chapter is seeking to build our capacity and offer more Outings in more locations across the state. From exploring urban centers to wilderness experiences, outings go straight to the heart of the Sierra Club - exploring, enjoying and protecting our planet.

Thank you for your response! Eric Uram
Eric.Uram@sierraclub.org or 608.233.9022



FVSG members Jenny Reschke, Jan Moldenhauer and Monny Hjerstedt working our Sierra Club refreshment table at the Bubolz Nature Preserve "Romp in the Swamp" fundraiser. We served hot chocolate, trail mix, and some candy to nearly a thousand people.

Kelly's Kitchen

A Unique Harvest

"I started growing mushrooms." After hearing my statement, most people utter a chuckling an incredulous "What?" You see, I love to eat mushrooms but am afraid of poisoning myself by picking a toxic mushroom while foraging in the woods. The solution? Grow my own!

This past spring I attended a workshop near Peshtigo, Wisconsin and learned the ins and outs of growing mushrooms at home. I proudly brought back two different packages of mushroom spawn one being that of Summer Blue Oyster mushrooms.

For growing our oyster mushrooms I chose to use the "totem method." First, we cut down a live poplar tree with a trunk diameter of about twelve inches. Certain mushrooms will only grow on specific types of wood and oysters happen to like poplars. We were lucky enough to have access to a stand of poplar trees. (Thanks mom and dad!) The trunk was cut into 2-3 foot long sections. Those sections were then cut twice more leaving us with a 3-piece totem.

Next, we placed a large garbage bag on the ground and spread a small circle of spawn in the bottom of the bag. We placed one section of a totem on top of the spawn in the bag. Then we sprinkled spawn on top of that log, added the second section of the totem, placed more spawn, then topped it off with the last piece of wood. The bag was tied up tight and left to sit for a few months. During that time the fresh wood created a moist environment inside the bag and encouraged the fungus to grow. When we opened up the bags a few months later, the wood was completely covered in the white mushroom fungus.



We then removed the totems from the bag and placed them in a location where they could stay and grow. Mushrooms prefer cool and shady conditions but they also need to receive rain. On our farm we have a silo without a top on it so I thought that would be the perfect place for our totems. I was right! In early October I harvested our first batch of Summer Blue oysters. Since then we've had oyster mushrooms quesadillas, burritos, pizza, and pasta. I also dried some to use later in winter soups. The mushrooms will continue to grow on our totems as long as the wood is still providing food for the fungus. Now that people have seen our mushrooms, their mocking "What?" has turned into a "Wow!"



Kelly Ramstack lives in the country near Manawa, Wisconsin with her husband, two border collies, and a handful of mischievous barn cats. Read more tales from the country at <http://adventureswithkelly.blogspot.com>.



Mushroom & Spinach Dairy-Free Lasagna

- 1 Tbsp. Canola oil
- 16 oz. Button mushrooms, sliced
- 9 lasagna noodles
- 14 oz. Package firm tofu
- 1 Tbsp. Olive oil
- 1 1/2 tsp. Salt
- 1/2 tsp. Pepper
- 1 tsp. Basil
- 1 tsp. Oregano
- 2-3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 Tbsp. Nutritional yeast
- 10 oz. Frozen spinach, thawed and drained
- 24 oz. Jar marinara sauce

Sauté mushrooms with canola oil in a large pan until done, about 10 minutes, stirring frequently. Meanwhile, cook noodles according to package directions. Drain and rinse under cold water.

Drain tofu and pat dry. Add to large bowl with olive oil, salt, pepper, basil, oregano, garlic and nutritional yeast. Combine with pastry blender or potato masher. Stir in spinach and mushrooms.

Preheat oven to 350. Add 1/3 cup marinara to bottom of 9x13 dish. Lay down 3 noodles then 1/2 of tofu mix. Then pour on 3/4 cup marinara. Repeat. Add last 3 noodles and sauce. Cover with foil and bake 30 minutes.

Stay up-to-date on the latest environmental news, outings, programs and events by checking out our website at

<http://wisconsin.sierraclub.org/foxvalley>.

Follow FVSG on Facebook and Twitter.

- On Facebook, search for "Fox Valley Sierra Group" then become a fan.
- Find us on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/FVSierraClub>.

Fire up the grill...

Cindy Carter FVSG - Political Chair

Guess what is going to be on the menu of your favorite burger joint soon? POOP burgers. Yes you heard me right, poop burgers. I think it is the Japanese who have found a use for the sludge that accumulates at the bottom of the waste water treatment plants. They don't know what to do with it, supposedly it has lots of protein and can be molded into looking like a steak or hamburger and even colored red like meat so we will never know the difference.

The thinking is it will feed lots of hungry people in 3rd world countries. And since the US is on the path to becoming one of those 3rd world countries, expect to see it soon in your local grocery store. I just wonder: If the FDA doesn't think they should have to label meats that come from cloned animals do you think they will feel compelled to label meats that come from poop? Food for thought...hope you weren't eating while you read this article.

Tar Sands Explained

By Diana Lawrence - FVSG Conservation

We have heard much lately about tar sands and the Keystone XL Pipeline that is proposed to run through much of the Western and Central United States. But what exactly are tar sands?

Tar or oil sands are made up of clay, sand, water and bitumen. Bitumen is a black, thick and oily semi-solid or liquid material made from decomposed organic material over many millions of years. The largest deposits of tar sands are found in Canada and the Middle East with some in the United States and Venezuela. Because it is so thick bitumen cannot be pumped from the earth like other oils and it must be dug up. Strip mining is the most common method to access the tar sands. Fracking is also used to retrieve the bitumen when the sands are too deep for strip mining.

Once extracted it must be processed with water, and lots of it. Hot water is run through the tar sands and then this mixture is agitated. The agitation causes the bitumen to separate and float to the top where it is skimmed off and further processed into a synthetic crude oil by removing the water and other solids.

Two tons of tar sands and several barrels of water for processing equals one barrel of oil or 42 gallons. The water used for processing is then put into large holding lakes where it remains poisonous forever.

A problem with oil from tar sands is that the gasoline made from it has a higher carbon content than the gasoline made from Middle Eastern crude oil. This means that the greenhouse gases formed from burning it in our vehicles are greater in concentration. The European Union has said they will not allow the gasoline made from tar sands oil to be sold because it has 22% more carbon in it and the European Union is trying to lower its carbon emissions.

Canada is on the path to producing 1.8 million barrels a day in the next ten years. This translates to losing another 740,000 acres of boreal forest. Canada's environmental ministry claims it can lower the greenhouse gas emissions of production by 17% in the next 10 years through better production methods.

Sources:

"About Tar Sands" from the Oil, Shale and Tar Sands Programmatic EIS website:

<http://ostseis.anl.gov/guide/tarsands/index.cfm>

Environmental Defence website:

<http://environmentaldefence.ca/blog/eu-not-buying-canadas-green-spin>

"Tar Sands and the Carbon Numbers", the New York Times, August 21 online edition

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/22/opinion/tar-sands-and-the-carbon-numbers.html>



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

All Creatures Great and Small



"Every good thing, great and small, needs defense"

- John Muir

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Senior	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35
Student/Limited Income	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35

Contributions, gifts and dues to Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to Sierra magazine and \$1 for your Chapter newsletters.

Enclose a check and mail to Sierra Club, P.O. Box 421041, Palm Coast, FL 32142-1041

or visit our website www.sierraclub.org F94Q W 1607 1

2011 Autumn Assembly Was a Tremendous Success at Camp Helen Brachman!

Members of the Fox Valley Sierra Group received many favorable compliments about the 2011 Autumn Assembly we hosted at Camp Helen Brachman on October 7-9, 2011. It was encouraging to have so many Sierra Club members come together from throughout Wisconsin to meet one another, share ideas and to discuss common environmental issues and concerns. The presenters, programs, meals, refreshments, musical entertainment and location provided not only a relaxing experience for all participants but also unique learning opportunities.

Everyone appreciated the unusually warm weather and clear starry skies. This allowed Sierra Club members to participate on the early morning hikes and view the moon, Jupiter and other celestial objects on Saturday night.

Persons who elected to camp had an added bonus: no need for a rain fly since rain was not in the forecast!

On Friday night Rebekah Weiss, Aves Wildlife Alliance, started the weekend with her presentation on Wildlife Rehabilitation. She shared firsthand stories of successful animal rehabilitation with behind the scenes photographs and three bird guests.

Representative Penny Bernard Schaber, 57th Assembly District, Wisconsin, Keynote Speaker for the Autumn Assembly, on Saturday morning shared her story of being an environmental activist. "Being an active member of the Sierra Club has been a part of my life since 1981. It has changed my life in more ways than I can say. All for the good!"

David Horst and Jeff Mazanec shared photos and stories from "The Fox-Wisconsin Heritage Paddles: A Journey of Rediscovery." This "Journey of Rediscovery" of the Fox and Wisconsin Rivers was born from an effort to gain National Park Service recognition for the Fox and lower Wisconsin Rivers as well as the Fox-Wisconsin Heritage Parkway.

Tom Boldt, Chief Executive Officer, The Boldt Company, presented "The Future of Green Buildings." The Boldt Company is a leader in constructing environmentally sustainable facilities. Dale Schaber presented Tom Boldt with the John Muir Chapter Torchbearer Award to honor Tom and The Boldt Company for their environmentally sustainable construction methods.

Dave Muench, President, Fox Cities Greenways, Inc. shared information on the development and preservation of Trails and Greenways in the greater Fox Cities region. "Whether it is a path for hiking, trails for biking, or a river for paddling, people need a safe alternative to driving in the Fox Cities." Alan Lawrence on behalf of the Fox Valley Sierra Group presented a check to Dave Muench to help foster trail and greenways development in the Fox Cities.

Scott Stein, spokesperson for the Fox River Cleanup Project, discussed the current status of the Fox River Cleanup Project. The Fox River Cleanup Project is a multi-year project designed to reduce risk to human health and the environment due to the presence of PCBs in the Fox River sediment.

We met Jake Fries and Nancy Carlson on the Beach at Pickerel Lake. Jake, DNR Wildlife Biologist, discussed the wildlife and environment at Pickerel Lake. It is a Wisconsin State Natural Area (No. 227). Nancy, John Muir Chapter Water Sentinel Leader, assisted volunteers with water sampling and testing of water samples at Pickerel Lake.

The remainder of the afternoon was spent with small group meetings (Coal Meeting, Group



Rebekah Weiss, founder of Aves Wildlife Alliance, with her friend, a Barred Owl, at Friday night's presentation.



Representative Penny Bernard Schaber, 57th Assembly District, Wisconsin, delivers the Keynote Address at the Autumn Assembly.



Dale Schaber presents the John Muir Chapter Torchbearer Award to Tom Boldt, Chief Executive Officer, The Boldt Company on Saturday morning.



Alan Lawrence presents a check to Dave Muench, President, Fox Cities Greenways, Inc. for continued Trail projects in the Fox Cities.



Jake Fries, DNR Wildlife Biologist, talking to Sierra Club members about the wildlife and the environment at Pickerel Lake.

Conservation Chair Meeting, Group Treasurer Meeting and Group Chair Meeting). Sierra Club members were encouraged to shop the Silent Auction Items which were organized by Shahla Werner, Jacinda Tessman and Kelly Ramstack.

Alan Lawrence presented Joy Hagen with the John Muir Chapter Good Citizen Award during the Awards Presentations on Saturday night. She and her group (North Fox Cities - Safe Trails and Recreation Supporters or North Stars) were honored for their work to make a section of Cty Road JJ a safe place for students to walk and bike to and from North High School and Fox Valley Lutheran High School.

The evening ended with the Crystal River Trio entertaining us in the folk music traditions of The Kingston Trio and Peter, Paul and Mary.

On Sunday morning, Shahla Werner, John Muir Chapter Director; Elizabeth Ward, John Muir Chapter Conservation Programs Coordinator, and Jennifer Feyerherm, Organizing Representative for Sierra Club's Beyond Coal Campaign, provided information and discussion about building Wisconsin's Clean Energy Future.

The weekend ended with Sierra Club members either hiking the Ice Age Trail at the Skunk and Foster Lakes State Natural Area (No. 312) or touring the Warch Campus Center at Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin, with Tom Boldt as tour guide.

Thanks to everyone who in any way helped make the 2011 Autumn Assembly a great success.

Special thanks to Matt Baumler at Lawrence University for allowing us to tour the Warch Campus Center and to the Fox Communities Credit Union in Appleton for providing pens placed in Autumn Assembly folders.

I need to thank Sally Freckmann, Portage County Ice Age Trail Chapter, and Debbie Krogwold and Butch Siegel, Waupaca County Ice Age Trail Chapter, for providing Ice Age Trail pamphlets, brochures and Ice Age Trail maintenance in the Skunk and Foster Lakes State Natural Area.

I would like to personally thank the following Fox Valley Sierra Group members who were especially involved in planning and organizing the Autumn Assembly: Maureen Birk, Lodging and Registration; Nancy Brown-Koeller, Special FVSG Cake, Meals, Refreshments and Snacks; Kelly Ramstack, FVSG Autumn Assembly Logo, Program Schedule, Presenter Biographies and Evaluation Form; Alan Lawrence, FVSG Website and technical support at the Autumn Assembly; Sally Peck, FVSG Treasurer; Monny Hjerstedt, FVSG Newsletter editor; Darrel Ruechel, organizing the Autumn Assembly folders; Penny Bernard Schaber, tour guide at the Warch Campus Center; and finally, the Fox Valley Sierra Group Executive Board members for their encouragement and support.

The following people at the John Muir Chapter level also helped us with the 2011 Autumn Assembly: Shahla Werner, Elizabeth Ward, and Jacinda Tessman, Chapter Coordinator, who created the 2011 Autumn Assembly Brochure. Thank you for all your help and assistance in organizing and promoting the 2011 Autumn Assembly.

I also need to thank the staff at Camp Helen Brachman: Darryl Woods, Camp Director, Jill Morgan, Associate Camp Director, and Phil Barker, Property Manager for their assistance given us in hosting the Autumn Assembly at Camp Helen Brachman.

See you at the 2012 John Muir Chapter Autumn Assembly hosted by the Southeast Gateway Group located in the Racine/ Kenosha Area.

Dale Schaber
Fox Valley Sierra Group
2011 Autumn Assembly Chair



Nancy Carlson (on left), JMC Water Sentinel Leader, assists Elizabeth Ward with testing of water samples at Pickerel Lake.



John Rummel (on right), President of the Madison Astronomical Society, and his friend, Jeff, assembly their telescopes for viewing the Moon, the planet Jupiter and other celestial objects.



Photo of cake used for dessert on Saturday night.



Alan Lawrence presents the JMC Good Citizen Award to Joy Hagen on Saturday night.

More photos from the 2011 John Muir Chapter Autumn Assembly hosted by the Fox Valley Sierra Group



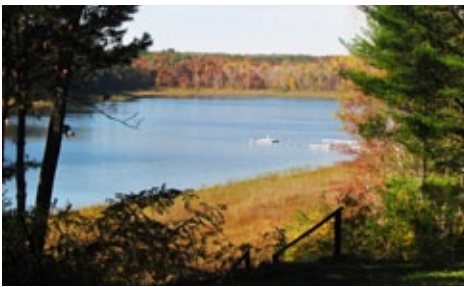
The Crystal River Trio Band entertains Autumn Assembly attendees on Saturday night.



Alan Lawrence giving the Fox Valley Sierra Group update at the Autumn Assembly on Sunday morning.



Jennifer Feyerherm, Sierra Club Field Organizer, recording comments from Sierra Club members during her presentation on “Moving Beyond Coal to Clean Energy in Wisconsin”.



Pickerel Lake State Natural Area (No. 227) at Camp Helen Brachman.



Shahla Werner, John Muir Chapter Director, collecting winning bids at the Silent Auction Fundraiser.



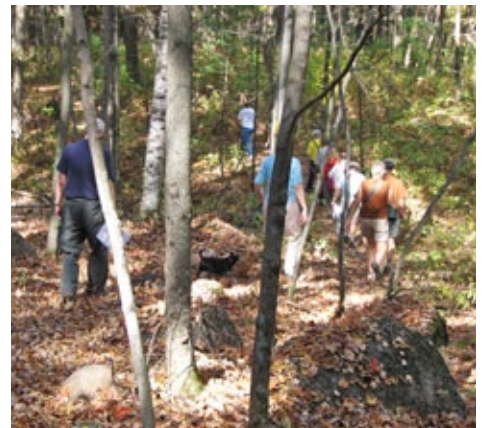
Welcome sign as you enter Camp Helen Brachman.



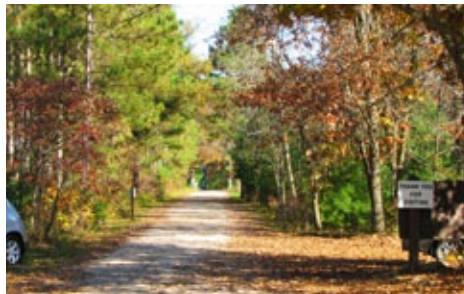
Rosenblum Lodge/Dining Hall at Camp Helen Brachman.



Elizabeth Ward, John Muir Chapter Conservation Programs Coordinator, recording comments from Sierra Club members during Jennifer Feyerherm’s presentation on “Moving Beyond Coal to Clean Energy in Wisconsin”.



Hiking the Skunk and Foster Lakes State National Area (No. 312) after the Autumn Assembly at Camp Helen Brachman.



Autumn Scene as you leave Camp Helen Brachman..

**Next Newsletter Deadline for submitting materials
for the February thru April Issue - January 15th.**

AREA NATURE CENTERS

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- Kaukauna
- (920) 766-4733
- <http://www.1000islandsenvironmentalcenter.com/>

Bay Beach Wildlife Sanctuary

- Green Bay
- (920) 391-3671
- <http://www.baybeachwildlife.com/>

Brillion Nature Center

- (920) 756-3591
- www.brillionnaturecenter.net

Bubolz Nature Preserve

- Appleton
- (920) 731-6041
- www.bubolzpreserve.org

Fallen Timbers Environmental Center

- Black Creek
- (920) 984-3700
- http://www.cesa6.k12.wi.us/products_services/fallentimbers/

Florence Wild Rivers Interpretive Center

- Fish Creek
- (920) 868-3528
- <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/Org/land/parks/specific/peninsula/nature/center.html>

Heckrodt Wetland Reserve

- Menasha
- (920) 720-9349
- www.heckrodtwetland.com

Ledge View Nature Center

- Chilton
- (920) 849-7094
- www.co.calumet.wi.us/departments2.ims?dept_id=70

Mosquito Hill Nature Center

- New London
- (920) 779-6433
- www.mosquitohill.com

Navarino Nature Center

- Shiocton
- (715) 758-6999
- www.navarino.org

Ridges Sanctuary

- Baileys Harbor
- (920) 839-2802
- www.ridgesanctuary.org

White Cedar Nature Center

- Fish Creek
- (920) 868-3528
- <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/Org/land/parks/specific/peninsula/nature/center.html>

Whitefish Dunes Park Nature Center

- Door County
- (920) 8232400
- <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/Org/land/parks/specific/peninsula/nature/center.html>

Woodland Dunes Nature Center

- Manitowoc
- (920)793-4007
- www.woodlanddunes.org

FVSG Environmental Award Awarded to John Gremmer

The Fox Valley Sierra Group gives an award, annually, to a person or organization in northeastern Wisconsin. The purpose of the Environmental Award is to recognize and honor individuals or organizations that have achieved significant benefits to the environment from their efforts and contributions.

The ExCom voted to accept Jan Moldenhauer's nomination as our winner. Her essay follows:

The John Gremmer I know is a quiet man, who has lived a full life here in the midwest. Born, raised, went to school, was probably an athlete, and spent his working life teaching, coaching, and most probably fishing a whole lot. I met him for the first time when I took a fly tying class in Winneconne, and he was the instructor. To wind feathers and beads and corks around a hook that is less than a half an inch long, is not easy, but he made it seem that way. Mixed in were tales of places to fish, humorous happenings, and pictures of fish. All at once, there was a fly in the vise in front of you! Amazing.

It was not just the tying of flies, but the search for things that are unmentionable in the water. You would be surprised and perhaps warned off of swimming in anything but a chlorinated pool if you knew that all those little specks in the water are living things! Along with representatives from the DNR, John trained many observers in the local Trout Unlimited chapter in how to measure clarity, oxygen content, bugs present, flow, and other things that told tales of the health of the streams visited. Many of the things that are in the water are extremely small, and he got grants for tools to help in identification, plus lent his expertise to anyone who asked. Not only did he help train enthusiastic fisherman and women, he managed to get people to write grants and get more equipment for the task. The mark of a true leader is how many people he can get to lead themselves and perform tasks that they never thought they could do. The streams in Central Wisconsin are safer because of his dedication.

He can also write for publication, to get others involved, to lead, and all this in quiet voice, a glint of humor, and search for perfection, PLUS a good fish or two. John is retired officially from our education system for a few years, but it hasn't stopped him from sharing his knowledge and affection for clean, clear water. He is a caretaker and a leader with a fishing rod as his magic wand, and a true candidate for our environmental award.

Fox Valley Sierra Group
of the John Muir Chapter of the Sierra Club

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It's Our Nature

Newsletter of the Fox Valley Sierra Group of the John Muir Chapter of the Sierra Club Vol. 11 Issue 4

The Good Old Days ...Let's Make Them Better Jan Moldenhauer FVSG

Sunrise, sunset, swiftly flow the days....I don't remember growing older, the song played on my car radio as I left Bubolz Romp in the Swamp. The sun was pouring in my car, and I was comfortable and relaxed because I had done a little good this day. Nothing major that you would beat a drum over, but a little bit. For some reason that made me think of the 'good old days'. The days when on a summer afternoon, Uncle Paulie would come over with his concertina, and sit under the elm in the backyard and play for the whole neighborhood, while we all sat around and drank cold lemonade. The good old days when grandpa lost some of his fingers at work, and they told him the name of a good doctor, and assured him his job would be waiting when he got well again. He got well fast, with nine children to support. The good old days when you helped out your neighbor if you could. Watched my clothes being worn by many girls in my church because I grew fast. Just a little thing. Sometimes a meal shared with someone or a family that needed it more than we did. There weren't many organizations then to help out, we were all poor.

The good old days when a river in Ohio burned for days because there was so much oil in it. When I warned my sailors not to swim in Lake Winnebago because they might get a rash from whatever was in it. They didn't believe me until one of them accidentally fell in and turned bright red. We sent him to the hospital. I think it was the water that literally turned me on.

I love to swim outdoors, and tried to swim across all the lakes in one of the counties up north when I was a camp counselor. So many lakes were polluted and the rivers turned poisonous right before my eyes

in the good old days. Then we got engineers, who figured out how to clean up their act, or in some cases hide it. Kindness had to have an organization, and lots of people still needed help. Over the years, slowly but surely, Wisconsin passed laws to protect all of us, for water, air, education, pensions, benefits at the workplace if injured.

Now we have another time when jobs are at a premium. Lots of people are looking, but the simple good paying jobs are no longer there. Machines are automated, programmed and can whiz along day and night without rest. Those good paying jobs of yesteryear are gone, and will not return. We have to find new skills. We need a different kind of education to focus on that need. Educators are just now coming to realize that. It will come with new skills and information. We have thousands of organizations to take the place of being a good neighbor, but the thing is, you have to join. Far too few are bearing the burden of the many. An hour here and there to visit someone in a nursing home, to root garlic mustard from our parks, to plant native plants along a trail, to get out of doors, you must commit. An hour to read the newspaper, and realize that our state is losing its reputation for conservation.

The present government is ramming through laws that will take away protection of our waterways, protection of our air, all in the name of more jobs, and will rush us right back to the bad parts of the good old days. Think about it. We went to Madison last week to complain about a mining bill. The senators we met hadn't even seen it yet, but it is going to be voted on this week, after only one public session. The bill was delivered to everyone last Thursday. I guess I think about how long it took to get these laws in place, and how quickly they can fall. Get on your phones and call, that is the best part about living here, a responsive government. If they hear us.....