



# WISCONSIN Sierran

NEWS OF THE WISCONSIN CHAPTER OF THE SIERRA CLUB

## AN EQUITABLE ELECTRIC SECTOR

As we continue our work to transition from fossil fuels to clean, renewable energy, it is important to remember that the change cannot be made without addressing the way the electric sector inequitably impacts Wisconsinites. High energy rates, difficulty contributing to public processes and other issues disproportionately impact low-income communities and communities of color. This must change.

Engaging in rate cases, the formal process for utility regulators to approve or alter utility rate structures, is one way to address inequity in the electric sector. In Wisconsin, the Public Service Commission is the regulating body. Rate cases provide the opportunity for utility customers to voice their concerns over high energy bills that can be financially devastating. Through collective activism, we can advocate for decreased energy costs so the most vulnerable in our communities no longer have to make impossible choices, such as choosing between buying medicine and paying energy bills.

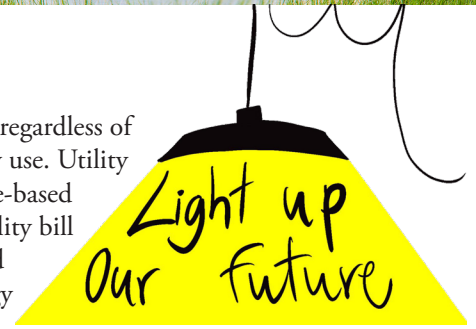
Utility rate structures set by rate cases determine customers' fixed fees. These fees show up on monthly utility bills and

are the same for all

*Our newsletter and our Chapter have new names! Find out more on page 3.*

residential customers, regardless of how much power they use. Utility bills also include usage-based fees. Because a full utility bill is the sum of fixed and variable fee, low-energy users have no control

over a higher proportion of their bill. Many low-energy users, who are often low income and from communities of color, are disproportionately, inequitably impacted by the fixed fees, which increased significantly in Wisconsin starting in 2015. In Madison, for example, residents now pay nearly \$500 per year in fixed fees alone – a substantial burden for many.



Artwork by Amy Inkonglad

In the winter, Wisconsin has a moratorium on shutting off residential utilities from November 1 – April 15, but during that time the bills don't stop and can pile up. There is some financial support for residents struggling to pay utility bills, but it is not enough, and peoples' utilities may be shut off when the moratorium ends. This is unjust and prevents access to critical resources, such as water and air conditioning in increasingly warm summers. Last year, Sierra Club successfully fought several times to maintain the moratorium on utility shutoffs, but the longer-term problem of assuring vital utility access remains unresolved.

Local governments, as well as utilities, have a role in addressing the inequitable impacts of our electric sector. In Milwaukee,

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# BREAKING BARRIERS IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT: ROSALIE EDGE

Have you heard of Rosalie Edge? She was once described as “the most honest, unselfish, indomitable hellcat in the history of conservation.” She broke gender and ideological barriers in the environmental movement in the early twentieth century and created a legacy that persists to this day. Despite her staggering accomplishments, she is not a well known figure, largely because she was a female environmentalist at a time when women were not included in the environmental movement.

I didn't learn about Rosalie's environmental activism until my daughter wrote a history paper about her last year. One of her greatest successes was her very public exposure of corruption in the Audubon Society. In the early 1920s, Rosalie was an avid birder. She became shocked and enraged after reading a pamphlet that said conservationists associated with the Audubon Society were allowing hunters on their lands to hunt birds. The conservationists were heavily influenced by timber companies, government officials, trophy hunters, pesticide companies and ranchers, all of whom arguably had an interest against conservation.

Rosalie decided to take a stand. At a public meeting of the Audubon Society, she boldly accused the members of corruption. Her accusations

were shocking and unprecedented. The Audubon society was a firmly established, admired organization led by men, while Rosalie was a 52 year old female birder and a newcomer to the environmental movement.

Nevertheless, Rosalie persisted. She founded her own organization, the Emergency Conservation Committee (ECC), to honestly fight for advances in conservation. By forming the ECC, Rosalie was able to sue the Audubon Society for its mailing list. She used the mailing list to contact all of the Audubon Society's members about the organization's corruption. As a result, the Audubon Society lost 60% of its membership. The court case also garnered a lot of publicity, which created public anger against the Audubon Society.

Eventually, Rosalie's activism caused the Audubon Society to change its practices to fight on behalf of birds. She also forced the leadership of the Audubon Society to remove several of the organization's more corrupt leaders. And she didn't stop there. Rosalie founded the first sanctuary for birds of prey, the Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, and she played a major role in establishing and expanding national parks, including Olympic National Park.

Rosalie's activism is relevant to us today.

She pioneered campaign and organizing tactics that we use in the Sierra Club. She published numerous letters to the editor in the New York Times, wrote pamphlets and lobbied decision-makers, including President Franklin Roosevelt. Most importantly, Rosalie's courage and dogged activism made the environmental movement more inclusive. Very few women were major figures in the modern environmental movement before Rosalie joined it.

The work Rosalie started is not finished. Many people, especially people of color and those of lower socioeconomic status are disproportionately affected by environmental harms yet they are not included or invited to participate in the environmental movement. This must change because in order to limit the effects of catastrophic climate change we need everyone's voice to be heard and respected. As the Wisconsin Chapter of the Sierra Club, we represent all people in our beautiful state, and we welcome everyone to the table.

## Laura Lane Chapter Chair

<sup>1</sup>Furmansky, Dyana Z. “Getting Over Rosalie.” *Audubon*, 7 Jan. 2010, [www.audubon.org/news/getting-over-rosalie](http://www.audubon.org/news/getting-over-rosalie).

<sup>2</sup>Edge, Peter. “Rosalie Edge, A Most Determined Woman.” Rosalie Edge, A Most Determined Woman | Hawk Mountain Sanctuary: Learn Visit Join, [www.hawkmountain.org/download/?id=5359](http://www.hawkmountain.org/download/?id=5359).

## THE WISCONSIN SIERRAN

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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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The deadline for submission of articles to the October issue is midnight on August 15, 2021.

### *Change of Address:*

You can update your contact information online at [myaccount.sierraclub.org](http://myaccount.sierraclub.org).

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this issue is particularly concerning. One of the inequitable impacts that we must address is energy burden; energy burden is the percentage of household income that goes toward energy costs, and it is disproportionately high for Black households in Milwaukee—among the highest in the nation. The Milwaukee County Energy Assistance Program, which pays a portion of the utility bill for residents with a high utility burden and low income, is an example of one way we can address this issue. Local governments should also consider making investments in energy efficiency targeted to Black households. These investments yield a win on two counts – both easing the high energy burden and reducing energy demand.

While work to decrease inequity in the electric sector continues, other forces have exacerbated the problem. The COVID-19 pandemic has imposed (and exposed) complex and compounding challenges on people just trying to get by—

individuals and families who have historically been overlooked and harmed by our nation's justice, human service, education and economic systems. In this time of unprecedented public health, social and climate crises, it is especially urgent to address the root disparities that keep people of lower income and BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) individuals and families relegated to the most vulnerable positions time and time again. As we advocate directly to utilities and other decision-making bodies, it is critical that our work includes dismantling the well-greased legacy infrastructure that imposes injustice.

Søren Warland, Volunteer  
Don Ferber, Volunteer  
Linda Frank, Volunteer  
Jess Haven, Beyond Coal Organizer

## NEW NAME, SAME DEDICATION

Names of organization reflect their identity and how they are viewed by others. In that vein, the John Muir Chapter of the Sierra Club is changing its name to the Wisconsin Chapter – a change overwhelmingly approved by 83% of our members who voted.

Our previous name was based on honoring John Muir, whose boyhood home was in Wisconsin, as a significant environmental figure and founder of the Sierra Club. Most Chapters across the county have names reflecting their geography, and having a different name led to confusion and a lack of recognition as the Wisconsin Chapter.

We continue to honor many of Muir's great accomplishments, but recognize that part of the history of the Sierra Club and the environmental movement was based on a Eurocentric culture. A Culture and perspective that marginalized and harmed other cultures and peoples, and is not representative of our current commitment to justice. In addition, this narrow perspective primarily focused on nature as a set-aside recreational resource only accessible to a privileged group of people.

Wisconsin's long environmental history includes numerous great environmental heroes – with many more who our history has not chosen to raise up and value. To align ourselves with just one individual, even one whom was integral to the Sierra Club, limits recognizing the contributions made by other

persons and cultures that other people may identify with or find more compelling. No single hero could represent the breadth of Sierra Club members and leaders.

The name Wisconsin brings an inclusion of everyone within our geography, with no temporal or cultural constraints. We also acknowledge that people bring different perspectives regarding the imperfections of past heroes, and as an organization that strives to be inclusive, we wish to honor that.

The Sierra Club has broadened its perspective in many ways. Initially a whites-only organization, we are now open and welcome to all who wish to join. From initially equating environment with unspoiled nature, we now see all environments as relevant, including those that are built. And we recognize that our past Eurocentric environmental movement led to injustices, and that justice is central to our environmental work. That includes raising the voices and honoring and including the experiences and perspectives of all people.

As the Wisconsin Chapter of the Sierra Club, we will continue to do just that.



# SIERRA CLUB

## WISCONSIN CHAPTER



## WISCONSIN'S MANAGEMENT OF GRAY WOLVES SHOULD BE BASED IN SCIENCE

In October of 2020, the Trump Administration announced plans to remove endangered species protections for the gray wolf. Earlier this year, the wolves formally lost their protections. Sierra Club and partners, represented by EarthJustice, have filed a lawsuit appealing that decision.

A law, Act 169, passed a few years ago, requires that the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) conducts a wolf hunt beginning in November and ending in February once gray wolves are removed from the Endangered Species list. Late last year, the DNR and Natural Resources Board stated they would not be able to do the legally required research and tribal consultation before starting a wolf hunt in early January. Instead, they will announce the hunt in November of 2021.

Our position, as always, has been that before Wisconsin opens a wolf hunt, there needs to be an inclusive, equitable, fair and science-based planning process that includes proper tribal consultation, the most up-to-date scientific information, a public input process and broad stakeholder engagement. We were able to secure a seat on the DNR advisory committee, and Diane Caine will represent Sierra Club on the committee. We were eager to see the DNR's commitment to doing a thoughtful process prior to moving forward with a wolf hunt.

Hunter Nation, the hunting group that famously auctioned off a trophy hunting trip with Donald Trump Jr. and very little ties to Wisconsin, sued the DNR stating that they were undermining their right to hunt wolves. Sierra Club, Humane Society of the United States and Center for Biological Diversity jointly engaged in the court case by filing a brief supporting the DNR's authority to wait to announce a hunt until November. The judge ruled in favor of Hunter Nation and ordered DNR begin a wolf hunt in February. The DNR appealed that decision, but the Court of Appeals announced it would not offer its ruling until March 9, making it moot. The DNR was forced to move forward with a wolf hunt.

The DNR issued a wolf quota of 200 and gave out 2,000 hunting and trapping licenses on February 22 for a six-day hunt. A February wolf hunt was unprecedented in Wisconsin, especially since February is breeding season for the wolves. Some scientists believe that the February hunt could have serious and long-lasting consequences on the wolf population.

If you'd like to get involved with our Wildlife Team and our work to ensure science-based management of Wisconsin's wildlife, contact Elizabeth Ward at [elizabeth.ward@sierraclub.org](mailto:elizabeth.ward@sierraclub.org).

**Elizabeth Ward, Chapter Director**  
Sierra Club Wisconsin



## FOREVER CHEMICALS

With more than 30 contamination sites statewide, PFAS (Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) chemicals, or better named “forever chemicals”, have infiltrated Wisconsin’s waterways. Over the past few months, there has been a push to regulate and eliminate these carcinogenic and hormone-interfering chemicals from our drinking water.

On December 16, the PFAS Coordinating Council, established by Governor Evers in 2019, released a Wisconsin PFAS Action Plan. This 91-page document consists of 25 action plans and will serve as the foundation for how state agencies approach PFAS contamination. Significant aspects of the action plan include implementing PFAS standards for soil and groundwater, initiating public awareness campaigns and ensuring that communities suffering from PFAS pollution have access to clean drinking water.

Communities particularly vulnerable to PFAS ingestion and impacts include veterans living near military bases and Great Lakes Indian and Fish Wildlife Commission member tribes that consume higher levels of fish. The PFAS Action Plan is a start to address both the PFAS drinking water crisis and environmental injustices.

Firefighting foam is one of the contributors to Wisconsin’s PFAS water pollution. In September, Act 101 went into effect and banned the use of firefighting foams containing PFAS chemicals. Then, in October, the Natural Resources Board enacted an emergency rule that added “action levels” to Act 101. Action levels would enable the Department of Natural Resources to see if water testing sites are successful in reducing levels of PFAS chemicals.

On December 18, a public hearing on the emergency rule was held by the Legislature’s Joint Committee for the Review of Administrative Rules (JCRAR). Despite testimonies from the Department of Natural Resources and industries in favor of retaining the emergency rule, the JCRAR, voting on party lines, terminated parts of the emergency rule. Most notably, Republican lawmakers ended the emergency rule’s ability to create PFAS action levels. In doing so, they have slashed the Natural Resource Board’s opportunity to find a way to treat the chemicals. Republican lawmakers defended their decisions by arguing that the emergency rule overstepped its designed purpose and power.



The Department of Natural Resources will continue to prioritize combating PFAS chemicals in 2021. More rules and stronger regulations regarding PFAS chemicals are anticipated. Want to get involved in PFAS work? Email [jadine.sonoda@sierraclub.org](mailto:jadine.sonoda@sierraclub.org).

**Zach Yiannias**  
Water Team Member



# STRONG POLICIES

FOR CLEAN AIR, CLEAN WATER, PUBLIC LANDS AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Sierra Club is deeply committed to advocating for strong environmental policy. 2021 brings two key opportunities: 1) the state budget process and 2) the legislative session.

The state budget process is a powerful opportunity to secure funding for initiatives to tackle climate change and become a more equitable state. In February, Governor Tony Evers announced his state budget proposal, which puts the values we have been hoping for into action. The

proposal includes funding for climate programs, drinking water programs, and land protection. Evers' proposed budget includes the creation of an Office of Environmental Justice, increased funding for Focus on Energy, drinking water programs (including lead pipe replacements), land protection, funding for local climate initiatives, biking and walking infrastructure, and more! Unfortunately, it does include the expansion of I94 as well, which is harmful, unjust, and doesn't mirror the values held in the rest of his budget.

Next, the Republican-led Joint Finance Committee will create their budget proposal, which will go to the legislature for a vote. As the budget session moves forward, Sierra Club members will attend meetings with their legislators, call Joint Finance Committee members, submit written comments and attend public hearings to fight for the final version of the budget to include the great programs that Governor Evers proposed and to prevent the inclusion of the I94 expansion.

To ensure that we have an environmentally just state budget, we need your help in the following ways. You can sign up for any or all of the opportunities listed below by visiting our "State Budget Action Hub" [sierraclub.org/wisconsin/state-budget-advocacy-hub](http://sierraclub.org/wisconsin/state-budget-advocacy-hub).

1) Attend and testify at the Joint Finance Committee hearings and other listening sessions. At the time this article was written, the Joint Finance Committee hadn't announced hearing dates. However, if you want to be among the first to know when the hearings were announced, we recommend joining our testimony pods!



These are groups of Sierra Club activists who will help each other prepare and practice their testimony. Whether this is your first public hearing or hundredth hearing, these testimony pods are meant to build connection when testifying online, help learn from one another, and build confidence when testifying!

2) Meet with your legislator. Sierra Club activists are setting up online meetings with their legislators to talk about what they want to see in the state budget. Meeting with your elected official not

only assures that they hear you - but it is also an empowering way to make a difference!

3) Submit a written comment. Sierra Club's online form allows you to submit a comment in just a few clicks!

4) Make a phone call to your legislators. Join in one of our call in weeks to amplify your impact!

5) Sign up for our budget advocacy team. Our state budget advocacy team receives an action approximately once a week to help support an environmentally just state budget. In addition to the state budget, our Legislative Committee is hard at work advocating for a healthy, safe and just world by taking positions on bills and getting our members to engage with them. In particular, we're keeping our eyes on redistricting, public transit, lands and water quality, and PFAS contamination.

Do you want to help make Wisconsin a better place for all? No experience is necessary, and we would love your input! Legislative Committee volunteers help decide whether and how Sierra Club Wisconsin responds to bills, and work on getting our members to engage with the legislative process. That means helping to organize call-in days, submitting public comments, testifying at virtual hearings, and more. Interested in learning more? Email [jadine.sonoda@sierraclub.org](mailto:jadine.sonoda@sierraclub.org).

Cassie Steiner, Senior Campaign Coordinator  
Jadine Sonoda, Campaign Coordinator

## A TURNING POINT FOR WISCONSIN'S ELECTRIC SECTOR

Within one year, half of Wisconsin's coal plants have been announced for retirement: the Genoa coal plant south of La Crosse, the Edgewater coal plant in Sheboygan, the Oak Creek coal plant in Oak Creek and the Columbia coal plant near Portage. This comes after years of advocacy by Sierra Club members, environmental health organizations, and the Clean Power Coalition of Southeast Wisconsin.

The Columbia coal plant was announced for retirement most recently. In February, Alliant Energy subsidiary Wisconsin Power and Light announced plans to retire the two units at the Columbia coal plant -- which Alliant Energy co-owns with Madison Gas & Electric and Wisconsin Public Service -- in 2023 and 2024, a move that will result in Alliant Energy being coal-free in Wisconsin more than 15 years earlier than the company's previous commitment.

This wave of coal plant retirements is paired with significant investment in solar and wind. Alliant Energy has announced that they will invest in 1,000 MW of solar by 2023, and hundreds of Sierra Club members and supporters have voiced their support for the first wave of proposed projects.

This is a significant turning point for the electric sector in Wisconsin and demonstrates that Sierra Club's commitment to 100% clean energy and to retiring all coal plants by 2030 is not just necessary, but is also achievable.

We remain committed to pushing for a clean and just electric sector, and invite you to join us as a volunteer in the next phase of our campaign. Contact [cassandra.steiner@sierraclub.org](mailto:cassandra.steiner@sierraclub.org) if you would like to join us.

**Cassie Steiner**  
Senior Campaign Coordinator, Sierra Club - Wisconsin

## BRAIDING SWEETGRASS INDIGENOUS WISDOM, SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE, AND THE TEACHINGS OF PLANTS

by Robin Wall Kimmerer, Milkweed editions., 2015,  
Reissued in 2020 408 pp.

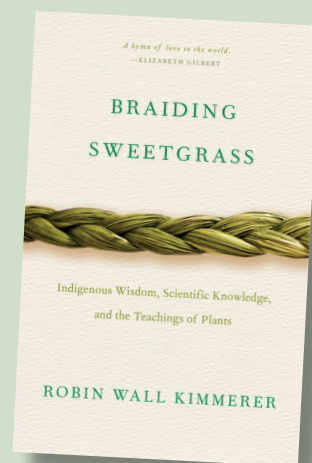
In a series of essays, Robin Wall Kimmerer brings her wisdom as a botanist, professor, mother, indigenous scientist and wordsmith to create an alchemy of clarity toward living with the Earth, our source. Each essay stands beautifully on its own, and together they are transcendent.

The tension between taking and killing versus survival is bedrock in native wisdom. *Braiding Sweetgrass* offers this ancient and sacred wisdom, supported by scientific study and contemporary retellings. The wisdom, the riches, the answers are available. Indigenous wisdom is not lost. Kimmerer the alchemist walks you into the woods, ponds and prairies. She then reveals transformative truths in richly crafted tales and narratives. Want to know how to live on the Earth and not spoil it? Read this book.

Sweetgrass is "the fragrant, holy grass." In Potawatomi, "it is called wiingashk – the sweet-smelling hair of Mother Earth. Breathe it in and you start to remember things you didn't know you'd forgotten," she writes in the preface. Sweetgrass is both a being and a metaphor of connection to source. "A Sweetgrass braid is burned to create a ceremonial smudge that washes the recipient in kindness and compassion to heal the body and the spirit." Kimmerer seems to have smudged each page for the reader, because — despite realistic portrayal of injustices to indigenous peoples and the planet — compassion, hope and care are woven into each narrative thread.

"I am the woman with the basket," Kimmerer declares after an immersive walk into the woods searching for leeks, "and how I fill it is the question that matters. If we are fully awake, a moral question arises as we extinguish the other lives around us on behalf of our own." In this essay, "The Honorable Harvest," the elders, the Earth, cultures, hunters, animals and plants pass their wisdom through a judicious and compassionate writer to woo the reader to become a better version of themselves. This book does not have to be a beautiful elegy for a dying planet. She provokes a personal shift to recognize the responsibilities of reciprocity as we relearn how to live honorably with each other and our Mother Earth. It's one of those books you never forget and never cull from your shelves.

Amy Lou Jenkins BSN MFA latest book is *Friends: Voices on The Gift of Companionship*. Contact her through [JackWalkerPress.com](http://JackWalkerPress.com) to forward a book for possible review.



## A STRONG START TO 2021

This January we held our first virtual Team Kick-Offs – and it was a success! All of our volunteer issue teams (think Transportation, Tar Sands, Coal) came together for a refresher on Sierra Club work, volunteer resources and a dive into team planning. We came out with new ideas and a boost of energy to start the year. Now is a great time to get involved, so if you'd like to learn more, email [kathryn.hogan@sierraclub.org](mailto:kathryn.hogan@sierraclub.org) and we'll find the right fit for you.

## LEAVING A LEGACY

Here's an opportunity we probably don't talk about enough. You can leave an environmental legacy by naming the Wisconsin Chapter in your will or trust. National Sierra Club has Gift Planning Officers who can help you every step of the way.

While your gift won't cost you anything today, you will receive some immediate benefits. By working with the Gift Planning Department to establish a legacy gift in your will, trust, or by beneficiary designation, you become eligible for recognition in Sierra Club's Rachel Carson Society. This particular giving society pays homage to Rachel Carson, who used the proceeds of her famous book, *Silent Spring*, to create an enduring legacy gift for Sierra Club. Her bequest remains instrumental in ensuring that Sierra Club has the funds necessary to continue our mission. To learn more, please call the Gift Planning Department at (800) 932-4270 or email [gift.planning@sierraclub.org](mailto:gift.planning@sierraclub.org) and tell them you'd like to support the Wisconsin Chapter.

## CLIMATE TASK FORCE REPORT

Last December, Governor Evers' Task Force on Climate Change released a report containing recommendations for how Wisconsin can meaningfully mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change. We're celebrating the milestone of having an administration that genuinely wants to prioritize climate action and has tried to integrate environmental justice and combating racial disparities into the conversation. **Though there were some missed opportunities, like failing to recommend the I-94 expansion project be stopped, there were also some exciting inclusions, like avoiding all new fossil fuel infrastructure.** Now is our opportunity to show support for the good and advocate for more ambitious goals! Read the report online at <https://climatechange.wi.gov/>.

## NATIONAL SIERRA CLUB ELECTION

The annual election for Sierra Club's Board of Directors. The Club election will receive ballots in early March. The ballot will include information on the candidates and how to vote on the website.

**Your participation is critical for a strong Sierra Club.**

The Sierra Club is a democratically structured organization. Input on policy and priorities from its grassroots members at all Sierra Club levels is a major membership obligation.

In a typical year less than 10% of eligible members vote in the elections to be valid. Our grassroots structure means that participation is needed in the voting process.

Learn about the candidates and the voting process at [sierraclub.org/2021-election](#)

Voting Online is quick and easy! Even if you need a user-friendly Internet voting site to save time and ensure your ballot is received by no later than noon Eastern time on election day.

## BACK 40 VICTORY

In January, a judge denied a wetlands permit to Aquila Resources for its Back Forty mine project in Up North Wisconsin. The Sierra Club - Wisconsin Chapter's Mining Chair issued this response:

"The Sierra Club applauds Administrative Law Judge Pulter's ruling to deny Aquila Resources' wetlands destruction permit application for its proposed mine adjacent to the Menominee River. **Judge Pulter correctly found that EGLE ignored issues raised by its own staff, the Environmental Protection Agency, and experts from concerned organizations, and underestimated the extent of proposed dam and destruction to wetlands.** The Sierra Club congratulates and thanks the Menominee Nation, the Coast Guard, the Menominee River, and local landowner Tommie for their successful efforts to challenge a clearly invalid permit application."



## ELECTIONS ARE UNDERWAY - VOTE!

Board of Directors is now underway. Those eligible to vote in the national Sierra Club election can do so by mail (or digitally if you chose the electronic delivery option). This page provides information on where you can find additional information on Sierra Club's election process.

### Sierra Club.

Sierra Club is an organization at all levels. Sierra Club requires the regular flow of views and participation from its membership in order to function well. Yearly participation in elections at all levels is a responsibility.

Members vote in the Board elections. A minimum of 5% is required for a resolution to be adopted. Participation is strengthened when our participation is high. That means your

visit our website at [https://www.sierraclub.org/board-directors/about-board-directors-](https://www.sierraclub.org/board-directors/about-board-directors)

If you do not receive your election materials in the mail, we encourage you to use the website to request a ballot and postage. If sending via ground mail, please note: your ballots must be received on Election Day, April 28, 2021.

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR LOCALLY GROWN, NATIONALLY KNOWN RETURNS

Join us for an online, social event! Connect with others from the comfort of your home during this fun-filled, interactive event highlighting the grassroots work of the Chapter. More details coming soon. Go to our website ([sierraclub.org/wisconsin](http://sierraclub.org/wisconsin)) or call us (608-256-0565) to learn more and sign up to sponsor the event! For now, save the date for May 12, 2021!

## COVID GUIDANCE EXTENDED

Outings, meetings and events that are in person remain on hold. Sierra Club's current COVID-19 guidelines extend until July, 2021.

## SEEKING EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CANDIDATES

Would you like to join other passionate volunteers in working toward the general and operational health of the chapter? The Wisconsin Chapter is seeking dedicated Sierra Club members with an interest in maintaining a strong and vibrant state chapter to run for the Executive Committee. The ExCom helps guide the chapter through governance, strategic planning, budget oversight and fundraising. If you have experience or a willingness to learn skills in those areas and are looking for a way to put your talents to work in a way that serves your values, purpose and passion, then we'd like to hear from you. Three at-large seats will be filled in the 2021 fall election. Those elected will serve three-year terms starting in January 2022 and ending in December 2024. Members from across the state are encouraged to apply. Meetings are scheduled for weekends and evenings to accommodate work/school schedules. The deadline for completed applications is August 1, 2021. A full description of Executive Committee member expectations is available as well as a short application form. Please contact Linda Frank at [Linda@frankenenvironmental.com](mailto:Linda@frankenenvironmental.com) to learn more about the opportunity to serve.

## LOVE SOCIAL MEDIA? JOIN OUR AMPLIFY TEAM!

Are you active on social media and passionate about the environment? While our activism remains virtual, it's more important than ever to spread the word online about how we can fight for a clean, green world. You can help out by joining our Amplify Team and widening the network of people we reach. We'll let you know when there are big opportunities to make a difference – like submitting comments or attending a virtual event – and you'll amplify the ask by sharing, liking, messaging, emailing and more. Interested? Email [kathryn.hogan@sierraclub.org](mailto:kathryn.hogan@sierraclub.org).



**TAR SANDS UPDATE**

## RESISTING LINE 3 AND LINE 5

With construction starting on Enbridge’s Line 3 and the Biden Administration’s revocation of a key permit for the Keystone XL pipeline, effectively cancelling it, a lot has been going on in pipeline fights in the region.

To start the year, the Tar Sands Team hosted a public webinar on January 14 to provide background information about tar sands pipeline issues in the Great Lakes region. We discussed the dangers of tar sands oil, gave insight to the current fight against these pipelines and provided attendees with resources to take action and join the fight.

Additionally, many people joined the fights against Line 3 and Line 5. Despite Enbridge receiving the final permits needed to start construction of Line 3 in November, grassroots efforts are trying to stall any progress the company hopes to make. Protestors have been blocking roads, participating in sit-ins and locking themselves to equipment. Anishinaabe dancers have been gathering peacefully at Enbridge construction sites to prevent further construction for Line 3 while additional court proceedings continue. Unfortunately, Enbridge is still moving forward with Line 3 construction every day, which continues to cause more damage.

For Line 5, the fights continue in both Wisconsin and Michigan. Here in Wisconsin, we are waiting for the Department of Natural Resources to release its draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) about Enbridge’s reroute proposition to move a part of the pipeline around the Bad River Reservation. Once the DNR releases the draft EIS, we will mobilize and submit comments again, like we did July 1 at a public hearing about the reroute. Get ready to take action and tell the DNR why the reroute is a bad idea!

Additionally, groups fighting Line 5 in Michigan are continuing efforts to shut it down. The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) recently approved one permit Enbridge needs to build a tunnel underneath the Straits of Mackinac, which would release approximately 1.4 million gallons of wastewater into the Great Lakes. Activists continue to oppose the project. The EGLE decision comes months after Governor Gretchen Whitmer revoked Enbridge’s easement to operate the current Line 5 along the bottom of the Straits of Mackinac. It is not clear yet if Enbridge’s Line 5 tunnel proposal will be recognized as part of the current Line 5 or as a new pipeline altogether. Regardless of the results, this decision will impact what permits Enbridge needs and whether or not Whitmer’s easement revocation will impact them.

After years of environmental activism and back and forth, the Biden Administration took action against pipelines on Day 1 by cancelling the Keystone XL pipeline. This is a win that we hope will spark further shutdown of other pipelines in the region, such as Line 3 and Line 5. Enbridge continues to destroy waterways and habitats, as well as violate Native treaties and lands. The fight against Enbridge and its pipelines requires collaboration across state lines and organizations. We continue to unite in the fight against them both.

Want to get involved in tar sands work? Email [jadine.sonoda@sierraclub.org](mailto:jadine.sonoda@sierraclub.org).

**Alex Garner**  
Organizing Intern and Tar Sands Team Member

# LOCAL GROUP UPDATES

Despite the ongoing global pandemic, our volunteer-led local groups keep safely advocating for Wisconsin's environment. Here are some updates from them and what the groups are prioritizing this year.

## CHIPPEWA VALLEY GROUP

In February, the Chippewa Valley Group organized a virtual presentation led by Ron Eckstein, retired DNR forester and now Green Fire member. In March, the group hosted a virtual presentation with River Alliance featuring a WI family farm that won an international award for water protection. Visit <https://www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/chippewa-valley> for future events.

## COULEE REGION GROUP

This year, the Group is prioritizing climate action, particularly promoting the transition from fossil fuels to clean, renewable energy. The group has been supporting the state-wide campaign to stop NTEC, Dairyland Power Cooperative's proposed fracked gas plant in Lake Superior.

In March, they co-hosted an online discussion with State Senator Brad Pfaff on transportation issues. Visit <https://www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/coulee> for upcoming events.

## FOUR LAKES GROUP

This year, the Four Lakes Group will continue to focus on transportation by providing input to the City of Madison on revisions to the Madison Metro bus system routes and services.

Early this year, the Group hosted a virtual café focused on establishing equitable and inclusive playgrounds in the City of Fitchburg. In February, the Group's Equity Access Team hosted a virtual exhibit regarding land access at the 2021 Garden and Landscape Expo. Visit <https://www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/four-lakes> for future events.

## FOX VALLEY GROUP

The Fox Valley Group has been unable to host their own outings due to Covid-19. However, the group remains active in sharing other resources and events regarding water and land protection, such as creating a list of Snowshoe Trails In and Around the Fox Cities. Visit <https://www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/fox-valley> to download the list.

## GREAT WATERS GROUP

In recognition of Black History Month, the Group hosted its second African American Environmental Pioneer Awards online as well as a panel of local experts discussing Milwaukee's lead problems.

In February, the group started a twice-a-month virtual outings project, sharing videos of trips to Western national parks and other places. Visit the GWG Calendar on <https://www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/great-waters> for future trips.

For Earth Day, April 24, the Group has planned socially distant cleanups and tree planting efforts, ordering 300 trees for planting in urban areas during April. On Monday, May 17, the group will be featuring Project Drawdown, looking to the moment when levels of greenhouse gases stop climbing and start declining.

## THE SOUTHEAST GATEWAY GROUP

The Group's 2021 initiatives include a variety of programs devoted to environmental justice, electric vehicles, the fallacies of recycling and other issues. Their work this year will include outdoor foraging videos by the outings chairs, trash tag pickups and working to save a stand of old-growth oak trees.

In February, the Group hosted a Virtual Vacations event. They have scheduled a presentation about why we should protect bats for Thursday, April 15. For more details, visit <https://www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/southeast-gateway>.

Zane Klavina  
Volunteer





# NOMINATE VOLUNTEERS TODAY!



Each year, the Sierra Club Wisconsin Chapter recognizes outstanding volunteers for their contributions to our organization, our communities and our planet. We know there is amazing work being done across our state, and today we are asking you, our members, to help us identify these very special people!

We want to hear your stories about the volunteer work that you've witnessed in the past year by Sierra Club volunteers as well as community leaders and other organizations. Fill out the easy online form to nominate them today. Don't let these environmental champions go unnoticed. Here are the six award categories:

**NEW ACTIVIST AWARD:** Given to a person who has been a Wisconsin Chapter activist for less than two years and who is an enthusiastic participant in issues and the organization. This recipient possesses a willingness to leap into new roles and champion environmental issues.

**WILDFLOWER AWARD:** Given to Sierra Club leaders in the Wisconsin Chapter, including an individual who exemplifies all that is wonderful in the environment and the club, a mentor for new and existing activists, or an educator who promotes a positive image for the Club.

**MERIT AWARD:** Given to Sierra Club leaders in the Wisconsin Chapter. Recipient may be an issues champion who has effectively battled environmental challenges, a consistent leader in the environmental movement (i.e. organization leadership roles, organization builder), or one who actively carries the Sierra Club message to decision-makers and the concerned public.

**LD ROCKWELL AWARD:** Presented to an individual who has provided exceptional service to the Wisconsin Chapter political/electoral program.

**GOOD CITIZEN AWARD:** Given to organizations and individuals outside the club who are championing innovative programs or processes that protect the environment.

**TORCHBEARER AWARD:** Given to organizations and individuals outside the club, such as decision-makers who consistently promote legislation, regulations or practices that protect the environment.

**JJ & PAT WERNER AWARD:** The chapter's highest honor, given to Sierra Club leaders in the Wisconsin Chapter who have shown an undying commitment to its goals and missions throughout the years.

The nomination form can be found at <https://sierraclub.org/wisconsin/awards>. The final deadline for nominations is August 1. Winners will be acknowledged at our annual Volunteer Appreciation & Awards Party in the fall. Contact Awards Chair Lacinda Athen with questions: [lacinda.athen@gmail.com](mailto:lacinda.athen@gmail.com).

## **WORKING TOWARDS AN UPLIFTING VISION: WE ALL RISE: AFRICAN AMERICAN RESOURCE CENTER**



We All Rise: African American Resource Center, Inc. is a non-profit organization in Green Bay, WI. They are a healing agency that exists to serve the most marginalized population in Wisconsin, the African American community. They provide mental health and crisis services with no wait time and offer therapy services to individuals, groups, couples and families. They also work with clients who come in with any needs they may have (housing, transportation, job searching and skills, safety, education, clothing, advocacy, etc.) and partner with them to find solutions and work toward healing.

Their work started in 2017 when Executive Director Robin Tinnon learned that less than 1% of African American youth are enrolled in afterschool programming. This led her to establish a safe and unapologetic space where Black youth could learn their history, increase their self-advocacy and become more positive participants in healthy relationships. We All Rise was born into existence. They secured nonprofit status in 2018 and opened their brick-and-mortar resource center in 2019. After a full year of the center being open to the public, its programming had served more than 800 individuals (including 150 youth).

This past year was nothing like they thought it would be. They found themselves amid not only a global pandemic but also a national uprising. The staff came together to have some serious discussions, knowing that Black folks would be disproportionately affected by COVID-19 due to reasons such as inadequate housing, lack of private transportation, inequities in health and underlying health conditions.

The vision of We All Rise is to create and help restore a vibrant African American community. Through uplifting, skill-building and intentionally targeting root causes of systemic oppression, they promote the healing of all. This vision calls for the collective liberation of African Americans navigating at the margins of society. This holistic approach inspires a village mentality that offers many support systems.

If you would like to learn more about, support or volunteer with We All Rise, contact them by calling (920) 785-9115 or visit their website at <https://www.weallriseaarc.org/>

**Robin Tinnon and Rachel Westenberg**  
Staff, We All Rise: African American Resource Center



# PROTECT WISCONSIN'S NATURAL RESOURCES THROUGH THE CONSERVATION CONGRESS

Are you asking: "What is the Wisconsin Conservation Congress, and why is it important to me?"

This is where you can make your voice heard regarding our natural resources in Wisconsin! The Conservation Congress is the only natural resources advisory body in the state where citizens elect delegates to represent their interests on natural resources issues on a local and statewide level. Their mission is to work with the Natural Resources Board and the Department of Natural Resources to responsibly manage our abundant natural resources, for present and future generations to enjoy.

- Every year, the **Wisconsin Conservation Congress meets in April** when citizen resolutions are introduced and voted on by the public in attendance at local county Conservation Congress meetings.
- Resolutions that pass are assigned to a WCC advisory committee for further examination and research/review.
- Resolutions that pass out of WCC committees are referred to the District Leadership Council and recommended for statewide public input as an advisory question on the next April's questionnaire.
- Those questions that pass the District Leadership Council are placed on the questionnaire and the public in attendance at the Conservation Congress County Meetings in April can vote on those advisory questions.

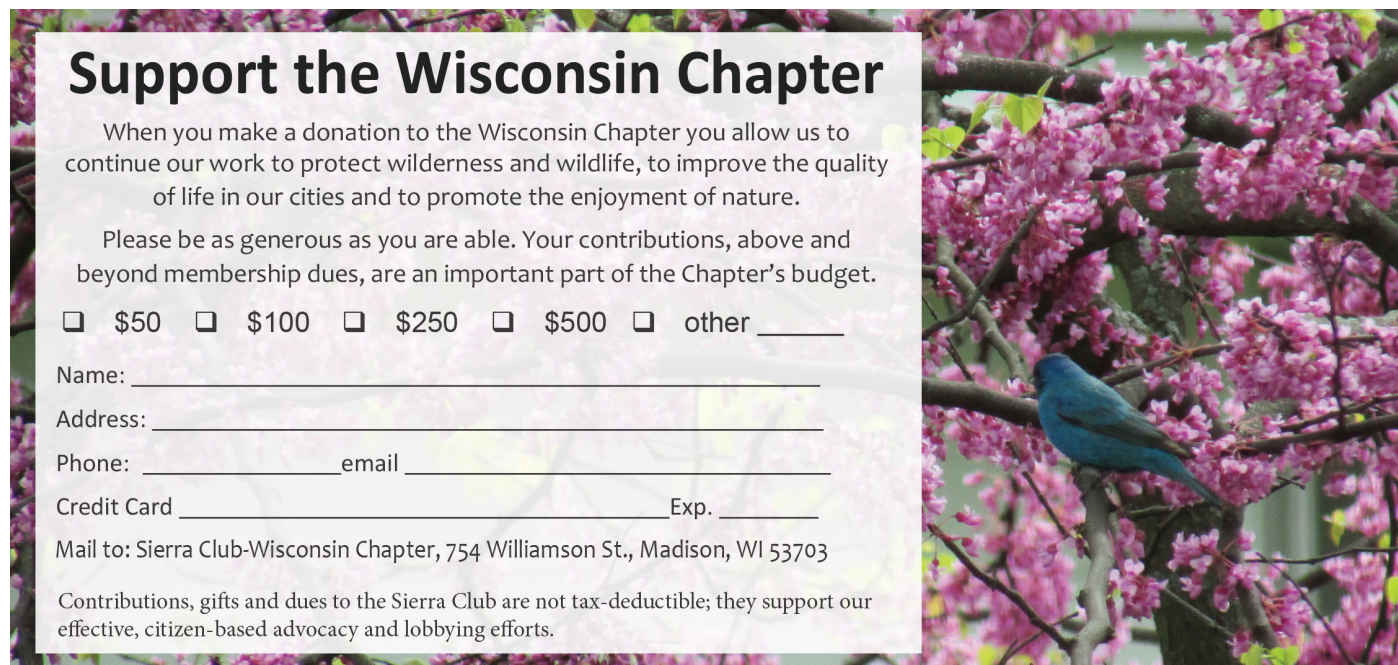
- The **full body of the WCC meets in May** to take a position on the issue based on the public's opinion and the results of the advisory questions.
- All questions and results from the WCC convention in May are then forwarded to the Natural Resources Board as advice from the WCC.

As you can see, it takes over a year to complete the process for a favorable resolution. There were a record-setting 64,943 responses to the 2020 Spring Hearing Questionnaire. So, it is most important to get involved and submit resolutions this April for protection of our natural resources. Public input will be for 72 hours beginning April 12, 2021.

For more complete information about submitting/supporting resolutions to WCC, visit [dnr.wisconsin.gov/about/wcc/springhearing](http://dnr.wisconsin.gov/about/wcc/springhearing) or contact Kari Lee-Zimmermann, Conservation Congress Liaison (Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources), 1-608-266-0580.

Sierra Club - Wisconsin's Conservation Congress voting guide will be available soon. Check our blog at [sierraclub.org/wisconsin](http://sierraclub.org/wisconsin) or email [cassandra.steiner@sierraclub.org](mailto:cassandra.steiner@sierraclub.org) for more information.

**Maureen McCoy**  
Lands Team Member



## Support the Wisconsin Chapter

When you make a donation to the Wisconsin 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.

\$50    \$100    \$250    \$500    other \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: Sierra Club-Wisconsin Chapter, 754 Williamson St., Madison, WI 53703

Contributions, gifts and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax-deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts.





## Conservation Congress Voter Guide

Voting will be open from April 12 at 7:00 PM to April 15 at 7:00 PM

| Questionnaire                          | Question  | Position    |
|--|---|-------------|
| <b>Natural Resources Board</b>         | Do you support the formation of a collaborative scientific working group composed of DNR, NRB, DATCP, WCC, CDAC, Wildlife Groups, Deer Farming Organizations and Native American Tribes to collaborate on the scientific research efforts to address health related issues leading to the development of CWD in deer and elk in our state?  | <b>YES</b>  |
| <b>Wisconsin Conservation Congress</b> | 2. Do you support WCC opposition to construction of a new 42-mile segment of the Enbridge Line 5 crude oil pipeline in Ashland and Iron Counties to replace the existing portion of the Line 5 pipeline that bisects the Reservation of the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa?   | <b>YES</b>  |
|  | 3. Do you support WCC opposition to issuance of any permits for the Line 5 project by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources at the conclusion of its EIS process?   | <b>YES</b>  |
|  | 4. Would you support legislation to require perennial native species vegetative buffers of 50 feet along rivers and streams and 16.5 feet along ditches not covered by local zoning ordinances under Wisconsin's Shoreland Management Program in NR 115?  | <b>YES</b>  |
|  | 5. Should the Wisconsin Conservation Congress support DNR's use of a fact-specific determination process for high capacity well applications that considers environmental impacts such as potential effects on groundwater protection areas, water loss, degradation of safe drinking water or groundwater, and impacts when combined with other wells to springs, navigable waters and public water systems? | <b>YES</b>  |
|  | 12. Would you support the Governor, Wisconsin legislators, the NRB and DNR Secretary uniting to implement the AFWA Best Management Practices for Prevention, Surveillance, and Management of Chronic Wasting Disease to control the spread and slow the increasing rate of prevalence of CWD in Wisconsin's deer herd?  | <b>YES</b>  |
|  | 14. Would you support legalizing the harvest of white (not albino) deer statewide?  | <b>NO</b>   |
|  | 21. Do you favor the DNR working with the Legislature to restore local control by allowing counties to develop ordinances to protect their lakes, rivers and wetlands?  | <b>YES</b>  |
|  | 22. Do you favor the Conservation Congress working with the legislature to add more positions to the Office of Applied Science?   | <b>YES</b>  |
|  | 24. Do you support the allowing dog training, trialing, and hunting on state-owned land from April 15-July 31 without requiring the use of an 8-foot leash?   | <b>NO</b>   |
|  | 26. Do you support the Conservation Congress working with DNR to accept Every Kid Outdoors passes at state parks in Wisconsin?  | <b>YESS</b> |



**SIERRA  
CLUB**

WISCONSIN CHAPTER

754 Williamson Street

Madison, WI 53703

Our newsletter is printed on recycled paper

## CALENDAR

### APRIL 1

Wisconsin Chapter ExCom meeting  
6:00 p.m.

### APRIL 6

Wisconsin Spring Elections  
Learn more at <https://myvote.wi.gov/en-us/>

### APRIL 12-15

Conservation Congress voting is live

### APRIL 22

Earth Day

### APRIL 22-23

Nelson Institute Earth Day 2021 - Nature at Work

### APRIL 28

Wisconsin State Budget Public Hearing - Virtual  
Find out more on our website [sierraclub.org/wisconsin](http://sierraclub.org/wisconsin)

### MAY 11

Locally Grown, Nationally Known House Party  
(online this year!)

### MAY 17

Project Drawdown - Great Waters Group  
6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

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## Algunos artículos del *Wisconsin Sierran* están disponibles en español.

Se sitúan en la red:

[sierraclub.org/wisconsin/muir-view-newsletter](http://sierraclub.org/wisconsin/muir-view-newsletter)

Select articles from The Wisconsin Sierran are available in Spanish. They are found online:  
[sierraclub.org/wisconsin/muir-view-newsletter](http://sierraclub.org/wisconsin/muir-view-newsletter)

## Monthly Virtual Volunteer Nights

APRIL 14

MAY 11

JUNE 8

JULY 13

AUGUST 11

SEPTEMBER 8

On the second Wednesday of every month, join us for a night of action and activism! Registration required to join us. Learn more at [sierraclub.org/wisconsin](http://sierraclub.org/wisconsin)



## OUR MEMBERS IN ACTION



Over 50 new volunteers joined our Virtual Volunteer Fair in February, our issue teams started off the year in full swing by planning for 2021 at our team kick-offs and our Public Lands Team has gotten creative with a snow sculpture competition all about spreading the message of what our public lands mean to you!