



The *Muir* VIEW

NEWS OF THE SIERRA CLUB IN WISCONSIN | JOHN MUIR CHAPTER

Fracked Gas

NEITHER A “BRIDGE FUEL” NOR “NATURAL,” “CLEAN,” OR “ECONOMIC”



Leaders of the Coulee Region Group deliver petitions in opposition to the NTEC gas plant to Dairyland.

Fracked gas (commonly known as natural gas, though there is nothing “natural” about it) has been touted as the “bridge fuel” for clean energy. However, there is nothing clean about the environmental damage and degradation caused by fracked gas. Like other fossil fuels, fracked gas emits carbon dioxide and methane, another potent greenhouse gas, into our environment. Fracked gas energy production is also a water-intensive process, and its dirty water continues to pollute our environment and endanger our health. As defenders of our environment and communities, we are actively working against the use of fracked gas in Wisconsin.

Since 2018, two utility companies, Minnesota Power and Dairyland Energy Cooperative, have planned to bring dirty fracked gas into Superior, Wisconsin. The Nemadji Trail Energy Center (NTEC), would cost Wisconsin customers over \$700 million. NTEC is located only 1.2 miles from the Nemadji River, a significant cultural area for the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa. NTEC would also divert 5.4 million gallons of groundwater from the Lake Superior basin. It has never been more clear that Wisconsin needs to become a 100 percent clean energy state.

Fracked gas has been used for more than six decades in the United States. Since 2015, more than 50 percent of gas used for energy consumption in the United States has derived from fracked gas. Since fracked gas has become a leading energy source in the United States, oil is acquired at a faster rate and has since lowered the cost of gas while causing the closings of traditional oil power plants.

Fracked gas is only considered economically feasible by the companies that use it. This past fall the Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI) conducted research on the economic viability of fracked gas and clean energy. In their reports, RMI states that the cost of fracked gas has already reached its peak in our energy economy. Furthermore, current and future investments into fracked gas power plants are likely to create “stranded costs” of over \$10 billion by the mid-2030s. This includes the Nemadji Trail Energy Center. Wisconsin customers will have

Continued on page 3

From the Chair

- 2 -

Volunteer Appreciation 2019

- 5 -

Green Review

- 10 -

Get Involved in 2020

- 3 -

Updates from Local Groups

- 6 -

Thank you to our Donors

- 11 -

Introducing our New Staff

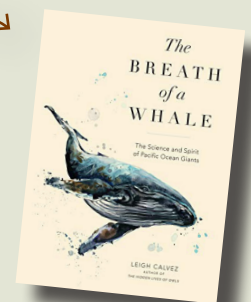
- 4 -

Issues at a Glance

- 8 -

Calendar

- 16 -



It's about caring

I recently heard from a couple of our members how sorry they were they couldn't give more to support our chapter and our work. But the usual (and true) response -- "We really appreciate whatever you can give, and any amount matters" -- only scratches the surface.

What underlies the financial and volunteer support we get from our members is that you care. And when it's hard to give, but someone does anyhow, it means they care that much more. I wish to recognize the many people who, when faced with tough decisions due to limited means, choose to give anyhow to create a better future for people and our planet. I find that inspiring.

It's also heart breaking, and I feel some sadness. Why are so many people struggling to get by, often due to circumstances they had little control over, yet wouldn't be if we valued people more and everyone received a living wage? Yet they are the ones who feel guilty for not giving more. That's one reason the Sierra Club chooses to get involved in political, social and economic justice issues. How much better off would we all be if people had the wherewithal to contribute what they wanted to causes they care about?

I'm also reminded of something that linguist George Lakoff said at the end of a PBS interview with Tavis Smiley about our political system, "Without caring, there is no democracy." In these troubled times, isn't that really what underlies many

of our current problems, that what we see occurring is anger turned to hate, not caring?

It takes courage to come back with caring when one is wronged or hurt by others. It takes courage to give. But that's why I'm so grateful we have such dedicated members who give even when it is hard, and volunteers who give even when there are so many other demands of their time.

The new year will bring many challenges, but maybe that's all the more reason to exhibit your caring. Together, we can rise up and find hope and compassion and a path forward that is uplifting. The gifts our members and supporters provide bolster us and our spirits. But giving also lifts the spirits of those who give, who do something out of caring. That's why I tell people to give until it feels good. Because it does, and those with little have often given a lot of themselves.

On behalf of myself; the rest of our board; and our great staff, Jacinda Tessmann, Elizabeth Ward, Cassie Steiner and Katie Hogan, thank you for your caring and previous support. Please know that especially with your backing, we are dedicated to doing even more in the coming year.

Don Ferber
Chapter Chair

JOHN MUIR CHAPTER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ELECTION RESULTS

Thanks so much to the approximately 360 John Muir Chapter members who voted in our contested election to add three new volunteers to our Chapter Executive Committee (similar to a board of directors). We were fortunate to have five great candidates with a variety of interests and skills who ran for the Executive Committee.

The three top vote getters (in alphabetical order) were Christopher Beaver, Linda Frank, and Laura Lane, who we will welcome to the board in January. In addition, we have one open position that the board will also appoint. We look forward to the new board members contributing their enthusiasm and skills, and we thank James Davies and Heather Wittrock for running for the Executive Committee. We value all of our volunteers, and it is only because so many contribute their skills and dedication in so many ways that we achieve all we do.

THE MUIR VIEW

754 Williamson St., Madison, WI 53703

A Publication of the John Muir Chapter of the Sierra Club

Muir View Committee

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Please submit articles by mail or email to:
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Please include the author's first and last names, and day and evening phone numbers at the top. Acceptance of submission contingent upon availability of space and must meet Sierra Club guidelines.

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Change of Address:

You can update your contact information online at myaccount.sierraclub.org.

Get Involved in 2020!

Everything we do, every event we have, every victory we win, is all because of the work of our amazing, hardworking, and dedicated volunteers. From entering petition data at a volunteer night, to leading a team or group, YOU are what makes everything Sierra Club does possible.

To better support our volunteer grassroots activists, 2019 held a series of firsts. In April we introduced monthly volunteer work nights in Madison, where we complete many volunteer tasks together, learn new skills and accomplish more together than we ever could have on our own.

Another first for us was a two-day training we hosted for our volunteers and leaders in November. Two trainers from the Midwest Academy joined us in Madison and led 35 of our volunteer leaders through a weekend of trainings, activities and exercises. Together, we learned about campaign strategy and how to write a campaign plan, and at the end of the weekend, all of our campaigns had strong and action-oriented plans started for 2020.

This year will be an incredibly busy one, and if you're looking to get involved, we have a role that can fit your schedule, interests and needs.

ONE-OFF OPPORTUNITIES --

ATTEND A VOLUNTEER WORK NIGHT NEAR YOU!

These volunteer nights allow you to spend an hour or two volunteering in person with a group of like-minded people. Come to one or come back each month. These are great because you can come and help out without taking any volunteer work home. There are currently regular volunteer nights in Madison (second Wednesday of every month), and Racine and Kenosha (the second Thursday of every month, starting Racine in January, Kenosha in February, etc.). More volunteer nights are in the works at other locations around

the state, so check out the events happening near you on our website or Facebook page! Want to see a volunteer night near you? Email kathryn.hogan@sierraclub.org to let us know!

SPECIFIC VOLUNTEER ROLES -- JOIN A COMMUNICATION TEAM

Only interested in one specific volunteer task? Love phone banking? Want to send texts for events and petitions around the state to our members and supporters sporadically? Only want to work on graphic design? Love creating social media content? We are assembling teams to do each of those things! You will be a part of a team that gets sporadic assignments when our campaign teams need it, and you will be able to plug into this work remotely, whenever you are available to do so. It is a great way to learn about a specific skill and contribute as you are able from the comfort of your own home.

JOIN A CONSERVATION ISSUE TEAM THAT WORKS TOGETHER LONG-TERM TO ACHIEVE SUBSTANTIAL CAMPAIGN GOALS

We have seven of these teams, each with its own campaign focus that you can learn more about below. These are all action-oriented teams and being a member could mean anything from helping plan an event and strategizing with the team, to designing social media content or writing a petition or press release. These are long-term teams, and the opportunities to learn and contribute within your own schedule are endless. No experience is needed -- just a passion for the issue area and a willingness to contribute as you are able!

Want to get involved, learn more, or ask questions? Email Katie at kathryn.hogan@sierraclub.org. She is waiting to hear from you!

Continued from page 1

to pay the cost for the plant and its failing economic impact.

In comparison to clean energy, the Rocky Mountain Institute states that Clean Energy Portfolios (CEP), a combination of solar and wind energy, provides the same amount of energy, capacity, and flexibility as new fracked gas plants with lower costs. Since the early 2010s, CEP costs have decreased by 80 percent and the cost to run and use clean energy undercuts the current cost of fracked gas. RMI also reports that by 2035, more than 90 percent of proposed gas power plants, if built, would be uneconomic to run compared to building a CEP. Wisconsin needs to divert its time, energy, and money into clean energy, so Wisconsinites do not pay for fracked gas power plant failures in the near future.

Fracked gas also creates direct, negative impacts on our environment. In September 2019, the Wisconsin Public Service Commission (PSC) and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) released the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Necedah Trail Energy Center. From the DNR's analysis, the most significant environmental impacts associated with the proposed power plant are the loss of wetlands and soil erosion, both due to construction. The wetlands lost during construction not only harms the local flora and fauna, it also disturbs and disrupts the cultural and historical importance of the Red Cliff

Continued on page 5

Introducing New Sierra Club Staff in Wisconsin!

**ELIZABETH WARD,
NEW CHAPTER DIRECTOR**



The Sierra Club – John Muir Chapter is very pleased to announce that Elizabeth Ward, our longtime program staffer, has accepted the position as our new Chapter Director. Elizabeth brings exceptional skills gained in her nine-plus years with the Chapter, and is very familiar with our campaigns and with Wisconsin's challenges – and opportunities! She has shown exemplary

leadership and truly values Sierra Club's grassroots structure and volunteer leadership. She also has provided strong support and guidance in other programmatic areas that will serve her well as she takes on added administrative and financial leadership. Her expertise and passion make her a perfect fit to take the chapter into the next decade.

Elizabeth and the rest of the staff (Volunteer Coordinator Katie Hogan, Campaign Coordinator Cassie Steiner, and Chapter Coordinator Jacinda Tessmann) will continue to support our issue teams, committees, Groups, and programmatic work. The Chapter is currently hiring for an additional program staff person.

In addition, we have three new staff people from the Beyond Coal campaign that joined us in the fall:

**MATT EARLEY, WISCONSIN STATE
BEYOND COAL CAMPAIGN REPRESENTATIVE**



Matt Earley is the new Wisconsin State Campaign Representative for the Beyond Coal Campaign. After almost 20 years in the private sector, Matt is excited to be dedicating his time to fighting fossil fuels and helping to bring clean and renewable energy to Wisconsin. When Matt is not shutting down coal plants with the incredible Wisconsin team, he can be found hanging out with

his family, running around the woods with his big old dog, or playing loud music in a dive bar with one of his music projects.

**JENNA YEAKLE,
ORGANIZING REPRESENTATIVE, DULUTH**



Jenna Yeakle is the new Organizing Representative in Duluth (her hometown!), joining Minnesota's Beyond Coal Campaign. She will be advocating for 100 percent clean energy in Duluth, (including fighting the NTEC gas plant proposed in Superior, WI). Jenna will also be fighting for clean water and land use in the face of oil and sulfide mining as well as lifting up environmental

justice solutions in the Twin Ports community. Jenna has spent the last few years in community health with a focus on food justice and health equity and is eager to use her organizing skills for the local and national environmental issues she is passionate about.

**JESS HAVEN,
ORGANIZING REPRESENTATIVE, OAK CREEK**



Jess Haven joins us as a new Organizing Representative. She brings a background in social justice, public policy and social work to her new role, and is enthusiastic about the opportunity to formalize her passion for advocacy in the context of environmental justice in her home state. Jess is eager to effectively support Wisconsin's robust volunteer base and the Clean Power Coalition of Southeast Wisconsin in efforts to achieve 100% clean energy.

Some of Jess' hobbies and interests include writing, kitchen experiments, vintage fashion, documentary photography and filmmaking, exploring the incredible US landscape near and far, and making seasonal visits to beloved Lake Michigan to satisfy a deeply rooted need to be awestruck on a regular basis.

Continued from page 3

Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians.

The EIS also addressed the Nemadji Trail Energy Center's impacts on climate change and air pollution. Fracked gas emits 117 pounds of carbon dioxide per thousand cubic feet. Carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas, is a key driver of climate change, which has both global and local impacts. In Wisconsin, climate change will increase severe storms, lower the water level in the Great Lakes, inland lakes and streams, and change our natural landscape in general, impacting our agriculture.

Uncombusted fracked gas also contributes to climate change by emitting methane. Methane, another greenhouse gas, is far more potent than carbon dioxide. Methane is commonly leaked from uncombusted oil into the atmosphere through holes and inconsistencies in oil pipelines. Once it is leaked, it absorbs the sun's heat, and warms the atmosphere at a faster rate than carbon dioxide. During the first two decades after its release, methane is 84 times more potent than carbon dioxide. Currently, 25 percent of our manmade global warming is due to methane emissions. The Nemadji Trail Energy Center is not only detrimental to our cultural history, it is detrimental to our future, which is why we need clean energy.

Fracked gas is also extremely water-intensive. In order for the Nemadji Trail Energy Center to operate, five wells would be constructed to divert 5.4 million gallons of water per day, an average of 750 gallons of water per well per minute. NTEC will also divert water from a local aquifer. The need for water at this proposed plant may dry up the existing aquifer nearby.

Using water from Lake Superior basin and underground aquifers increases the risk of aquifers running dry and lowering the Great Lakes water levels.

The large amount of water used to create energy also means Wisconsin will have to deal with wastewater. The proposed sewer pipelines to discharge wastewater have negative environmental impacts of their own. This includes stormwater runoff and excessive sedimentation. These environmental impacts not only devastate our environment, they also degrade and dirty our drinking water. Furthermore, fracked gas is not regulated within the Clean Water Drinking Act's Underground Injection Control Program. This leaves our communities with unregulated, dirty water.

Wisconsin needs to be at the forefront of clean energy for the United States. Although fracked gas has been considered a "bridge fuel" to a clean energy future, it is not. It is a dirty and costly fossil fuel. The Sierra Club -- John Muir Chapter is an active proponent in working to achieve 100 percent clean energy in our state. We deserve to have clean water and air for our state and region—it is a right. We owe it to our future to decrease our carbon and methane footprints. The PSC will make a decision on whether to allow the plant to move forward in mid-February. The Department of Natural Resources is still reviewing the permits they would grant. As Wisconsinites, we must pressure our utilities to invest in clean energy and stop the Nemadji Trail Energy Center from ever being built.

Sarah Kear
Chapter Organizing Project Aide

2019 Volunteer Appreciation and Awards Event

In October, over 50 volunteers, leaders, and partners gathered in Milwaukee to celebrate our outstanding volunteers and community leaders for their work on behalf of the environment. From new activists to lifetime achievements, we want to acknowledge the amazing efforts and accomplishments of our 2019 award winners and inspire each other to move forward in 2020.

2019'S AWARD WINNERS ARE:

James Davies, member of our Transportation Team, received this year's New Activist Award for his work advocating for public transit accessibility and biking and walking infrastructure.

Roswitha Both received this year's LD Rockwell Award, the award given to an individual who has provided exceptional service to our political program. Rose has attended legislative town halls of multiple state Assembly

and Senators and has consistently held local legislators accountable for their votes on bills like the Wetland Destruction Act.



Continued on page 10



UPDATES FROM THE GROUPS

Our volunteer-led local groups engage at the city, county and local region level. They engage new members and volunteers and push for local policy changes. Here are just a few of the many 2019 highlights from our local groups.

CHIPPEWA VALLEY GROUP

The Chippewa Valley Group of the Sierra Club has stayed busy in 2019, with a monthly outing and a monthly educational program. Programs highlighted many topics including the importance of the Great Lakes, the Driftless area, water conservation, and more.

FOX VALLEY GROUP

The Fox Valley Group serves seven counties with 11 monthly meetings in northern Appleton. We are a social group with two of our meetings being potluck events: Summer picnic and December holiday party. The other public meetings involve interesting speakers and announcements about activities and issues.

We have frequent outings of seasonal quiet outdoor activities that are accessible to most. In recent years we have organized an Earth Day Hike for the public utilizing trails around the Fox River in Appleton, Neenah and Menasha. 712 people participated last April, making it our largest hike.

We are advocating against the Back 40 Mine from being built on the shore of the Menominee River and against the Kohler Company from building a private golf course using State Park land.

We also occasionally organize environmental rallies and events for the public. This past May our “Wisconsin Loves Parks” event supported High Cliff State Park with camping and garlic mustard pulling.

COULEE REGION GROUP

While it was far from the only effort, insuring clean, renewable power, including securing passage of the Ready for 100 resolution by the City and County of La Crosse, was the main effort for the Coulee Region Group in 2019. To involve the public, we sponsored a Community Climate Resolution Discussion in January and a follow-up Imagining Carbon Free forum in April. We created an online Community Energy Survey to gauge opinions and an online petition for residents to request Ready for 100 passage in their community.

Coulee Group board member Cathy Van Maren is on the La Crosse city and county Joint Sustainability Commission, where she worked with city and county staff and elected officials to draft and advance resolutions. We were rewarded in July when the La Crosse Common Council passed a resolution committing the community of La Crosse to transitioning to 100 percent renewable energy and zero percent carbon emissions by 2050 or sooner.

The Joint Sustainability Commission will soon advance a similar resolution to the La Crosse County Board. Meanwhile, the Coulee Region Group is working to assure that funds are allocated, actions are taken, and results tracked to measure progress toward the goals stated in the plan. Kathy Allen and Cathy Van Maren have led this effort in the Coulee Group.



FOUR LAKES GROUP

Political work: 2019 started with a significant Madison mayoral election in Dane County. The Group co-sponsored a debate between candidates that included transportation and climate change issues.

Outside Dane: Recognizing the Four Lakes Group is Madison- and Dane County-centric, we deliberately organized strategic activities and issue work in our southwest Wisconsin area. Working with the Land and Wildlife team, we organized a Wisconsin Loves Parks event at Governor Dodge State Park, and pushed for additional state parks operating funding.

Climate Action: In 2019, volunteers participated in both the March and September Climate Strike events and supported the Beyond Coal Team's work to transition MG&E to clean energy.

Dane County is developing a Climate Action Plan (CAP). Sierra Club staff and volunteers contributed to the plan's workgroups, and provided extensive comments on the drafts on conservation, transportation, agriculture and green infrastructure. Coupled with our work to pass local 100 percent clean energy resolutions, this prepared us to advocate regionally in 2020 to aggressively reduce emissions and invest in resiliency strategies.

Finally, we created a "climate crew" focusing on the climate crisis and what we can accomplish in our region. We plan to use new skills learned at the Midwest Academy training to define an effective 2020 campaign.

Outings: Our outings chair and leaders continue to provide regional recreational opportunities to enjoy parks and trails. Let us know if you would like to become an outings leader and introduce others to your favorite area hikes or bike rides.

Events & Activities: Volunteers continue to engage people at events like the Garden Expo and Canoecopia, and support neighborhood festivals with people power and know-how for recycling and waste reduction.

GREAT WATERS GROUP (GWG)

- GWG joined the coalition pushing for a Milwaukee City/County Task Force on Climate and Economic Equity and has a seat on that new task force. Members also are involved in the Chapter's transportation team, spoke out against We Energies rate increases and joined the youth climate march.
- Monthly programs included presentations on issues in our watershed at Schlitz Audubon and Lake Michigan, and plastic-free initiatives.
- Our recent focus on urban issues continues as we linked "Environmental Justice Matters II," presented by community leaders, with the Earth Day celebration we co-sponsor at the Urban Ecology Center-Washington Park (UEC), and a cleanup at Lincoln Creek. GWG, our Nearby Nature program and UEC also co-hosted an On the Table community discussion on environmental justice.
- The group hosted more than a dozen outings in 2019, with about 150 people attending. A commitment to Havenwoods State Forest continued with multiple interpretive and stewardship outings. Other events of note included hikes on the Ice Age Trail, paddles in Lincoln Park and a training for new outings leaders.
- GWG hosted Wisconsin Loves Parks events at Havenwoods and also Kohler-Andrae State Park, where members have been fighting the golf course expansion.

SOUTHEAST GATEWAY GROUP (SEGG)

The Southeast Gateway Group offered monthly educational programs including an update from State Representative Greta Neubauer on clean energy and climate initiatives in the state, a presentation on the rapid growth developments in wind power by Chris Nolan, a senior manager for Vestas, and current challenges for the Great Lakes from John Dickert, President and CEO of the Great Lakes Initiative.

Our active outings group has offered numerous outings including a hike in the Nachusa Grasslands and paddling on the Nippersink River.

SEGG continues to work with the City of Racine and Weed Out Racine to remove invasive species from Colonial Park. With the removal of over 1,000 ash trees, recent efforts have focused on planting over 700 trees and 400 shrubs to improve water quality, enhance habitat for wildlife, and create an enriching experience for the people that use the park.

SEGG members play an active role in the Clean Power Coalition, attending monthly meetings, testifying at the water permit and rate case hearings and protesting We Energies' proposed solar tax. Closing the South Oak Creek coal plant, which is costing rate payers almost \$75 million more than available renewable energy, remains a goal of many SEGG members.

Preventing new gas plants: our message is loud and clear

Sierra Club members and supporters provided more than 1,200 comments opposing the new fracked gas plant in Superior. Over a dozen people -- including students, faith leaders and members of the Bad River, Fond du Lac and Red Cliff Bands -- gave powerful testimony at the Wisconsin Public Service Commission (PSC) hearings about the economic and health dangers of more fossil fuels.

Strengthening Livestock Siting Rules on Factory Farms

The Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) has been working to rewrite the rules about where factory farms can be located. Sierra Club members submitted hundreds of comments and testified at the six hearings.

Testimony included statements like: “Living in Springfield Corners near a disgusting factory farm for cows, I spoke about the importance of protecting clean water and air. The smells from animal manure permeate our home. We often can’t open windows. I shared this and my experience driving past the farm with cows squished together in absolutely inhumane conditions. It made me cry.”

The proposed rule had some really promising improvements, including increased requirements about how close a factory farm can be to another person’s property or home. Unfortunately, when the Senate voted not to approve acting-Secretary Sean Pfaff as Secretary of DATCP, this rule change was put on hold.

Opposing the Felony Trespass Bill

A bill signed into law in November made it a Class H felony (\$10,000 fine / six years in jail) to trespass on land “owned, operated, or leased” by an energy company. These bills have been popping up around the country since the Standing Rock protests.

This has enormous ramifications on pipeline protests and landowners and Tribal members with pipelines through their land. As a result, we teamed up with about 40 other organizations, including civil rights, social justice, property rights, indigenous rights, and environmental organizations, like the American Civil Liberties Union, WISDOM, Menikanaehkem Inc., Honor the Earth, and Midwest Environmental Advocates. The Ho-Chunk Nation, Bad River Band, Red Cliff Band, and other Tribes also spoke out in opposition to the bill.

Hundreds and hundreds of people from across Wisconsin called and wrote to their Senators and the Governor. Unfortunately, the bill was rushed through the legislature and signed by the Governor.

**Preventing
New Gas Plants**

**Strengthening Rules
on Factory Farms**

**Opposing
Trespass**

Removing the Line 5 Tar Sand Oil Pipeline

Enbridge continues to move forward with its plans to reroute the Line 5 pipeline in the Bad River watershed, just upstream of Copper Falls State Park. All of the rivers in the area flow upstream towards Lake Superior, through the Bad River reservation, so moving the pipeline to a different part of the watershed will not reduce the risk to the waters, and the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa is opposing the reroute. This is on top of the concerns people in Michigan have raised about the Line 5 pipeline in the Straits of

Mackinac, which connects Lake Superior and Lake Huron.

Nonetheless, Enbridge has started approaching landowners south of the reservation, hoping to create an easement corridor in a 'U' shape. Enbridge is forging ahead with forcing this pipeline in an area where people do not want it. The permitting process for the pipeline will begin in early 2020 and we're hoping to push on the DNR to deny any permits for it.

Working to Stop the Back 40 Mine

A lot of inaccurate information continues to suggest that the Back 40 Mine has been approved and is moving forward. However, the mine continues to face a lot of opposition and challenges. In fact, the Coalition to Save the Menominee River (of which we are a member) is in the middle of a lawsuit challenging the permit. Additionally, the coalition has challenged federal permits. Often, it's lawsuits and slowed-down permitting processes that mark the beginning of the end of a proposed project.

Removing Line 5

Stopping the Back 40 Mine

Stopping the Felony Bill

Fighting Coal Plants and Advocating for Clean Energy

Fighting Coal Plant Pollution that Threatens our Waterways

Following review of extensive public comments, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) made significant changes to the water permits for the We Energies' coal plants in Oak Creek and the Columbia coal plant in Portage. For both permits, they required the coal plants to comply with federal coal ash rules, which prevents storing wet coal ash. Additionally, with the Oak Creek permit, the DNR included more robust measures to bring mercury levels into compliance going forward. Most notably, the DNR's press release mentioned that the hundreds of comments they received led to the changes.

Advocating for Clean Energy: We Energies' Rate Case

The Sierra Club spent much of 2019 engaging on We Energies' proposed rate changes. We partnered with a number of groups, including Renew Wisconsin and the Clean Power Coalition of Southeast Wisconsin, to successfully defeat We Energies' proposed solar tax for homeowners with solar panels. In addition, Sierra Club's analysis found that the utility's customers are paying \$73 MILLION to keep the Oak Creek coal plant online and could save that much money if We Energies were to retire the coal plant and buy energy off the grid instead. Unfortunately, a settlement with the Wisconsin Energy Industrial Group and the Citizens Utility Board, the Public Service Commission ignored those concerns and allowed We Energies to increase electricity rates.

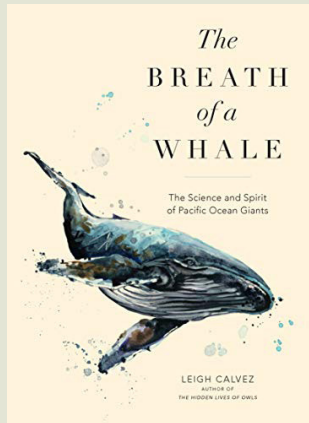
THE BREATH OF A WHALE:

THE SCIENCE AND SPIRIT OF PACIFIC OCEAN GIANTS

BY LEIGH CALVEZ, 2019, SASQUATCH BOOKS, 240 PAGES.

Anyone who has ever been on a successful whale-watching excursion may have experienced whining children and complaints about waves, rain or heat. Perhaps families argued, but then a moment comes that changes everything. From the magic of the first misty blow, through the last sight of a fluke, the crew and each passenger are fixed on every movement as subtle as a slow, giant roll that shows a blue or green underside of a fluke or as majestic as a full body breach that splashes everyone on the boat and produces aftershocks of waves that send us grabbing for a solid surface to hold us steady while we laugh. We are mesmerized. Leigh Calvez captures this magic as she travels the Pacific on a journey to know cetaceans: whales, dolphins and porpoises.

She collects data in Hawaii as a scientist studying the effects of sonar on whales. She serves as a volunteer naturalist on the Oregon coast during grey whale migration. Everywhere she traverses, she tells the tale of individual cetaceans and pods and families. Emerging scientific understandings and ongoing mysteries are offered within stories, so that the biology is never dry, and the reader never feels an urge to skim.



While *The Breath of a Whale* is part memoir, the information about Calvez' life is light, and the point of view is that of a trusted friend taking you along on adventures. We know she divorces then raises her children alone. We know she suffers a life-threatening infection and septic shock. The details are few, yet they influence how she views the wild world. Her scientist-self lacked the confidence to publish her findings of calf stranding after sonar exercises in Hawaii, although, eventually she did so. Her spiritual impulses lead her to pray to ask a false killer whale permission to be tagged, yet she understood this silent act might be mocked by science. She notes the slow scientific acceptance of assigning emotion to mammals. Surely a whale who carries a dead calf on her nose for weeks is morning a loss too difficult to process quickly.

This winter, your time will be well spent if you travel with Calvez and find wonder, knowledge and perhaps a connection to these great beasts, a connection that feels familial and spiritual.

Amy Lou Jenkins' books include *Every Natural Fact* and *Corners: Voices on Change*. If you have a book for possible review, contact her through JackWalkerPress.com.

Continued from page 5

The Clean Power Coalition of Southeast Wisconsin

received the Good Citizen Award, for their continued fight to close down the coal plants in Oak Creek and protect the nearby communities. Two of the Coalition's many accomplishments have been a community listening session with hundreds of community members in front of 7 utility executives and preventing We Energies proposed solar tax earlier this year.

The Coalition to Save the Menominee River received the Good Citizen Award, for their efforts to stop the destructive Back 40 Mine, and to protect access to clean water, the Menominee River, and the Green Bay watershed. Members have testified at countless public hearings, spread the word through the media and activated citizens through protests, rallies and fundraising. They have filed numerous court cases contesting permits as well. They are a shining example of what can be accomplished when a diverse group of concerned citizens unite and focus their skills on protecting the

environment.

The Pasch/Lewis Family was presented with this year's Wildflower Award. Marjorie, Keziah, Salome, and Qian are dedicated members of our Madison Gas and Electric Beyond Coal Team, and other members of the family and family friends often help as well. They can be found tabling for Sierra Club most weekends of the summer, volunteering with Four Lakes Group's Recycling Away from Home program, and helping with every event the Beyond Coal team plans. While each member of the family offers so much individually - they collectively bring creativity, strategic questions, dependability, and energy to our team.

Cathy Van Maren received this year's Merit Award for all of her work with the Coulee Region Group. She was instrumental in passing La Crosse's 100% clean energy commitment passed earlier this year. Additionally, she has spent years promoting safe, clean and accessible

Continued on page 11

Continued from page 10

transportation, and has been a staunch supporter and advocate for clean water.

Milwaukee City Council President Ashanti Hamilton and Milwaukee County Supervisor Supreme Moore

Omokunde received this year's Torchbearer Award. The two co-sponsored the resolution in Milwaukee to commit the city and county to eliminating greenhouse gases by 2050 and to create a joint City-County Task Force on Climate and Economic Equity, the first of its kind in the state.

Bill Moore received the Chapter's highest honor, the JJ & Pat Werner Award for his decades of advocacy and time leading hikes throughout Wisconsin. He is being recognized for his work with the Sierra Club Great Waters Group in numerous leadership positions, fighting proposed coal plants, serving on the state Executive Committee and leading decades of outings teaching people about Wisconsin and encouraging and inspiring them.

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Your generous contributions - above and beyond your membership dues - provided crucial support for our local grassroots campaigns to protect Wisconsin's water, land and wildlife.

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Y & Z
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MEMORIALS were received in memory of Hanns Golez; Francis J. McEvoy; Charlie Roberts; Mary K. Norwood; Rebecca Langer; Dan Ritter; Diane Radspinner; Evelyn A. Gunderson; Herbert J Lundin; Jonathan Luskin

These donations were made from November 1, 2018 through October 31, 2019. Thanks also go out to our many contributors who prefer to remain anonymous. We try to acknowledge every donor; if your name is not listed, please know that we greatly appreciate your support.

Investing in People and the Planet

My name is Laura Lane, and I'm a volunteer with the Sierra Club - John Muir Chapter.

Like many, I felt a sense of despair after the 2016 presidential election. Sitting on the sidelines no longer seemed like an option. I decided I must act on my values. Volunteering with the Sierra Club seemed like a natural fit.

The Chapter connected me with like-minded people who were passionate about saving our wild spaces and addressing climate change. I know that together we are making a difference, and with the support of the Chapter, I am growing and learning as an advocate.

The John Muir Chapter is dedicated to supporting volunteers and our development as leaders, and that support requires resources. That is why I'm asking you to give what you are able to support our work. You can find a donation form below

Sierra Club volunteers are on the front lines working to make an impact on our communities every day. We educate

people about the critical threats facing our planet, and we act to make a difference. Our actions include lobbying politicians, writing letters to the editor, planning events such as the recent climate strike, collaborating with other



organizations, collecting signatures on petitions, sharing information through social media, and mobilizing people to get our voices heard. The Sierra Club is a grassroots organization, and I didn't really understand the importance of this until I saw the amazing work being done

by my fellow residents firsthand.

A donation to the Sierra Club in Wisconsin is more than an investment in an organization that is working on multiple fronts to protect our environment and fight climate change. It is an investment in people who want to make a difference.

Sierra Club has given me so many new and empowering opportunities. I met with my legislator for the first time. My first opinion editorial was published in the local paper. I'm learning new skills that I've been curious about for some time, like social media strategy.

As a Sierra Club volunteer, I meet people everyday who are committed to change and who inspire my own volunteer work as well. That gives me hope for the future. Please invest in that future with a donation today. Together we can make a difference.

Laura Lane
Chapter Volunteer

Support the John Muir Chapter

When you make a donation to the John Muir Chapter you allow us to continue our work to protect wilderness and wildlife, to improve the quality of life in our cities and to promote the enjoyment of nature. Please be as generous as you are able. Your contributions, above and beyond membership dues, are an important part of the Chapter's budget.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ email _____

Credit Card _____ Exp. _____

Make payable to: Sierra Club-John Muir Chapter
Mail to: 754 Williamson St., Madison, WI 53703

- \$50
- \$100
- \$250
- \$500
- other _____

Contributions, gifts, and dues to the Sierra Club- John Muir Chapter are not tax deductible. They support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts here in Wisconsin. If you wish to make your gift tax deductible by only supporting our charitable work, please make your check payable to Sierra Club Foundation with John Muir Chapter in the memo.



SIERRA CLUB

JOHN MUIR CHAPTER
754 Williamson Street
Madison, WI 53703

Our newsletter is printed on recycled paper

CALENDAR

JANUARY 11

Chapter Executive Committee and River Touring Section Annual Meeting

11 a.m. to 3 p.m. First United Methodist Church, 615 Broadway St., Baraboo, WI
Contact: Carol Olson: 608-356-8992, olsonfam44@centurytel.net

JANUARY 16

Renew Wisconsin Energy Summit

Monona Terrace, Madison
Registration at renewwisconsin.org/renewable-energy-summit

JANUARY 24

Sierra Club - John Muir Chapter Open House

Time TBD. Get a behind-the-scenes view of the work we do! Chapter Office, 754 Williamson St., Madison, WI. Contact: Elizabeth Ward: elizabeth.ward@sierraclub.org.

JANUARY 25-26

Sierra Club Transportation, Land and Water Teams' 2020 Kickoff!

Chapter Office, 754 Williamson St., Madison, WI
Contact: Cassie Steiner: cassandra.steiner@sierraclub.org

FEBRUARY 7-9

WHA Garden Expo

Alliant Energy Center, Madison
More information at wigardenexpo.com

FEBRUARY 18

Spring Primary Election

myvote.wi.gov

MARCH 3

The Big Share, an online day of giving

Learn more at thebigshare.org

VOLUME 58 / NUMBER 1 JANUARY - MARCH 2020

VOLUNTEER NIGHTS ARE COMING TO A CITY NEAR YOU!

If you'd like to attend, contact Katie Hogan at kathryn.hogan@sierraclub.org

- Second Wednesday of every month in Madison, starting on January 8
- Second Thursday of every month, alternating between Racine and Kenosha each month, starting with January 9 in Racine
- February 5 - Milwaukee area
- February - La Crosse

Looking for other ways to get involved locally?
Visit sierraclub.org/wisconsin/local-groups

MARCH 6

Wisconsin Environmental Health Network Conference

Madison. More information at wehnonline.org

MARCH 6-8

Canoecopia

Alliant Energy Center, Madison.
More information at paddlers.com/canoecopia

MARCH 21

Wisconsin Grassroots Network Festival

Mazomanie. More information at wisconsingrassroots.net

APRIL 7

Spring Election and Presidential Preference Primary

myvote.wi.gov

APRIL 22

Earth Day's 50th Anniversary!

Join our Team Sierra Earth Day team at teamsierra.org/wisconsin.
Stay tuned for more opportunities and activities.



OUR MEMBERS IN ACTION



In November, 35 Sierra Club volunteers, representing different issue campaigns and areas of Wisconsin, attended a two-day intensive training hosted by the Midwest Academy. The training taught our leaders about power and influence, provided the tools to craft a winning campaign strategy, and built confidence among members of our various statewide issue campaign teams. In January 2020, we are taking what we learned at the training and putting it into action, starting with our issue team kickoff meeting on January 25 and 26. Now is the best time to get involved in one of our teams! Contact Volunteer Coordinator Katie Hogan to get involved: kathryn.hogan@sierraclub.org.

