

lt's Our Nature

Newsletter of the Fox Valley Sierra Group of the John Muir Chapter of the Sierra Club Vol. 14 Issue 1

Fox Valley Sierra Group Programs

February 13, 2014 7:00 PM *Air Quality & Lobby Day* Phil Nolan will present an air quality policy of containing and recycling industrial air emissions.

Plus, a representative from the League of Conservation Voters will update us on the recent Lobby Day activities.

March 13, 2014 7:00 PM Butterfly Gardens

Jack Voight from Butterfly Gardens of Wisconsin, Wisconsin's largest butterfly house & maze, will educate and encourage us to have a backyard butterfly garden. He will tell us how to attract butterflies, by growing prairie butterfly nectar and host plants.

April 10, 2014 *Organic Lawn Care*

Troy Reissmann from Valley Organics will help us keep our lawn green the green way.

Check our website for updates http://wisconsin.sierraclub.org/foxvalley

All programs are held at the wheelchair accessible Gordon Bubolz Nature Preserve, 4815 N. Lynndale Drive (County A) in Appleton, Wisconsin and are free and open to the public.

Please join us!

From the Chair January 2014, Alan Lawrence, FVSG Chair

I thought I'd use this column to highlight environmental disasters carelessly caused by people. Actually, that's a huge topic and impossible to really cover. But I wanted to focus on it.

This past week, as I write my column, the news is about a chemical spill in West Virginia that contaminated the water supply for 300,000 people in nine counties. This was certainly inconvenient and expensive to the affected residents. Chemicals had leaked out of a large tank and flowed into a river just above a drinking water plant. Authorities told residents to stop using their water for everything except flushing toilets, and to watch for symptoms of exposure such as skin irritation, nausea, vomiting or wheezing.



Having experienced two days last summer when local tornadoes knocked out our electricity I have some idea how inconvenient this would be. Fortunately we still had clean running water while we were without electricity. And, the outcome was bound to be short-lived and finite. Electricity was eventually restored. But with poisoned water in your pipes how confident could you be that you had adequately flushed your system with clean water?

Oil spills have become a regular feature of our news. We can think of the March 2013 pipeline spill in Mayflower, Arkansas. The community residents had no idea that an oil pipeline was buried beneath their back yards until oil gushed to the surface and made a toxic river through yards and down the street to a river. Thousands of barrels of heavy Canadian crude contaminated property and environment and forced residents to suddenly leave their homes. We can think of the July 2011 pipeline oil spill into the Yellowstone River in Montana when a pipe buried beneath the river burst. Remember the July 2010 oil spill in Michigan when a pipeline burst and flowed into Talmadge Creek, a tributary of the Kalamazoo River. The pipeline break resulted in the largest on-land oil spill, and

one of the costliest spills, in U.S. history. The pipeline carries diluted bitumen (dilbit), a heavy crude oil from Canada's Athabasca oil sands.

And think about the Keystone XL Pipeline that industry really wants to build across our country and across fragile and precious environments to carry tar sands oil from Canada to refineries along the Gulf of Mexico. There have been thousands of pipeline incidents in recent years causing many injuries and fatalities and billions of dollars of damage.

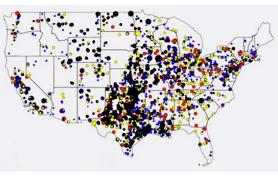
Think about the Deepwater Horizon oil spill (also referred to as the BP oil spill) in April 2010 that leaked out of control for 87 days under a mile of ocean water. Then think about all the drilling we do for oil and gas and the further risks done with fracking and injected chemicals.

Think about deep mines, like the proposed Gogebic Taconite Mine in northwestern Wisconsin. Think what it will expose, and think about groundwater that it will damage.

Think about ground water extraction, and how that is depleting aquifers and causing myriad problems.

Think about poisoning in Love Canal in New York. Remember the Erin Brockovich story, dramatized into a movie, where industrial waste was sickening a community. Think about the PCBs in our own Fox River and the expensive \$1 Billion cleanup. Think about carbon dioxide and the problem of global warming. There quite literally are thousands more examples of harmful environmental things we have done to ourselves.

Rather than ending with a hopelessly long list I'd like to



Nearly 8000 pipeline incidents since 1986



Hercules 265 Rig fire that caused a collapse of the drill floor and derrick after an explosion in the Gulf of Mexico, July 2013.



Landslide at Kennecott Copper Bingham Canyon Mine, April 2013, in Bingham Canyon, Utah.

suggest that some of these were truly unexpected accidents. But if we allow ourselves to learn from past mistakes then we should be able to minimize future incidents.

My frustration is with industry insisting that they can do things safely and refusing to comply with regulations and environmental impact studies. It is these regulations and studies that offer the hope that we can do things better and safer.

I am especially frustrated when companies like Gogebic Taconite are incorporated as Limited Liability Corporations. They do not want regulations and studies, and they are limited from the financial consequences of disasters they cause.

You can tell your legislators what you think about responsible regulations and environmental safety. In fact, on February 11 you have the opportunity to travel to Madison to meet with your Wisconsin legislators for Conservation Lobby Day. Organized by the Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters this event draws hundreds of conservation and environmental activists from around the state. They're even providing a bus to help us attend, with pickups in Algoma, DePere, Appleton and Oshkosh.

(See http://conservationvoters.org/ for more information.)

Thanks for reading my comments. As leader of our group I welcome your feedback.

Alan Lawrence, 920-730-9515 or alan_lawrence99@yahoo.com

A Fellow Sierra Member writes the president concerning the Keystone Pipeline

August 24, 2013 Make Teddy Roosevelt Proud!

President Barrack Obama The White House Washington, DC 20500

Dear President,

There is a question as to the Keystone Pipeline. I have a plan that should satisfy those with the most interest in this project.

First, because it is Canadian Oil, it should be able to travel through Canada. Send it east [north of any stream flowing into the Great Lakes – because the pristine fresh waters there are the most precious resource on earth]. It would flow through Cree Territory, [for when the Canadians put up a dam to flood the area], they showed no concern for their fellow Canadians.

Send it east into Quebec – I'm sure [after the run away railroad oil cars] Quebec would welcome a pipeline. Then send it south along the Hudson River. The cadets at West Point could gain experience guarding it against terrorist extremists. Since the pipe line operators keep claiming that it is perfectly safe with no problems of spillage, test them by allowing it to go in the Catskill Mountains [New York City's water supply]. Make sure that Wall Street gets to see it – they are the ones who will profit from it.

Then go north on to Philadelphia. Since the Liberty Bell has a crack in it, remind yourself that a perfect union whether it's bells or equal justice under the law - is always a goal. Dumping oil on middle America is counter to this ideal. Make Chevy Chase part of the route. Since the average annual income there is two million per household - they can see their investment first hand. Make sure, in Washington, D.C., that the State Department gets its "dirty oil". They have [with no ecological input] decided that Canadian tar sand oil is OK in the United States. Make sure Congress also gets to see it. They take donations from oil companies to allow the ruin of people's properties along the pipe lines. A little oil in the Tidal Basin would give it a glitter that tourists might enjoy. Finally, make sure it goes through the Pentagon – as they can also help protect it - as it flows south to Newport News, Virginia -[where the Chinese and Brazilians can get it].

Why should the people of Little Rock, Arkansas or Washington County, Wisconsin be ruined. They're not owners or investors – only innocent citizens hoping for fairness from a democratically elected president.

November 9, 2013

Dear President,

I sent you a letter on August 24th regarding a proposal to send the Keystone Pipeline down the Hudson River Valley and, so far, I have not had a reply. I understand you're busy trying to fix the glitches in the "Affordable Care Act", so my thoughts might not have been looked into.

I am concerned about sending that pipeline through the Catskill Mountain's. Since it is the source of fresh water for the New York City, it would be a terrible tragedy for all those people if a pipeline broke. This is doubly concerning after the latest oil spill on that wheat farm on North Dakota – 20,000 barrels on land that will never produce wheat again. Also, I note that they are tearing down the homes in Mayflower, Arkansas were the pipeline broke and flowed down the streets. When you combine that with the earlier pipeline breaks in Alaska, the Yellowstone River near Billings, Montana, the Kalamazoo River in Michigan, and the gas line break in Washington County, Wisconsin that has ruined 92 household fresh water wells, something must be done to assure that people have fresh water.

For New York City, water could come from Lake Erie. A pipe line could go north to Albany and then up the Mohawk River to Niagara Falls Area. To assure that the water would be safe for human consumption, a select Committee could be set up to hold hearings – made up of the biggest supporters of the Keystone Plan. They could take annual trips over the falls in a barrel. I'm not sure the "hearing" would improve – but their understanding that pipelines affect ordinary citizens would echo.

In case there are some congressmen making the barrel trip, they could go ever the Canadian part of the Falls to get Junket Credit. If you need a name for this project, I would call it Eerie Channel. You might 'drop this off' with Anita Dunn so she can be the first to try the Falls.

Thank you for your consideration, Allan J, Mortenson MA and MS

THE VALUE OF VOLUNTEERING

Have you ever thought about the value of the volunteer work that you do? Some people volunteer more than others, have more available time, and have the physical ability to do the volunteer work. Volunteering not only makes us feel better about ourselves but we also know we are doing our part to make our community a better place to live.

I personally know a lot about the Ice Age Trail and am aware of the thousands of hours that volunteers spend each year building or maintaining the Trail. Many Sierra Club members can be proud of being among those who volunteer on the Trail. When the Ice

Age National Scenic Trail is eventually completed in Wisconsin, it will be close to 1,200 miles long. The Trail presently includes more than 630 miles open to the public for walking, hiking, backpacking, and snowshoeing as it meanders from generally Door County through the northern and southern units of the Kettle Moraine and through Rock and Dane and Waupaca and Langlade Counties and then west to St. Croix Falls in Polk County. Ice Age Trail volunteers devote approximately 70,000 hours in a year's time on the I am the Fox Valley Sierra Trail. Group's Ice Age Trail Coordinator. Our Fox Valley Sierra Group has had a long history of helping to maintain and build the trail. Dale Schaber, as the former FVSG-IAT coordinator, is to be given great credit for his many years of giving our chapter opportunities to volunteer on the Trail.

The Ice Age National Scenic Trail generally follows the end moraines of the most recent glaciations, although it diverges from them in several areas to include other features of the glacial landscape and a glimpse of the Driftless Area. The Ice Age Trail Alliance was established in 1958, and the Ice Age Trail is lengthened through Wisconsin's hills and valleys by many miles each year. Volunteers are the heart, soul, hands and backbone of the Trail and

help to add miles to the Trail each year.

The hours you volunteer on the Ice Age Trail, through its partnering with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the National Park Service, among others, are added up and multiplied by a theoretical value of all

those hours. Those hours and that theoretical value indirectly help to secure funding for the Trail from both public and private sources. So the hours you spend maintaining the Trail do have value not only to yourself but to the Trail.

Our Fox Valley Sierra Group will again be volunteering on the Trail this year within Portage and Waupaca Counties as well as either Door, Kewaunee, or Manitowoc Counties. I know I would appreciate your joining us on the Trail, but the Ice Age Trail would also appreciate your work on the Trail as well. You'll feel good about getting outdoors and about the volunteering you are doing. So, when you consider whether to volunteer on the Trail this year or volunteer with another organization, remember that your time is valuable. We all desire to make our community a better place to live.

Darrel Ruechel/FVSG-IAT Coordinator

Community Wide Earth Day Celebration at the ReStore in April, 2014

The Greater Fox Cities Area Habitat for Humanity ReStore is again sponsoring the Fox Cities Community Wide Earth Day Celebration at the ReStore in April, 2014. Organizers are currently working on a date for the Celebration. As soon as the date is set we will let you know. The ReStore is located at 3000 East College Avenue in Appleton, Wisconsin. The Earth Day Celebration is free for the whole family. Come rain or come shine!

Featured at the Earth Day Celebration will be 50 earth-friendly local vendors and exhibitors, children's activities and organic and locally grown food. Participants can attend educational forums being presented during the Earth Day event.

More information about the Earth Day Celebration will be found on the ReStore website: www.appletonrestore. org. Click on the Earth Day link found on the ReStore main page.

We are also asking for people to help staff the Fox Valley Sierra Group table during the Earth Day celebration. Contact Dale Schaber at dschaber@ athenet.net or 920-739-6041 if you are interested or want more information about volunteering your time at the ReStore Earth Day Celebration.

Appleton Earth Day Volunteers Needed!

As usual, Fox Valley Sierra Group members will be participating in and helping to organize some Earth Day events. If you would like to help us with Appleton's Earth Day events, please contact Dale Schaber, 920-739-6041, dschaber@athenet.net.



Fox Valley Sierra Group OUTINGS

Feb. 9, Sunday Snowshoeing at Mosquito Hill Nature Center New London

Winter brings frozen wetlands an that means a chance to see lowlands of the Wolf River not usually accessible. They turn into frosty wonderland trails and are a pleasant, easy trek on snowshoes. Meet in the Nature Center building for about a 2-hour hike. Rental available. Arrive 15 minutes early if you are renting. Bring a sandwich if you'd like to stay for late lunch afterwards. Leader will bring hot chocolate. Fee: Donation for trail use. (rental additional.) Leader Nancy Brown-Koeller, 715 853-6625.

Feb. 23, Sunday

Snowshoeing at Navarino Nature Center, Navarino

Meet in the Nature Center building for about a 3 hour hike. Arrive 15 minutes early if you are renting. Bring a sandwich if you'd like to stay for late lunch afterwards. Leader will bring hot chocolate. Fee: Donation for trail use. (rental additional.) Leader Nancy Brown-Koeller, 715 853-6625.



May 31, Saturday Ice Age Trail Work Day in Portage County

Our Fox Valley Sierra Group will once again be doing minor trail maintenance on the Ice Age Trail in Portage County on May 31. This service project will begin at about 9:30. Tools will be provided. However, if you wish to bring any pruning tools, etc., feel free to do so. Spring is a nice time to be out in nature, and this work day will also give us an opportunity to assist the Portage County Ice Age Trail chapter with trail maintenance. Bring a lunch, water, work gloves,

and mosquito and tick repellent to this outing. We will stop for ice cream mid afternoon. For head-count purposes, location to meet, ride consolidation, and information, contact Darrel Ruechel, FVSG IATA coordinator, 920-993-0903, r7dairl@yahoo.com.

April or May Garlic Mustard Pulling

Pull garlic mustard at High Cliff State Park and at Memorial Park in Combined Locks, Wisconsin. All depends on the weather and how fast the garlic mustard grows. Call early to be put on the garlic mustard pullers list and to be contacted about specific dates and times. Contact Dale Schaber, 920-739-6041 or dschaber@athenet.net.

Vol. 14 Issue 1 February- April. 2014. *It's Our Nature* is published four times a year by the Fox Valley Sierra Group, P.O. Box 264, Appleton, WI 54912-0264. Subscription included with Sierra Club membership dues. Get outside and join us on one of our outings this winter! They are a great way to meet other outdoor enthusiasts. Outings are open to members and nonmembers alike. In order to participate, sign up at one of our general meetings or contact the outings leader directly.

Next Newsletter Deadline for submitting materials -March 15th -April thru June Issue.

Union Sand Mine Appeal Hearings Delayed

The Town of Union sand mine appeal hearings were scheduled to begin in January and continue through February but there has been a setback. The Waupaca County Planning & Zoning Department still has not completed the transcripts from the November 2012 hearing on the proposed sand mine. The appeal paperwork was filed by the citizen's group Preserve Waupaca County on June 6, 2013 but six months later, the transcripts are still not complete. New dates for the hearings will eventually be set.

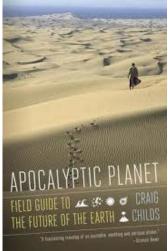
For the backstory on the Union mine please visit the FVSG Sand Mine webpage: http://wisconsin. sierraclub.org/foxvalley/SandMines.html

Follow "Preserve Waupaca County" on Facebook for the latest updates.

Green Book Club

The next meeting of the "Green Book Club" is March 12. We will be meeting at 6:30 PM at "The Attic" coffee house in Green Bay.

Our current selection is "Apocalyptic Planet: Field Guide to the Everending Earth" by Craig Childs. This book was the winner of the Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute's 2013 Nature Writing Award. It is a highly recommended read about the beauty, past, and future of the Earth. You can obtain a copy with a "Green Book Club Discount" at "The Reader's



Meeting Ideas?

Over the years we've had meetings featuring orchids, gardening, canoe camping, wildlife, birds, water issues, air quaility issues, mining issues, travel to interesting places, plus some fun meetings such as picnics and campfires.

Do you have any ideas for meetings or speakers you would like in the future?

Contact ANY of our board members and let us know.



Mary from Going to Pot Orchids spoke at our November meeting

Loft" bookstore in Green Bay. We hope you can join us for the discussion!

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.

Conservation Lobby Day 2014

On Conservation Lobby Day, conservation voters - like you - will come from every corner of Wisconsin to share their natural resource values (and expectations) with their state legislators in Madison.

In 2014, there will be big and important (some good, some bad) conservation issues on the move, which is why you need to be there! When we stand together, good things happen! Save the date for Tuesday, February 11, 2014.

On Conservation Lobby Day, you can expect to:

Get the inside scoop on top conservation issues and state politics.

- Meet one-on-one with your state Senator and Representative.
- Network, strategize, and make new friends with hundreds of other conservation-minded citizens from across the state.
- Attend trainings presented by professionals on everything from natural resource issues to citizen advocacy.

Registration will begin at 9:00 a.m. and the program will start promptly at 10:00 a.m.



Please log on to http://conservationvoters.org/ or for any questions contact Tom Stolp, Field Director: tom@conservationvoters.org or call 414-921-0084.

An RSVP is required in order to attend. After you register, a local WLCV organizer will follow up to make sure you have the information you need to have a great (and effective) day!

We are pleased to offer Conservation Lobby Day at no cost to you. However, the day does not come without costs. Your donation of \$60 will offset the cost of one participant. Please consider donating, so we can continue to offer this important day free of charge.

There is a bus ride option this year catching the bus in Algoma, De Pere, Appleton or Oshkosh. Register for the event and bus at the ConservationVoters.org website.

Welcome New Members

er i J Rose John Wilson e Beuttenmueller oria Hughes hael Weidert avia ianne Small beth Dorn n Bay ert Bjork Holvenstot ly Kinn rles Penny en Phetteplace John Wilson ert Van Den Elzen oria Hughes n Jung d Naze Schwartz а cy Lueddecke es Ultang /ega an Smith onne Malek

Fox Valley Sierra Group Of The John Muir Chapter Of The Sierra Club

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lce Age Trail

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Standard

Life

Senior

Supporting

Contributing

Student/Limited Income

Hospitality Assistant

Sara Hillestad shillestad@new.rr.com



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