



It's Our Nature

Newsletter of the Fox Valley Sierra Group of the John Muir Chapter of the Sierra Club Vol. 19 Issue 1

Fox Valley Sierra Group Programs

April 11, 2019 - 7:00

Girl Scout Building

Wisconsin Wetlands Association

The Wisconsin Wetlands Association is dedicated to the protection, restoration, and enjoyment of wetlands and associated ecosystems. The association uses science-based programs, education, and advocacy to fulfill its mission. 2019 is the fiftieth anniversary of the Wisconsin Wetlands Alliance. Director Tracy Hames will give a presentation on fifty years of wetland preservation in Wisconsin.

May 9, 2019 - 7:00

Girl Scout Building

"Wisconsin Loves Parks" & Sierra Club Outings

A High Cliff State Park official will report on the status of the state parks and give us some first-hand information on how budget cuts have affected the parks over time. We will share our own experiences in the parks and explore the outing opportunities our Fox Valley Sierra Group and Sierra Club National have to offer.

June 13, 2019 - 7:00

Girl Scout Building

"Right to Harm"

Lynn and Nancy Utesch have been educating the public and elected officials about the harm large industrial farms are doing to rural communities and our environment. They will be showing a documentary that has recently been released titled "Right to Harm". The movie takes an in depth look at industrial farms throughout our country and how they affect local communities. A question and answer session will follow the movie.

July - No Meeting

August 8, 2019 - 6:00

Plamann Park - Chris Brandt Shelter Summer Picnic

Come share your summer with fellow Sierrans. Grill will be provided. Bring a dish to pass, your own meat for grilling, beverages, and place setting.

From the Chair

March 2019, By Alan Lawrence

The 100th anniversary of Grand Canyon National Park was February 26 and will be celebrated all this year. This is a fantastic place, serving more than six million visitors each year (more than the population of Wisconsin). Even if we only had this one National Park, I would agree with the title of Ken Burns' documentary miniseries entitled, "The National Parks: America's Best Idea". Turns out this is not even the oldest park in our system. We own a lot of beautiful places worth preserving.

It was interesting that during the Government Shutdown of December and January a major focus was on the parks that were closed. And, unfortunately, severe vandalism occurred at parks, like Joshua Tree, because they were unprotected. I hope some lessons were learned.

This week, as I write my column, has been interesting. On Monday President Trump proposed devastating budget cuts to the National Park Service and the Land and Water Conservation Fund. But on Tuesday he signed into law a massive public lands bill that permanently reauthorizes the fund. That's an important fund that has steered revenue from oil and gas leases to conservation of lands in 40,000 parks, monuments and historic sites. A December newspaper clipping on my desk cleverly named, "Parks program on the rocks," feared the loss of this fund.

Wisconsin has its own Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program. It is funded differently, but very efficiently preserves lands across Wisconsin. Funding for it was drastically cut in recent years by our past Governor and is set to expire in 2020. I had the privilege in February to speak to the Outagamie County Board of Supervisors and urge them to pass Resolution 157, supporting our stewardship program. It passed unanimously. The Resolution was to be forwarded to the Legislature, the Governor, and to all Wisconsin Counties. It is a sign that the people value our public spaces.

continued of page 7.....



Plan on attending our Earth Day Hike this April 20th.

The Girl Scout Service Building, 4815 North Lynndale Dr., Appleton, WI.
Bubolz Nature Preserve 4693 North Lynndale Dr., Appleton, WI.
They share the same driveway.

The 2019 Loop the Lake Hike

We are proceeding per our committee's plan, all the major items are completed and we are in the home stretch. Our club is fortunate to have had numerous sponsors provide financial, graphic art, marketing assistance, a large tent for the registration area, and healthy snacks for the participants. Per Sierra Club risk management, we are required to purchase a supplemental insurance policy from national for the event. The insurance policy was purchased, certificates of insurance were issued to the Cities of Neenah, Menasha, and the Village of Fox Crossing. We are currently reaching out to non-profits, small businesses, and outdoor groups to table in Fritse Park. The hike will be free to all participants and we are planning a picnic lunch for all volunteers. We will be keeping our members informed as the preparations are finalized. More Sierra Club volunteers will be needed than in previous years. If you have a few hours Saturday morning, April 20, please join us in making this another successful Sierra Club event.

Contact Committee Chair John Engel,
johnwilliamengel@gmail.com (920)475-1472.

After the Loop the Lake Earth Day Hike in the morning come on over to Mosquito Hill in the evening for some great music!



Green Apple Folk Music Society
presents an

EARTH DAY

HOOT



Join us as a variety of performers celebrate the earth with folk, acoustic, and traditional music.

- family & child friendly event
- intermission treats

| | |
|------------------|---|
| When: | Saturday, April 20. 7:00 PM |
| Where: | Mosquito Hill Nature Center New London |
| Donation: | \$5 for adults, kids free (suggested) |

CO-SPONSORED BY:

Sierra Club Fox Valley Group

Citizens' Climate Lobby - Appleton/Fox Cities



www.greenapplefolkmusic.org * Facebook: Green Apple Folk Music Society

Essity is happy to support the Fox Valley Sierra Club and the Loop the Lake Earth Day Hike

Essity is a leading global hygiene and health company dedicated to improving well-being through products and solutions, essentials for everyday life. Essity manufactures the Torq brand of professional hygiene products, which include dispensing systems, paper towels, bath tissue, napkins, skin care, industrial and kitchen wipers and Internet of Things (IoT) solutions used in professional settings like restaurants, healthcare facilities, offices, schools and industries.



With more than 47,000 employees worldwide and over 900 employees here in the Fox Cities region, Essity's sustainable business model creates value for people and nature.

Globally, Essity is a United Nations Global Compact signatory and focuses on six of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals. Essity has been recognized by the Dow Jones Sustainability Index, the CDP A List for water and forests, and the Global 100 by Corporate Knights among many others.

Locally, Essity employees stay very involved in the local communities on projects such as Environmental Education Grants, composting programs, sponsoring Walking and Biking Trails and Healthy Kids events, Earth Week education and activities, E-waste events, Habitat for Humanity, plastic cap to bench recycling programs for local youth groups, Fox-Wolf Annual Watershed Cleanup, etc.

Essity is proud of their long history in the Fox Cities and is happy to support the Fox Valley Sierra Club and the Loop the Lake Earth Day Hike to continue to further conservation efforts in this beautiful area where we raise our families.

Evergreen Credit Union is a proud sponsor of the Sierra Club Earth Day Hike!

Come visit us on West American Drive in Neenah – you'll know it is our building by the 198-panel solar array on top. Our solar array produces over 85% of our annual electricity demand and we purchase the rest from renewable sources, meaning we run on 100% renewable energy. We're also a Zero Waste facility meaning we divert 90% or more of our waste from the landfill, including composting on site. These are just a few things we do to be environmentally responsible and we'd love to tell you more in person.



From our unique solar loans to our special rates for hybrid and electric vehicles, we have the solutions to help you love the planet too. We've also sponsored local community projects such as the Bike Fix-it Station at Fritse Park. Stop by and check it out as you Loop the Lake for Earth Day! You can also visit our booth on April 20rd to enter for your chance to win a bike helmet in either youth or adult size.

Evergreen Credit Union is a full-service financial institution serving Winnebago, Outagamie, Calumet, Waupaca, and Waushara counties with an environmental mission. Visit our website at www.evergreencu.com for more information or give us a call at (920) 729-2999.



Three Cities - One Community
Neenah • Menasha • Fox Crossing

SATURDAY, APRIL 20, 2019

**Celebrate Earth Day with this
 Free, Fun Event for the Whole Family!**

Rain/Severe Weather Date April 27

**Walk all or some of the
 stroller-friendly 3.5 mile
 Loop the Lake Trail**

**Visit informational tables at
 Fritse Park to learn about our
 Sponsors, Local Non-profits
 and Outdoor Self-Powered
 Recreation.**

**Registration/Start
 9:00-10:30 a.m.
 Arrowhead Park
 355 Millview Dr., Neenah
 Cost: FREE!**

**Preregistration Preferred.
sierraclub.org/wisconsin/fox-valley**



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Pick 'n Save



Fox Valley Sierra Group OUTINGS

April 20, Saturday 9:00-12:00

Loop the Lake Earth Day Hike

See details on page 3

April 27-28, Saturday - Sunday

Canoe the Little Wolf and nearby river, Class II; Car Camp

Runnable when the water is up in the spring, these two small, scenic creeks are a lot of fun. There are two drops on the Robinson that can be portaged. We'll pick up spring thaw trash as we go, leaving the stream in better shape for those who follow. Wet or dry suit required for this early season trip. Contact Phillip Johnsrud: 715-572-9884, johnsrud@tds.net

May 11, Saturday

"Wisconsin Loves Parks" at High Cliff State Park

Celebrate Wisconsin Parks. Details to come. See article on next page. Picnic, speakers, service project and hikes. Check the Sierra Club events calendar, the Fox Valley Sierra Group website, Facebook or contact Monny Hjerstedt: 920-558-0013, mhjerstedt17@gmail.com

May 10-12, Friday Evening - Sunday

Group Camping at High Cliff State Park

We will enjoy the outdoors together at a group campsite and participate in the celebration and service project on Saturday. Limit of 40 at group site. Cost approx. \$15.

Sign up deadline May 6th. Contact Monny Hjerstedt: call or text 920-558-0013, mhjerstedt17@gmail.com

May 18, Saturday

Bike Ride, Shawano Country Roads

Scenic country bike route, about 20 miles. Gently rolling hills. Free snack at the Shawano Lake Park. Optional BYO lunch for picnic in park afterwards. Bathroom, water, off-road parking available. Contact Nancy Brown-Koeller: 715-853-6625, nancybrownkoeller@yahoo.com

June 1-2 Wolf River

WHITEWATER CANOE CLINIC (Solo and Tandem)

Are you comfortable canoeing in rivers and would like to develop or practice some beginning whitewater canoeing skills? Then the Chapter's "River Touring Section" whitewater canoe clinic is for you. For complete details, contact Rich Krieg, 920-660-3557, richkrieg@new.rr.com

June 1, Saturday

National Trails Day - Hike the Ice Age Trail near Hartman Creek State Park

Directions and details to be determined. Hike will start at 9 a.m.. Bring water and lunch. Four to six miles. Contact Phil hikerphil@icloud.com

June 8, Saturday

Fish Hatchery Tour, Wild Rose

Wild Rose Hatchery has a state-of-the-art, bio-secure facility where trout and salmon are raised for the Great Lakes. Walleye, northern pike, Great Lakes spotted musky, and lake sturgeon are raised to help stock Wisconsin lakes and rivers to assist with natural reproduction. Over 100 years of hatchery history is highlighted in exhibits in the Education Center, along with two 300-gallon aquariums show-casing fish raised. Bring quarters for pellets to feed the brown trout in the old hatchery. Tour begins at 10am and will be held rain or shine as most of the tour is indoors. Bring a sack lunch to enjoy after the tour. Cost: Free. **Deadline for signing up for the tour is Thursday, May 30.** Contact: Kelly Ramstack, 920-540-9139, kjramstack@yahoo.com.

June 10, Monday Evening

Telulah Park- Newberry Trail Hike, Appleton

Urban hike along the Fox River in the heart of Appleton starting at Telulah Park. Optional stop at a local watering hole for a beer or soda. About 3 miles. Contact Monny Hjerstedt: call or text 920-558-0013, mhjerstedt17@gmail.com

June 21, Friday Evening

Summer Solstice Hike at Mosquito Hill Nature Center, New London

Hike past ponds and through prairies and woods to end up on the top of Mosquito Hill with hopefully a spectacular view of the sunset looking over Outagamie and Waupaca Counties. Hike approx. 3 miles. Contact Monny Hjerstedt: call or text 920-558-0013, mhjerstedt17@gmail.com

July 9, Tuesday Evening

1000 Island Nature Center, Kaukauna

Hike along the shores of the Fox River just outside of Kaukauna at the Nature Center. About 3 miles. Contact Monny Hjerstedt: call or text 920-558-0013, mhjerstedt17@gmail.com

Check out our webpage or facebook frequently for updates or additional outings.

Outings: Get outside and join us on one of our outings! They are a great way to meet other outdoor enthusiasts. Outings are open to members and non-members alike. In order to participate, sign up with the outings leader directly. Time and meeting locations of outings can change. Some trips are weather dependent. Times are not listed in these descriptions to ensure participants will check with trip leaders before proceeding.

July 22 - August 2

Whitewater paddling in Montana, Class II-III; Car Camp

Join experienced paddlers on some classic whitewater rivers in Montana. The trip will be flexible to meet the needs and skills of participants. Paddlers must feel comfortable on rivers like the Wolf Section III. Join us for all or part of this approximately two-week trip, day hike(s) included. Contact Phillip Johnsrud: 715-572-9884, johnsrudp@tds.net

July 31, Wednesday Evening

Private Prairie Walk, Omro

This combined Sierra Club and Wild Ones Fox Valley outing will tour an exquisite large private prairie restoration at the home of Wild Ones Fox Valley charter members Bob and Carol Niendorf. This decades-old, short and tallgrass prairie is home to native lupines, purple prairie clover, butterfly weed, and much more. Learn about prairie restoration and native wild plants. Will be a very easy hike on a 20-acre prairie from 6-7:30 pm. Please wear long sleeves and pants with sturdy hiking shoes. Mosquitos may be an issue so a hat and head net are suggested. To sign up for the outing and plan carpooling please contact John Engel, johnwilliamengel@gmail.com (920)475-1472.



The weather didn't cooperate with us on a couple of our winter outings but we did have a good time snowshoeing at Hartman Creek State Park March 2nd. Even Hayley seemed to enjoy the ride.



Wisconsin Loves Parks

As many of you know, in 2015 the Wisconsin legislature removed all general revenue funding from our state park system, 4.6 million dollars, about 28% of the operating budget. At the same time they instituted fee increases for admission, camping and trail use to make up all except \$1.2 million, but that amount was left as a budget cut, on top of cuts that have been affecting parks for many years.

This move was strictly ideological, as the amount of money is tiny, a miniscule fraction of one percent of Wisconsin's 70 billion dollar budget. Some members of the state legislature are philosophically opposed to any public land ownership. You may remember the legislative mandate to sell off 10,000 acres of state land every year.

The John Muir Chapter of the Sierra Club has originated a campaign to ask for five million dollars to be put into the general revenue fund for the state park system. As part of this campaign, on Saturday, May 11, six sites across

the state will hold "Wisconsin Loves Parks" events. Our local event will be held at High Cliff State Park. While plans have not been finalized, we tentatively plan a bring-your-own picnic (the park is providing us with a shelter), a service project (park staff has proposed garlic mustard pulling, trail repair, and tree planting), educational speakers, and/or themed hikes (history, botany, geology). We hope to have some press in attendance and will invite all area state legislators.

Wisconsin spends less on its state parks than any of our neighboring states, about five times less (per visitor day) than Minnesota, our most significant competitor for tourism dollars. The Walker DNR considered this a point of pride.

Our parks belong to all of us and benefit all of us. Every year they produce over a billion dollars worth of economic activity for the state and especially the communities near them. Let us all turn out to show how much Wisconsin loves its state parks.

As details are finalized they will be on the Sierra Club events calendar, the Fox Valley Sierra Group website and Facebook.





April 30 - 6:30 - Oshkosh Public Library

Join us for a showing of the documentary "Reinventing Power". This film takes us across the country to hear directly from the people making our clean energy future achievable. Meet people in eight states whose lives were changed by the renewable energy industry, while exploring various aspects of the industry from innovation to installation.

A panelist discussion with individuals knowledgeable in wind and solar technologies will follow. (Jim Funk from Energize, LLC and Patrick Nahm from Appleton Solar, LLC)

For further information contact Diane Perschbacher dperschbacher1@new.rr.com / 920-216-2159 or review the event at <https://www.sierra-club.org/wisconsin/fox-valley>.

Bear Hunting is Not What You Think

I accompanied Wolf Patrol, a wildlife advocacy group, during the 2018 Wisconsin Black Bear hunt which ended October 10. 4500 bears were taken, most with the aid of bait, hunting hounds, or both. We patrolled Forest County Wolf Caution Areas (WCAs) in known wolf territory posted by Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) where wolf/dog conflicts, usually fatal, occurred. We documented active bear baits and continued hounding activities in WCAs. We spoke with hounders who agreed to be video taped. Through radio and visual contact, staying well away from active hunts, we monitored hound operators.

None of it was what I expected.

In 2016, 34% of bears were taken with the aid of hounds. Wisconsin regulations state no "pack" of hounds may exceed 6 in number while in pursuit of a bear. This rule does not apply during training season, July 1 through August 31. Neither do shooting hours nor licensing, as Wisconsin eliminated the Class B license in 2015, allowing unlicensed operators to run dogs on bears, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, during the hottest eight weeks of the year. The regulations do not define how many "packs" of dogs may pursue a bear at one time.

At the hunting season close, we monitored a group with a total of 10 hounds in pursuit of one bear. They expressed repeated confusion regarding the number of dogs "on the ground" once the bear was treed. Not all operators were in visual, or "line of sight" contact with all of their dogs at any one time. Dogs are tracked via GPS collars.

Hounders we spoke with expressed concern that "large groups are able to [maintain] more bait sites than small groups. The large groups keep 100 or so baits, which is maybe overkill," they conceded. Bait sites near highways are favored, as hounders drive with one of their dogs on top of the "box" – a crate loaded in the back of a pickup truck - to "scent." Then the operator turns the dogs loose – typically right along a highway, but also on county and Forest Service roads. Hounders have been documented illegally blocking highways and private roads during a hunt.

WDNR defends baiting as a means to "determine age class and gender." Nevertheless, the mean age of male bears "harvested" in Wisconsin for 2017 was 2.4 years of age, 3.7 years for females. 59% of the total are

1-2 years old. "Bait sitters" observe the frequency of "hits" to their bait sites, and the size of the bears "hitting" them, using sign at the site and trail cams. Bait is supposed to be inaccessible to other wildlife species, but wolves, deer, martins and many other species are documented at bait sites. Bait typically consists of junk food: cake mix, donuts, jelly, canned fruit, pretzels, cooking grease, marshmallows, cookies, frosting and candy. Chocolate, a known toxin to canids and felids, is "discouraged," but not illegal in Wisconsin. Only meat is restricted, but suppliers sell products that smell like meat. Five million gallons of bait are placed in Wisconsin annually, baiters voluntarily reported in 2014.

Bears become habituated to human-provided food sources. In 2017, 747 nuisance bear complaints resulted in 373 bears being relocated from "problem areas," usually within close proximity to active baits. 585 bears were relocated in 2016. In 2016, 47 Agricultural, or crop damage, permits resulted in the killing of 118 bears.

Hounders we spoke with expressed their belief that "without hunting [black bear] with dogs, the population would explode." Nevertheless, the population is doing just that, in spite of the WDNR "harvest goal" of 5,000 bears from the estimated population of 28,700. WDNR analysis determines Wisconsin black bears obtain over 40% of their caloric intake from bait, contributing to increased litter sizes.

Since 2015 tag holders register their kill electronically. They are required to mail in a tooth sample for age and sex classification. While it is illegal to kill a sow with cubs, there is no enforcement of this. Neither is the tooth sample requirement enforced: a post card reminder is sent, with no further action taken, according to Scott Walter, WDNR Large Carnivore Specialist. 375 samples remained uncollected upon publication of the 2016 report.

Once the bear is treed, the operators contact the "shooter," the person holding the bear tag, who has arranged with an operator or club to have a bear treed, so they can shoot it. On this occasion, the shooter was not onsite. It took an hour for her to show up to shoot the bear out of the tree.

There are no studies estimating the number of cubs orphaned annually by hound training and hunting.

Laura Menefee - Conservation Writer, Nature Photographer
October 22, 2018 - Sturgeon Bay Wisconsin

National Sierra Club Elections are Underway - VOTE!

...”From the Chair” continued from page 1

Sierra Club has been working hard, and successfully, in recent years to discourage the use of coal for electrical production. Many coal power plants have been closed, and others were stopped before being built. A recent article in Madison’s Isthmus newspaper helps bring the issue home. The article is called “Killer Coal” and is worth reading in its entirety at this website link:

<https://isthmus.com/news/cover-story/wisconsin-coal-and-climate-change/>

The article opens by following a ranching family in Montana. It’s never been easy farming this area, where the annual rainfall is 12 to 16 inches and much of the groundwater has a high salinity, which can make it toxic to both plants and animals. But the farming business has gotten much more difficult in the past 40 years, thanks to coal mining.

Mining boomed here after passage of the 1970 Clean Air Act because the region’s low sulfur content coal is cleaner to burn than other types of coal. But this boom has caused numerous problems for farmers and ranchers because of how it has disrupted and poisoned water supplies.

Groundwater is relied on most for livestock operations. Aquifers are in the coal seams. When you cut a giant hole in the ground, you disrupt how that groundwater system works. That makes springs go dry, that makes wells go dry, and it makes it very difficult to run a livestock operation. There are creeks in Montana that have sulfate levels that would kill a cow. And that’s directly related to coal mining.

Here is the kicker.... The troubles facing the ranchers in Montana and Wyoming can be traced, at least in part, to Wisconsin residents. Much of the coal that Wisconsin’s power plants burn comes from Wyoming and Montana. “We are the market.” Think about that.

Wisconsin is more dependent on coal power than all but nine states. Fortunately, that may be changing. Alliant Energy and We Energies have announced they will eliminate all use of coal power by 2050, reducing their carbon emissions by 80 percent.

News reports in early March informed us that a study had shown what many of us already knew: “Kewaunee County Well Contamination Tied to Animal Waste.” Fortunately, Gov. Tony Evers declared that 2019 would be “the year of clean drinking water.” At least the problem has the attention of our governor.

I want to call out John Engel, our group’s vice chairperson. He has worked very hard preparing for our annual Earth Day Hike. Our Loop the Lake Hike involves three communities and their governmental agencies. Please join us on April 20 for a hike. (John is still looking for volunteers to help that day.)

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

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



It’s time for America to get smart about energy and be less dependent on dwindling oil reserves. We need to increase our use of clean, renewable energy sources like wind and solar power. Let your voice be heard.

Add your voice to protect the planet.
Join Sierra Club

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Join today and receive a **FREE Sierra Club Weekender Bag!**



Check enclosed. Please make payable to Sierra Club.
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Signature _____

| Membership Categories | Individual | Joint |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Special Offer | <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 | |
| Standard | <input type="checkbox"/> \$39 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$49 |
| Supporting | <input type="checkbox"/> \$75 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 |
| Contributing | <input type="checkbox"/> \$150 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$175 |
| Life | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1250 |
| 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, F94Q **W-1607**
P.O. Box 421041, Palm Coast, FL 32142-1041

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