



# Four Lakes Sierran

The Newsletter of the Four Lakes Group Sierra Club, Winter 2018

## 2018 - Celebrate the National Scenic and Historic Trails Act Anniversary!

Hike Wisconsin's two National Scenic Trails –  
Ice Age Trail • North Country Trail



The snow is squeaky as we set out down the hill on our snow shoes. It is a brilliant day with bright sunshine and the trail winds down the hill and then along the edge of a kettle pond. We detour, skirting the edge of the pond to see what animal tracks we can find in the snow. Winter perhaps defines the Ice Age Trail which traces the last great glaciation period in Wisconsin.

### Ice Age Trail

The trail, not fully completed, winds from Sturgeon Bay, looping down through the Kettle Moraine to the Janesville area, then back up through the middle of the state passing through several iconic sites like Devils Lake and Dells of the Eau Claire and then the west to Interstate State Park in St Croix Falls.

The Ice Age Trail Alliance (IATA) and its volunteer led Chapters build, maintain and lead hikes along the trail's 1200-mile path through Wisconsin. To learn more about segments near you or become involved as a trail steward, visit the IATA website.

### North Country Trail

Less well known is the North Country Trail which stretches across the top of the country from the New York/Vermont border in the Adirondack Mountains to North Dakota and the Missouri River.

The trail crosses some of the most spectacular areas of Wisconsin including the ancient Penoque Range (location of a recent mining fight) and some of Wisconsin's most spectacular falls including

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## Chair's column

Dave Blouin

Happy New Year and count me as happy to be done with 2017 – a year that consistently challenged our expectations of political stability and propriety in ways that we're still trying to understand. Despite the chaos created by some of our national and state elected officials, our Four Lakes Group leaders and activists nonetheless continued to work hard all year to bring awareness to the important environmental and conservation issues around us and will work even harder in 2018.

I'm pleased to report that Beverly Speer and I were reelected to the Four Lakes Group Executive Committee for two-year terms for 2018-19. Big thanks to Beverly for continuing her activism and long-time commitment to our success including coordinating our annual calendar sales. Calendar sales help generate needed Group funding for projects each year.

Local Club member and activist, Mary Reames, was elected to a one-year term on the Executive Committee in December. Mary lives in Madison and is a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Accredited Design (LEED)

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## Coal – Truth and Consequences

Home is where the heart is, and where we want to be. But where the heart is, so are our lungs and other body parts. When subjected to emissions of neighboring coal power plants, too many people have to leave their homes behind – or suffer the consequences.

Bill Pringle and others who live or lived near We Energies' Oak Creek and Elm Road generating stations located in Oak Creek, WI, know all about this. At a film showing in Racine about the impacts of a coal plant in Cheshire, Ohio on the residents there, Bill talked about the illnesses they incurred while living near Oak Creek, and how his son Jason almost died as a result of respiratory ailments.

The Oak Creek coal plant built over 50 years ago has required additional pollution controls to mitigate the plant's toxic emissions. However, in 2010 We Energies opened the neighboring Elm Road Generating Station, of which MGE is also part owner as a power source for the Madison area. This necessitated additional coal rail shipments and, as a result, coal dust exposure. We Energies has maintained that transporting, storing and burning the coal is not a problem for area residents.

The Pringles moved away from Oak Creek in 2014. Others also left and sold their homes to We Energies for up to 3 times the market value. Some received an additional \$10,000 at closing by signing non-disclosure agreements stating they would not sue the utility for health issues. The Pringles chose not to sell to We Energies, and continue to bring attention to their plight and that of others.

### Out of sight, out of mind?

Perhaps Madisonians can count themselves fortunate. After strong community opposition to coal at the downtown Madison Blount St power plant, in good part from health concerns, MGE agreed to convert Blount St to natural gas. Our good fortune contrasted with Bill Pringle and other residents of Oak Creek and Caledonia who were subjected to additional coal impacts at nearly the same time Blount St was taken off coal.

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*Chair*

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working for Leonardo Academy – a non-profit sustainability consulting firm. She previously practiced environmental law for the City of Chicago. We're very pleased to welcome Mary to the Executive Committee!

Our Executive Committee team consists of up to seven Sierra Club members interested and willing to serve as the administrative and policy board for our regional Group. With Mary, we're up to six members which means that there is room for one more dedicated Club member to join us in this important work.

Interested members, whether new to the Club or not, are invited to join us Wednesday, February 21, 6:30 - 8:30 pm at the Goodman Community Center in Madison to learn more about our important Sierra Club local and regional volunteer efforts. Our volunteer leaders will be available to discuss the programs they lead and how you can become involved. We'll have food, refreshments and inspiring stories to share. Check out our Facebook page, [4LakesSierraClub](#), for more info.

Learn more about our important efforts on our [4lakes.org](#) website by clicking on the "Get Involved" page, including our Beyond Coal energy team, our educational and recreational Outings programs, the Inspiring Connections Outdoors, Cruisin' for Cuisine social program, and much more. We'd love to hear from you if you're interested in becoming more involved, or you have ideas about other issues you wish to engage on.

The Four Lakes Group remains the largest, in terms of membership, in Wisconsin at nearly 6,000 individual members. Overall membership in the Sierra Club, including our Group, continues to rise – apparently in correlation with growing concerns for preservation and improvement of environmental protections.

Let's hope we can leave the chaos of 2017 behind and redouble our efforts in 2018 to lead to preserve and protect our shared air, land, and water that nourish and sustain us.

See you on the trails!



backpacking along both the Ice Age and North Country Trails.

To find an organized hike, trail workday or a celebration event, go to the Sierra Club Outings at <https://www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/outings-events>, the IATA at <https://www.iceagetrail.org/events/>, or NCTA at <https://northcountrytrail.org/trail/upcoming-events/calendar-of-events/>.

### **The Anniversary**

More than a single trail or the trail you see in your mind's eye, the National Trails System encompasses historic routes allowing us to walk through history and scenic paths that trace geologic and ecological phenomena and provide outdoor adventure. 2018 marks the 50<sup>th</sup> year since passage of the National Trails System Act in 1968. While much has been done, lots of work remains to fill in gaps and buffer and protect these outstanding corridors.

Special anniversary events and hikes are being organized across the country this year. For more information, go to <https://www.trails50.org/>

You're invited to the party!

*Trails*

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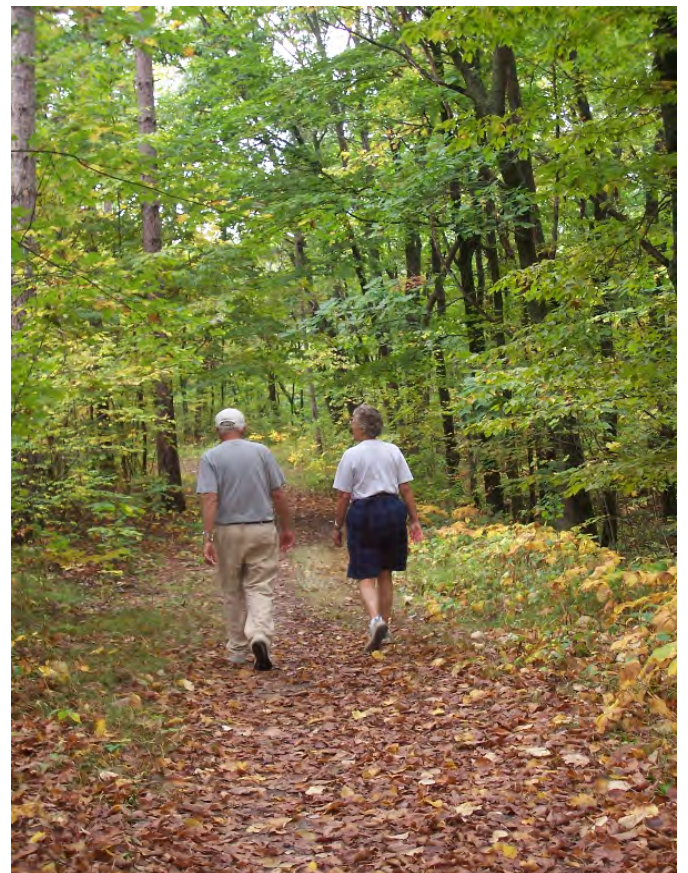
Copper Falls and Potato River Falls. The North Country Association (NCTA) staff and volunteers serve as the stewards for the trail and its buffer lands. Visit their web site for more information on the North Country Trail.

### **Trails for all seasons**

In all seasons, the trails provide wonderful recreation opportunities specifically for walkers/hikers. Visit waterfalls or walk through beautiful fall colors of National and State Forests. In spring, look for mushrooms and beautiful wild flowers and in winter enjoy the peaceful serenity of the snow-covered landscapes.

Day hikes can be done linearly or sometimes in a loop using connecting trails. Longer hikes can be done backpacking or using inns/bed and breakfasts along the way.

In Wisconsin, Sierrans have long been involved with the establishment, construction and maintenance of the Ice Age Trail. And the Sierra Club Outings program has organized hikes and



## Winter 2018 outings

For all outings, wear weather and activity appropriate clothing, and good footwear. For work outings, wear work clothes and gloves. Bring fluids to drink, and a snack or food, and sunscreen, a hat, and insect repellent if needed. If carpooling, please be a little early. Please contact the leader to RSVP, if you have questions, or with concerns about weather or to cancel. Check the Four Lakes Group web site or Facebook page for updates or added events.

### **Leader Contact Info**

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### **Saturday, February 4, 1:30 - 3 pm – Bird and Nature Outing, “Only maples for syrup?” - Cherokee Marsh**

Enjoy a family-friendly stroll on beautiful trails through Cherokee Marsh. A naturalist will provide education along the way about the woodlands, wetlands and prairies along the Yahara River. Co-sponsored by Madison Friends of Urban Nature, Madison Audubon and Friends of Cherokee Marsh. 6098 N Sherman Ave, North Unit main parking lot at end of curved gravel entry road. RSVP to Alex Singer.

### **Sunday, March 18, 1:30 - 3 pm – Bird and Nature Outing, “Will spring ever get here?” - Warner Park**

Join a naturalist to learn about the wetlands, woods and prairie of Warner Park, and the wildlife habitat for birds and other creatures that call it home. This is an informal family-friendly nature walk around the scenic Warner Pond lagoon and across Castle Creek. Co-sponsored by Madison Friends of Urban Nature, Madison Audubon and Wild Warner. Meet at the

Rainbow Shelter by the Warner Pond lagoon. RSVP to Alex Singer.

### **Thursday, March 29, 6:15 pm – Evening Hike - Ice Age Trail, Montrose Segment**

We'll take an easy hike of about 6 miles on level packed limestone trail towards Purcell Rd, then turn around and head back to Basco. Meet at the Ice Age Trail/Badger State Trail junction in Basco off Hwy 69. Take Hwy 69 south of Paoli for ~ 1.2 miles. Turn east on Henry Rd, and go ~ a 1/2 mile into Basco. Park on the street by the trail intersection. RSVP to Kathy Mulbrandon.

### **Saturday, April 7, 10 am – Spring Hike - New Glarus Woods State Park**

Join David as he leads his annual 4–5 mile hike through prairies and forests at New Glarus Woods State Park. The hike is moderate with rolling hills and ravines and a great opportunity to observe and learn about spring ephemerals and succession as they start to bloom and trees bud out. To carpool meet David at 9:00am at the Verona Park & Ride, Hwy PB and Verona Rd. Otherwise, meet at New Glarus Woods State Park parking lot off State Hwy 69, 2 miles south of New Glarus. All vehicles will need to have a Wisconsin State Park pass, which can be purchased at New Glarus Woods State Park.



**Saturday, April 7, 2:30 - 4 pm – Bird and Nature Outing, “Effects of climate change” - Tenney Park**

Enjoy a nature walk to learn about nature and discuss how climate impacts the area. Tenney Park is in an urban setting along Lake Mendota, where one can observe the impacts of people, the lake and land, and climate. Meet at Tenney Park Beach parking lot. RSVP to Alex Singer.

**Tuesday, April 24, 6:30 pm – Evening Hike - Ice Age Trail, Montrose Segment**

We'll hike the Ice Age Trail south while traversing through wooded and prairie areas. From sandstone vistas we'll see the surrounding Sugar River Valley area and learn about the geology and flora of this area. This is an out and back moderate hike with some rolling hills and with a total distance of about 5-6 miles. Meet at Ice Age Trail parking lot off Frenchtown Rd (just north of Belleville). Take Hwy 69 south of Paoli, turn east on Frenchtown Rd. In about 1 mile turn south on Piller Rd into the parking lot.

**Tuesday, May 22, 6:30pm – Evening Hike - Ice Age Trail, Valley View Segment**

Join us for a 3-mile interpretive hike to learn about prairie and woodland vegetation on the Ice Age Trail at the Valley View preserve. We'll hike several trail loops and learn about the natural features and restoration efforts from interpretive signs. Take Mineral Point Rd. ~2.3 miles west of the Beltline, turn left on Pioneer, and then right on Valley View which curves left and becomes Mound View Rd. Go another .5 miles to the kiosk on the right on Mound View Rd. RSVP to Kathy Mulbrandon.

**Saturday, May 26, 10 - 11:30 am – Bird and Nature Outing, “Love is in the air” - Edna Taylor Conservation Park**

Join us for an easy family friendly walk from the Aldo Leopold Nature Center into beautiful Edna Taylor Conservation Park and learn about Aldo Leopold and the management of nature at this Conservancy. Co-sponsored by Madison Friends of Urban Nature, Madison Audubon, and Aldo Leopold Nature Center. 330 Femrite Drive, park

in the first lot on right, meet in the Aldo Leopold Nature Center lobby area. RSVP to Alex Singer.

**Cruisin' for Cuisine**

Cruisin' is a casual dinner group that meets monthly at a locally owned Madison area restaurant. We order off the menu and everyone gets their own check. Non-members are welcome to join. We're always trying different places, so please join us. RSVP to the leader at least 2 days prior to dinner for the dining time.

**February 15, Swad, 6007 Monona Dr, Madison**

Enjoy the cuisine at one of Madison's lesser known gems at Swad hidden away on Monona Dr. Routinely rated as one of Madison's top Indian restaurants, you'll surely leave satisfied. swadmonona.com Contact Don Ferber



**March 13 – Graft, 18 N. Carroll St., Madison**

Graft is a very pretty, capable restaurant that swings for the fences. It's a menu with broad appeal – entirely satisfying rillettes of diced, smoked trout, harissa-rubbed chicken thigh atop Israeli couscous, or flank steak with coffee butter. Massive wine list. GraftMadison.com Contact Janine Melrose

**April 19 – Lone Girl Brewing Company, 114 E. Main St., Waunakee**

Enjoy a newer brewpub in Waunakee with a beautiful roof-deck patio and fire pit. Try the tacos, burgers or a range of sandwiches and entrees, not to mention their craft brews. TheLoneGirl.com Contact Janine Melrose.

## Go Green – at the WHA Garden Expo

**When: February 9 – 11**

**Where: Alliant Energy Center, Madison**

Being green is more than a slogan at WHA's Garden Expo. It's a way of life, and one very consistent with the Sierra Club's mission. The Expo provides education and helps people appreciate and enjoy the outdoors.

And in mid-February when cold, short days linger on, who doesn't want to think ahead to the warmth and greenery of spring? The Garden Expo is a highly enjoyable three-day event packed full of great exhibits and demos, and a vast array of presentations on nature and gardening.

Best of all, you can be there to revel in the warmth and greenery well before mother nature sees fit to provide us with the same show outdoors (at least here in Wisconsin). And better yet, volunteering at our Sierra Club booth gets you a pass to get you in all weekend for free!

No experience is needed to volunteer at the Sierra Club booth – just a willingness to talk with people. The Garden Expo draws a great and receptive audience for our messages and issues, and it's a fun place to be to engage people in conversation and talk about the Sierra Club – or whatever else may come up. Go to <http://www.wigardenexpo.com> for info on the Garden Expo.

Simply go to <http://signup.com/go/rQXHwjq> to sign up and choose the shift of your choice. And invite a friend as well!

Questions? Contact Don Ferber at [d\\_ferber@sbcglobal.net](mailto:d_ferber@sbcglobal.net) or 608-217-2959.

## Tar Sands Fighters Undaunted

A few non-profits challenging a \$40 plus billion foreign corporation might seem daunting, but it's not stopping our intrepid pipeline fighters. With leadership from 80 Feet is Enough!, the Sierra Club, 350 Madison, the Wisconsin Safe Energy Alliance (WiSE), Save Our Illinois Lands (SOIL), Native American Tribes and others, a large enthusiast crew attended a terrific Pipeline Summit in Wisconsin Rapids in late October. Over 180 people attended the Friday public session, and 70 stayed for the weekend to plan and coordinate.

The focus was primarily on how to prevent another disastrous twin pipeline to the current Line 61. Speakers talked about how Native American and property rights were being violated, and landowners along the entire length of Line 61 told sobering stories about the problems they had experienced with Enbridge and the pipeline. But we were even more inspired by several youth from the Youth Climate Intervenors who, despite their teenage years, had dedicated themselves to fighting for climate justice.

The conference would not have been possible without the generous funding of the Bold Alliance. Jane Kleeb was there and talked about how Bold Nebraska had stopped Keystone XL.

The battle continues in the courts too, as Enbridge was up against a much less sympathetic circuit court in Madison in January regarding the requirement to provide insurance to Dane County regarding the expansion risks from Line 16.

## Canoeecopia

**When: March 9 – 11, 2018**

**Where: Alliant Energy Center, Madison**

The Sierra Club will again have a booth at this annual watersports extravaganza to inform people about our outdoor activities and water issues. Please consider volunteering at our booth to help promote the Sierra Club and talk about our activities. Volunteers get in free to Canoeecopia. You can find more information about this event led by Rutabaga at <http://www.canoeecopia.com/canoeecopia/>.

Stay tuned, and watch for more information on our web site and in our Enews. Contact Eric Uram at [eric.uran@headwater.us](mailto:eric.uran@headwater.us) for more information.

Despite being taken to task by Madison for the health impacts of coal, nearly two-thirds of MGE’s power in 2018 still derives from coal burning at the Elm Road and Columbia (Portage) generating stations. While MGE publicizes itself as a green energy company, apparently if it’s not here locally, and other utilities own substantial portions of those coal power plants, it’s not MGE’s problem – or at least one they can’t manage with a little PR aimed at the locals – and shareholders.

We Energies claims Elm Road is a newer, cleaner burning power plant, but clean coal does not exist, and it doubled average coal use at Oak Creek to over 12,000 tons per day. That amount of coal dust from transport and storage, with coal ash further exacerbating toxic exposure, cannot be done without harm to people and the environment.

**Holding MGE and WE Energy accountable**

Since we don’t want coal burned here when we flip our lights on, watch TV, or the refrigerator runs, should we subject others to what we don’t want? We demanded better here, let’s demand better for the residents of Caledonia and Oak Creek impacted by our electricity use.

Our Beyond Coal campaign in Wisconsin is active in pressuring both MGE and We Energies to get off coal and on clean energy. While both utilities are making progress, it’s too slow and too belated. Our organizers in Madison and Southeast Wisconsin are working with Sierrans and other groups, and it’s an opportunity for you to get involved and raise your voice and demand energy justice for all. Madisonians don’t want to be externalities; neither do Caledonians.

From planning events, holding vigils, reaching out to others, lobbying your local government to take action, writing letters to the editor, and more, your voice and actions matter. In Madison, we’re collaborating with 350 Madison, RePower Madison, MGE Shareholders for Clean Energy, and others. With your help, we can achieve a just energy future for all, wherever their heart and home may be.

Information about our activities is at <https://www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/moving-beyond-coal-clean-energy> and <https://www.facebook.com/WIBeyondCoal/>. To support the future you want and we all deserve, contact Devin Martin at [devin.martin@sierraclub.org](mailto:devin.martin@sierraclub.org) or 608-338-0746.



Oak Creek coal power plant in Oak Creek, Wisconsin



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<http://www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/four-lakes>



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### Newsletter Mailing

Our goal is environmentally friendly, cost effective communications with our members. Our primary communication modes are this newsletter, the Four Lakes Enews, and our web site and Facebook page. We mail a hard copy if we don't have your email or you request one. Otherwise, you'll receive an email when the newsletter is available to download.

If we don't have your email address, please consider sending it to [d\\_ferber@sbcglobal.net](mailto:d_ferber@sbcglobal.net) to save paper and mailing costs. Plus, we'll send you our Enews to really keep you better informed.

**Get active with the Four Lakes Group at our:**

## **WINTER VOLUNTEER THAW**

**Wednesday 2/21, 6:30 - 8:30 pm,  
Goodman Community Center, Madison**

Are you feeling frustrated – but also ready to help make the world (or at least your community) a better place? The Sierra Club is active on many fronts, but also offers opportunities to expand into other areas of interests, but only lacks capacity.

That's where you come in. Join with us on one of current campaigns, or share a concern with us that you would like to take initiative on and perhaps find others who share your interest.

We're active on many environmental issues – beyond coal to clean energy, transportation, water quality, protecting public lands and wildlife habitat, and waste reduction – and also get involved in related politics and social issues.

As a grassroots environmental organization, your voice counts, and we depend on volunteers to accomplish much of what we do. What's required is people who care and are willing to prioritize a bit of time to devote to important issues and work with others to achieve common goals.

Join us on February 21 from 6:30 – 8:30 pm at the Goodman Community Center for an opportunity to learn about our ongoing local and regional efforts and how you can engage on this important work. We'll provide the venue with food and refreshments where we can share ideas and inspiring stories.