



WISCONSIN Sierran

NEWS OF THE WISCONSIN CHAPTER OF THE SIERRA CLUB

ACCESS TO THE OUTDOORS

“I can’t believe we haven’t visited this park or trail before.” Over the past 16 months, my husband and I have been able to discover and explore new local parks and trails, which is surprising since we have lived here since 1987. The pandemic made us take a closer look at what is right here in our community.

We were not alone. The National Recreation and Parks Association found that **“more than 190 million U.S. residents visited a local park, trail, public open space or recreation facility during the first three months of the COVID-19 pandemic.”** As the UW School of Medicine and Public Health puts it: “Access to outdoor recreation matters... Just spending time in natural spaces improves mental and physical well-being.”

But access is not the same for everyone, and barriers exist that keep many people from enjoying outdoor opportunities:

- In too many cases, you need to have a car to visit a park or public land.
- Financial costs, such as entrance fees or user fees, can be enough to stop a family from visiting a park or enjoying an outdoor activity.
- Parks and public lands still have work to do to provide infrastructure for the differently abled like fishing piers, playgrounds, trails or equipment, like accessible kayaks.
- Equipment costs can be high, for example,

camping equipment for a family.

- Many people have not felt comfortable or welcome in a park or public land setting due to experiences with racism, ableism or sexism.
- Many people have not had the information or opportunity to try something new in a friendly and no-to low-cost environment.

The Sierra Club Wisconsin Chapter’s Lands Team and Equity Committee, the Four Lakes Group’s Land Access and Equity Team, and the Great Waters Group’s Nearby Nature program have been advocating to improve access to Wisconsin’s amazing parks and public lands.



Continued on page 3

From the Chair
- 2 -

Pipeline Resistance
- 4 -

Stopping Gas in its Tracks
- 5 -

Legislative Update
- 6 -

Protect Wisconsin Wolves
- 7 -

Issues at a Glance
- 8 -

Award Winners
- 10 -

Green Review
- 11 -

Vote for Chapter Leadership
- 12 -



REPUBLICAN BACKED DENTIST'S POWER PLAY ENDANGERS WOLVES' LIVES IN WISCONSIN

His six year term on Wisconsin's Natural Resource Board (NRB) has expired, but dentist Fred Prehn refuses to step down. Instead, he chairs the meetings and weighs in on important natural resource decisions, which is having disastrous consequences for the state's wolf population.

On August 11, Prehn forced the new and rightful appointee, Sandra Dee Nass, to sit in the wings, while he led the NRB in a vote to nearly double the fall wolf hunt quota. Although the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) recommended the hunt quota be set at 130 and many advocacy groups called for a zero quota, the NRB ignored the recommendations and set the quota at 300 wolves.

The NRB's move to set such a high wolf quota for the fall hunt comes on the heels of a disastrous spring wolf hunt that took place during the wolves' breeding season. A lawsuit filed by hunters forced the DNR to hold a spring wolf hunt in which almost twice as many wolves as the 119 wolf quota were killed.

Despicably, the wolves are falling victim to political games. Prehn was appointed to his now expired term by Republican Governor Scott Walker. Prehn's refusal to step aside blocks Democratic Governor

Tony Evers' new appointee, Nass, from taking her place.

Evers appointed Nass on April 30. The accepted practice of the NRB is for members to graciously vacate their seats and allow new appointees to take their places. Indeed, Prehn's own predecessor stepped aside and allowed him to become a full voting member within days of his appointment six years ago.

By refusing to graciously and honorably vacate his seat as his past predecessors have done, Prehn is thwarting the will of the people. The people of Wisconsin elected Evers and gave him the right to name a new appointee to the Natural Resources Board. Prehn is preventing Nass from taking her rightful seat and effectively silencing her voice. Nass is extremely well qualified to serve on the Natural Resources Board, and as the Governor's rightful appointee, no one-including Prehn-has the right to withhold her seat from her.

In June, our Executive Committee passed a formal motion stating that the Sierra Club Wisconsin Chapter opposed Prehn staying on the NRB beyond his term's expiration and called on him to step down immediately. We also collected and delivered a petition with over 425 signatures demanding Prehn vacate his seat now. A letter signed by

advocacy groups, including the Sierra Club Wisconsin Chapter, was also sent to Wisconsin's Attorney General, Josh Kaul, asking him to remove Prehn from his seat on the NRB.

Prehn claims his refusal to step down is technically legal, citing a 1964 Wisconsin Supreme Court decision which allowed members of some boards to holdover until the Senate confirmed their replacements. Wisconsin's Republican controlled Senate has not confirmed Nass' appointment and has set no timeline to do so. Nass is denied her participation, while Prehn hangs on and wrongfully influences policy decisions, including the wolf hunt. This situation has dire consequences, not only for Wisconsin's wolf population, but also the management of our state's natural resources, including clean air and water.

I'm writing to all Sierrans with an urgent call to action: let your voices be heard on Prehn's holdover and the inhumane 300 wolf quota for the fall hunt. Write letters to the editors of your local newspapers, call your elected state officials, and testify at the NRB meetings. If you would like more information, please email me at lalane22@yahoo.com.

Laura Lane
Chapter Chair

THE WISCONSIN SIERRAN

754 Williamson St., Madison, WI 53703
A Publication of the Wisconsin Chapter of the Sierra Club

Wisconsin Sierran Committee

Chapter Chair: Laura Lane
Editor: Cassie Steiner
Layout: Catherine McKenzie
Reid Magney, Janine Melrose,
Jacinda Tessmann

Contributor Guidelines

Please submit articles by mail or email to:
754 Williamson St.
Madison, WI 53703-53703
wisconsin.chapter@sierraclub.org

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.

Advertising Coordinator:

Jacinda Tessmann
jacinda.tessmann@sierraclub.org

Advertising Rates:

Current advertising rates may be found on the Wisconsin Chapter website: sierraclub.org/wisconsin

Deadline:

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

Change of Address:

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

Continued from page 1

EXPANDING THE EVERY KID OUTDOORS PROGRAM TO WISCONSIN

The National Park Service's Every Kid Outdoors program provides a pass for fourth graders and their families for free admission to National Parks. Other states have expanded this pass to include their state parks, and activists in Wisconsin want to expand this program to Wisconsin State Parks.

In April 2020, 92% of Conservation Congress voters supported this program. And the 2021 budget introduced by the Governor included language that would create the Every Kid Outdoors program here in Wisconsin. Unfortunately, this language was not included in the budget that was signed into law. Now, a standalone Every Kid Outdoors bill has been introduced in the Senate and Assembly. Thank you to the many Sierra Club volunteers and supporters who have helped get us this far by supporting the Conservation Congress resolution and the bills in the legislature!

The Assembly version of the bill had a hearing that team members turned out to support. Team member Maureen McCoy explains that "by focusing on this age group year after year, the program aims to ensure every child in the United States has the opportunity to visit their federal lands and waters by the time he or she is 11 years old, establishing a lifelong connection to enjoy and protect our American outdoor heritage. We want to increase this opportunity by making our beautiful Wisconsin State Parks available to 4th graders and their families."

TRANSIT TO TRAILS AND PARKS IN DANE COUNTY

Local public transit can help bring the outdoors closer to people, and the Four Lakes Group Land Access and Equity Team has been working on enhancing transportation to parks in Dane County. Madison Metro, which manages and runs the transit system at the heart of Dane County, has initiated a redesign process providing an opportunity to get more parks linked to public transit. A current analysis of county park properties shows that only six are currently accessible by bus.

Dane County Parks wants to expand public transit access to more properties, especially the nearly 2,500 acre Capital Springs Recreation Area which offers a broad range of recreational opportunities including wildlife viewing, cross country skiing, hiking, snowshoeing, canoeing, kayaking, hunting, fishing and camping. The Lussier Heritage Center at the heart of this greenspace is transitioning to become the park's environmental education and visitor services hub.

Sierra Club volunteers are working together with Dane County Parks to achieve our goals. We are educating Madison Metro and the Local Transportation Committees that are beginning to design a pilot project to introduce a shuttle service. The effort to expand public transportation options to access local parks and public lands also benefits our local

climate change efforts which have focused on reducing vehicle miles traveled and reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector.

REDUCING OTHER ACCESS BARRIERS

While the American Disabilities Act has resulted in many changes to our park and recreation infrastructure, including accessible bathrooms, picnic tables and fishing piers, there is still work to be done. Earlier this year, the Four Lakes Group hosted a café to understand more about inclusive playgrounds. These parks strive to create play experiences that don't separate people by abilities but bring them together. One of our volunteers, with frank candidness, reminded us that these playgrounds are "more inclusive" but still have a ways to go. In the case of the Fitchburg playground that was discussed, the playground needs to be linked to public transit in order to serve intended populations.

Moving forward, the Four Lakes Group wants to provide opportunities to explore gear and recreation experiences. We hope to team up with Dane County Parks on events to do just that.

Additionally, Great Waters Group and their partners at Nearby Nature Milwaukee and the Urban Ecology Center have been hosting outings to provide a group environment to explore parks in the Milwaukee area and clean ups to maintain these parks.

BEING COMFORTABLE IN THE OUTDOORS

Are we really welcoming to all outdoors enthusiasts? In a recent trip to the Northwoods, confederate flags hung on a house adjacent to where we stayed. What does this say to our neighbors of color?

I encourage you to join the October 7th event Thru-hiking the Ice Age Trail: Emily Ford on Race and Outdoor Recreation (sign up for this event on the Wisconsin Chapter website sierraclub.org/wisconsin). Emily Ford is the first known Person of Color and Black woman to thru-hike the Ice Age Trail. She traversed 1,200 miles in Wisconsin winter weather conditions. At this event, Ford will be sharing her experiences on this hike, as well as her broader experience as a Woman of Color in outdoor recreation.

Increasing access to parks provides many benefits to Wisconsinites -- including physical health, mental health, education and love for the outdoors. Join one of the Sierra Club's teams (sierraclub.org/wisconsin/volunteer) to continue to evolve the outdoor experience in Wisconsin and your neighborhood!

Liz Wessel
Sierra Club Four Lakes Group Executive Committee Member

A WINDOW INTO THE GREAT LAKES REGION'S PIPELINE RESISTANCE

The region west of the Great Lakes has historically been a pipeline corridor transporting Canadian tar sands oil for refining through some of the most pristine wilderness areas. The main actor in the creation and maintenance of these pipelines is Enbridge, one of Canada's largest fossil fuel conglomerates. Today, two of the company's major pipelines, Lines 3 and 5, are facing strong resistance movements and are under review in courts and government agencies in Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan. Enbridge, their pipelines and the tar sands products they carry threaten Indigenous treaty rights and pose a dangerous threat to our climate and environment. The movement to stop tar sands pipelines is fast-moving and ever-changing, and a lot has happened in the last few months.

The Enbridge **Line 3** pipeline extends from Alberta, Canada to Superior, Wisconsin and would transport nearly one million barrels of tar sands everyday. **Enbridge, the company responsible for the largest recorded inland oil spill in the US**, now seeks to build a new corridor through the Mississippi headwaters, the treaty territory of the Anishinaabe peoples of Northern Minnesota to the shores of Lake Superior. Enbridge has pushed forward with the construction of the new pipeline as fast as they can while the final permits for the operation of the project are being challenged in court. On the ground, Indigenous-led resistance to this construction has been crucial and is ongoing. On June 5-8, thousands of people gathered in Northern Minnesota to stand against the Line 3 tar sands pipeline in a coordinated effort known as the Treaty People Gathering. Over 200 water protectors were arrested after shutting down Line 3 construction at the Two Inlets pump station for 29+ hours—one of many direct actions that have delayed Enbridge's work this summer. To date, over 700 water protectors have been arrested.

The Enbridge **Line 5** pipeline travels from Superior, Wisconsin to Sarnia, Ontario. On its route, the pipeline travels through northern Wisconsin to the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, across the lake bed of the Straits of Mackinac and to a refinery

in Sarnia. In Wisconsin, Enbridge is attempting to expand Line 5 around the Bad River Reservation after they chose not to renew Enbridge's permits to operate on their land. Enbridge is still awaiting a number of permits following the release of the draft Environmental Impact Statement from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), which they need to move forward: No permits, no pipeline. The Sierra Club Wisconsin Chapter has been placing pressure on Wisconsin decision makers like Governor Evers and DNR Secretary Preston Cole to avoid all new fossil fuel infrastructure, something which the Governor's Task Force on Climate Change underlines as important to meet the state's environmental goals.

In Michigan, **the pipeline, which has spilled over 1.1 million gallons since 1968**, travels under the Straits of Mackinac, where the pipeline cuts through one of the most ecologically sensitive areas in the world. A spill of tar sands oil from this section could affect all of the Great Lakes, which make up 22% of the world's surface freshwater. In May, Enbridge refused to shut down Line 5 in the Straits despite Governor Gretchen Whitmer's order to do so. The Governor believes the pipeline to be a 'ticking time bomb' and we couldn't agree more. While Enbridge illegally operates Line 5 along the bottom of the Straits, they continue to pursue their proposal to construct a tunnel underneath them, which they would run Line 5 through, claiming greater safety. Resistance to the project is strong, and across the region the movement is growing to stop all tar sands products from flowing and to advocate for treaty rights, climate, environment, health and our communities.

If you would like to learn more about our tar sands work, email Jadine Sonoda at jadine.sonoda@sierraclub.org.

Bernard Kaiser
Organizing Project Aide



STOPPING GAS IN ITS TRACKS

We know gas has no part in our clean energy future, and today it's more clear than ever before. In the scientific findings released this August by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), methane is named specifically as an extremely potent greenhouse gas -- more than 80 times as powerful as carbon dioxide. Methane is the main component of the gas that is burned in some power plants and is what many utilities claim as 'clean'. Natural gas is the industry term used to mask the negative impacts of this fossil fuel and it is critical that we stop building infrastructure that supports gas and call it what it is: a fossil fuel. In Wisconsin, we're opposing all new fossil fuel infrastructure, including the three new gas projects below.

SUPERIOR: NEMADJI TRAIL ENERGY CENTER

Dairyland Power Coop and Minnesota Power have jointly proposed the Nemadji Trail Energy Center (NTEC), a \$700 million gas plant, and are still working their way through the approval process. We're continuing to push back. Sierra Club is partnering with Clean Wisconsin to ask a court to overturn the Wisconsin Public Service Commission's (PSC) initial approval of NTEC. Around the same time of the PSC's approval of the NTEC plant, it has come to light that Former-Commissioner Michael Huebsch applied for Dairyland's CEO position and communicated with Dairyland employees, indicating a conflict of interest. On another front, Dairyland has applied to the Rural Utility Service of the USDA for a grant to fund NTEC, and we're calling on the office to reject their application and stay aligned with President Biden's commitment not to fund fossil fuels.

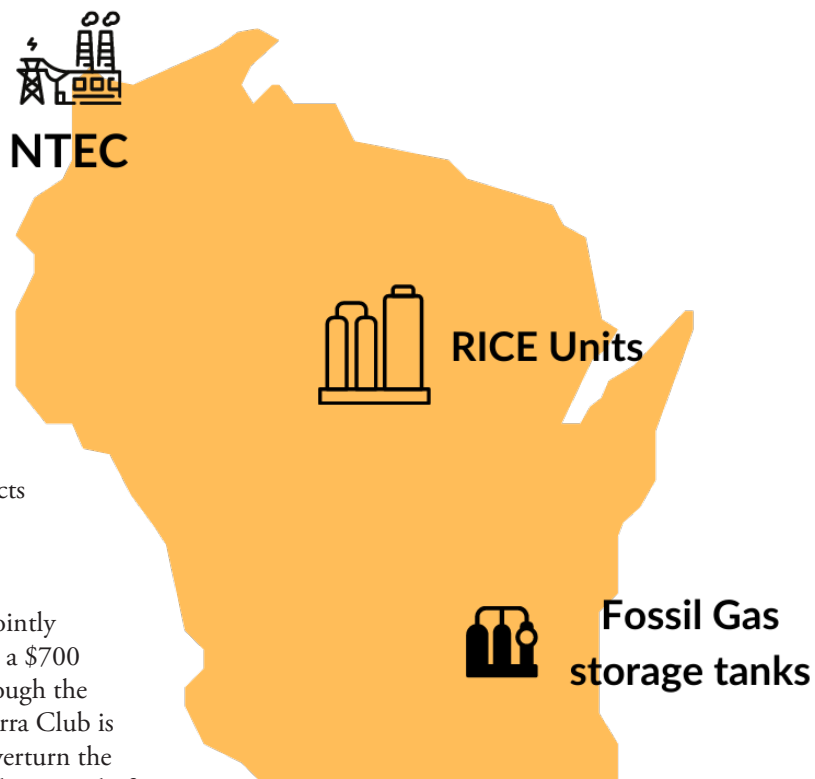
IXONIA AND BLUFF CREEK: LIQUIFIED NATURAL GAS STORAGE TANKS

WEC Energy, the owner of We Energies and WPS, has proposed building new liquified natural gas (LNG) storage tanks, stating that they are necessary if they are to meet customer demand on a few of the coldest days of winter. Customers would be charged over \$460 million for this project, which would, in addition to digging us deeper into our fossil fuel hole, endanger the communities they're proposing to build the storage tanks in Ixonia and Bluff Creek Wisconsin. Sierra Club found that WEC could instead invest that money in energy efficiency programs and eliminate the need for the tanks all together. At a recent Public Service Commission hearing on permits for this project, 100% of the public comments called for the projects to be rejected and told the Commission that WEC's project is a bad idea for our health, climate and economy.

ROTHSCHILD AND KRONENWETTER: RICE UNITS

In addition to their LNG proposal, WEC has also proposed building two new Reciprocating Internal Combustion Engines (RICE units) in central Wisconsin, which are small gas plants used to meet peak energy demand. Battery storage is an excellent alternative to this fossil fuel infrastructure, and we're excited to show up throughout the permitting process to make sure WEC and Wisconsin's decision makers know this.

If you want to get involved in our gas work, email Jadine Sonoda and jadine.sonoda@sierraclub.org.



LEGISLATIVE REVIEW



While our current legislature can be difficult to work with, advocating for strong bills is crucial if we want to hold our lawmakers accountable and make sure they know Wisconsinites are calling for clean air, clean water and

healthy lands. Our Legislative Committee tracked bills that impact our environment, health and communities throughout the summer, and our work is ongoing. Read on for our legislative updates.

WISCONSIN'S BUDGET

The Republican budget failed to support many Sierra Club priorities to protect Wisconsin's environment and residents, and failed to ensure equity for those who have continually been disenfranchised. Our asks were based on solid science, the looming threat of climate change, recognition of the threats to our water and air, the need for access to places that people need to go and protecting nature.

Especially troubling were cuts to much-needed transit for Madison and Milwaukee. There were failures to address dangerous PFAS, lead in water pipes, nitrates and other toxins that are especially problematic in some rural areas. Common sense proposals like expanding the highly successful Focus on Energy program, providing added funding for county conservation staff and any new climate and environmental justice programs were axed. Adding insult to injury was the rejection of \$1.6 billion in federal aid for health care and major cuts to education funding.

The Knowles-Nelson Stewardship fund was renewed, but only for 4 years and at a lower-than-requested level. There were small increases in paratransit aid, and we still have hopes that free state park passes will be approved for fourth graders and their families.

Despite this sad news, we do have hope. First, our volunteers did a great job of making their voices heard. Governor Evers controls the significant federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds coming to Wisconsin (some of which he's already used to offset the cuts to Madison and Milwaukee's transit systems) and many communities are taking strong action on climate and clean energy. Finally, redistricting holds hope to once again elect representatives who will represent and respond to their constituent's needs.

The Wisconsin Chapter marches on stronger than ever, and with your support, we'll continue fighting for you and the environment.

CLEAR ACT

Everyone deserves clean drinking water, but PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) are threatening this by contaminating this essential resource. This summer, the Wisconsin Senate introduced a bill called the CLEAR Act, one of the most comprehensive pieces of legislation in the nation, to keep Wisconsinites safe from the harmful effects of PFAS. Some highlights of the bill:

- **Clear and strict standards.** Requirements for water source enforcement standards and water quality criteria, soil and sediment residual contamination levels and air emissions standards.
- **Grant programs.** Funding for community grant programs to take action to mitigate, treat, dispose of or remove PFAS contamination.
- **Health and environmental studies.** Funding for one study to determine the long-term human health effects. Another study will conduct biomonitoring to assess PFAS exposure levels and better understand the factors that affect PFAS levels in residents of different communities.
- **Robust sampling and testing.** Funding for the sampling and testing of public water supplies for PFAS.
- **Target the source.** Addresses the primary sources of PFAS, especially in firefighting foam and food packaging.

EVERY KID OUTDOORS

Every Kid Outdoors is a federal program that provides free access to national parks for fourth graders and their families but many Wisconsinites do not live near a national park which makes it difficult for families to enjoy the Every Kid Outdoors program. The Every Kid Outdoors Act is a proposed bill that allows the DNR to accept the Every Kid Outdoors pass at Wisconsin State Parks which will increase access to green spaces for kids in our state, improve physical health, mental health, and provide education and love for the outdoors in our children. Read more about this on page 3.

REDISTRICTING

Now that the results of the 2020 Census are in, it's time to turn our attention to redistricting. Redistricting is the process by which new congressional and state legislative district boundaries are drawn, and it is completed the year after the ten-year US Census is completed. In Wisconsin, requirements include that state legislative districts be compact and contiguous. The Wisconsin State Legislature draws congressional and state legislative district boundaries, subject to the governor's veto.

Throughout this process, it's crucial that we fight gerrymandering and advocate for a fair redistricting process. Gerrymandering happens when the political party in power tries to draw district lines to their advantage, thereby

Continued on page 11



THE FEB WOLF HUNT CAN'T HAPPEN AGAIN

THE HUNT EXCEEDED QUOTAS BY 83%

THE CONTINUED FIGHT TO PROTECT WISCONSIN'S GREY WOLVES

This summer, the chapter's Wildlife Team, composed of volunteers and leaders from across Wisconsin passionate about ensuring the state's wildlife is managed based on science and tribal consultation, worked diligently to prevent another wolf harvest in November.

This comes after an already-turbulent year for the grey wolf, starting with their removal from the endangered species list, and a disastrous hunt held this February. In less than three days, nearly one-quarter of the Wisconsin wolf population was exterminated. Wolves were shot, trapped or chased by hunting dogs, the last a heinous practice allowed in only one state, Wisconsin. The slaughter earned Wisconsin negative national and international headlines. A scientific analysis by the University of Madison found that in addition to the 218 reported wolf kills in February, approximately another 100 wolves died, the majority which were likely illegally killed. The number of unborn and nursing pups was uncalculated, but the breaking apart of wolf packs was predicted to have detrimental consequences for future populations as well as increasing wolf-human conflicts.

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR), did eventually seek feedback and input on the existing wolf management

plan, which gave our team a window to engage people around the state in calling for a science-backed and cultural based wolf management plan going forward. We're hopeful to get a strong wolf management plan next year, but it was not done in time to impact a potential wolf hunt this fall.

To date, Wisconsin's DNR still lacks the critical biological data needed to assess the impact of the February hunt on Wisconsin's remaining wolves. Yet, compelled by a misguided law (Act 169), the DNR is forced to violate its higher public trust obligations to manage the state's precious wildlife. We took a position calling for the lowest quota possible, given the lack of information from the February hunt. Two of Sierra Club's Wildlife Team members participated in the hours-long meeting and debate as part of the formal DNR committee.

The Natural Resources Board (NRB) is the entity that oversees the DNR, and at a meeting of the NRB two members suggested quotas without any basis or evidence, after spewing disturbing comments. One, after calling the February wolf hunt a 'success', proposed a quota of 500, almost the entire population we have left here in Wisconsin. What transpired felt like a free-for-all auction, with numbers being thrown

Continued on page 10

UPDATES TO CHAPTER & OUTINGS COVID-19 GUIDANCE

Sierra Club announced a phased reopening plan for offices and outings in July. The guidance and its implementation remains fluid and are being adapted as needed based on the latest scientific findings about the virus' spread and COVID-19 numbers. Planning of outdoor events and limited indoor events, with additional safety protocols, has resumed. Check the calendar of events on chapter and local group websites for approved activities near you.

Protocols are in place for vaccinated staff to resume work in Sierra Club offices but, for the foreseeable future, offices will remain closed to visitors and volunteers. While we look forward to the time when we can meet in person again, our work continues at full speed as chapter staff and volunteers continue working effectively and efficiently on our priority campaigns. The best way to reach staff continues to be via email: wisconsin.chapter@sierraclub.org.

I94 E/W EXPANSION PROJECT UPDATE

We released an alternative to expanding the I94 highway with our partners at 1000 Friends of Wisconsin, ACLU of Wisconsin, Midwest Environmental Advocates, Milwaukee Riverkeeper, and Wisconsin Environment. The "Fix at Six" alternative would fix the safety and operational concerns of the corridor but, rather than expanding it, invest in more pressing transportation needs such as road repair and transit expansion. The alternative presents four elements for creating a collaborative, equitable, sustainable and community-based vision including a new bus-rapid transit system, promoting walkable and bikeable neighborhoods, and identifying other equitable projects, like better zoning practices. Read the full report, learn more, or sign up to help at fixatsix.org. As public input sessions on the I94 expansion begin, we are calling on WisDOT to move forward with Fix at Six instead.



INTRODUCING: ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE SERIES!

Introducing: Environmental Justice Series

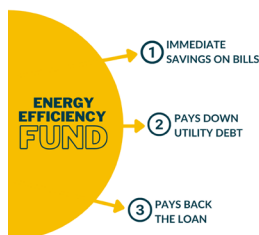
We're very excited to announce our new virtual equity series: talks on environmental justice!

- Sep 28 @ 6:30** **Connection between Wolves and Indigenous Nations:**
Screening of the film 'Family' followed by Panel Discussion
- Oct 7 @ 6:30** **Thru-hiking the Ice-Age Trail:**
Emily Ford on race and outdoor recreation
- Oct 19 @ 7:00** **Coal, Gas and Public Health:**
On the electric sector and environmental justice
- Nov 3 @ 6:30** **Uprooting Racism, Seeding Sovereignty:**
Pre-recorded Keynote featuring Leah and Naima Penniman
- Dec 9 @ 7:00** **Indigenous Resistance to Mining in Wisconsin:**
Panel discussion
- Jan 6 @ 6:00** **Environmental Justice and Sierra Club:**
Panel discussion with Sierra Club leaders



From accessibility of public lands to health impacts of burning fossil fuels, examples of environmental injustice are deeply woven into each of the issues that we work on. To examine these connections, we are organizing an Environmental Justice Event Series beginning this fall. These events are included in the calendar on the back cover of this newsletter. They are also on the calendar on our website, sierraclub.org/wisconsin.

CITY OF MILWAUKEE TACKLING ENERGY BURDEN AND CLIMATE CRISIS



The City of Milwaukee is moving forward on an innovative proposal to help reduce energy burden, reduce climate impacts and offset some of the harm caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. They have proposed using some of the funding they will receive from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to create a unique on-bill financing program. The program will be targeted at the neighborhoods with the highest energy burden, those the highest percent of household income going to utility bills. Residents (including renters) can apply for a loan that will fund energy efficiency and weatherization improvements. The electricity bill savings from the upgrades will reduce electricity bills and be applied to any utility debt. After the debt is paid off (or if there is no debt), the savings will be applied until the loan is paid off. The Mayor

has included it in his APRA proposal and the Milwaukee Common Council will make final decisions this fall. Contact Cassie at cassandra.steiner@sierraclub.org if you want to get involved with these efforts.

BACK 40 MINE VICTORY

In January, a Michigan judge issued a ruling denying Aquila Resources their wetland and stream permit for their proposed Back 40 mine. Aquila appealed the decision and lost. On May 11, Aquila announced they had withdrawn their application for the permit entirely. This is great news!

Aquila Resources has never operated a mine before, but had proposed an open pit sulfide mine deeper than 600 feet, the height of Wisconsin's tallest building. 70 million tons of acid-producing waste rock and milled tailings would be produced and endanger sacred sites of the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin along the river and area where the mine would be located.

Aquila is likely to reapply for the permit, meaning they'd have to go through the permitting process again. We'll continue to support the Menominee Tribe and work to stop the Back 40 mine. To learn more about the Back 40 proposal and its harms, join us for our panel discussion: Indigenous Resistance to Mining In Wisconsin on December 9. To learn more or get involved in this work, contact Elizabeth at elizabeth.ward@sierraclub.org.

WHO IS WISCONSIN MANUFACTURERS AND COMMERCE?

Many of our members have heard of the Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce (WMC) business association. WMC represents large businesses from manufacturing to service industries, to chambers of commerce across the entire state. The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel calls them "state's most influential business lobbying group." That power has led to WMC historically opposing laws aimed at helping low income families, labor union advancements and environmental safeguards -- and being successful in its efforts. For example, it supported rulemaking and legislation that purposefully waters down PFAS regulations and accountability for polluters. Part of our work is shining a spotlight on their actions and pushing back in support of the environment and Wisconsinites' health. We hope you will join us in holding WMC accountable for its harmful actions.



JOIN US IN CELEBRATION OF OUR AWARD WINNERS!



Every year, the Sierra Club Wisconsin Chapter recognizes some of our many wonderful volunteers and community leaders for their dedication, passion and leadership. We could not do our work alone, and celebrating our award winners is one of the best parts of our year. **Please join us on Wednesday, November 17 at 6:30 p.m. for a virtual ceremony** that allows us all to be together and celebrate these environmental leaders from across the state. You can RSVP at the event on our calendar on sierraclub.org/wisconsin.

This year's award winners are:

GOOD CITIZEN AWARD:
MARY FAYDASH

JJ AND PAT WERNER AWARD:
MELISSA WARNER

LD ROCKWELL AWARD:
MASARU OKA

MERIT AWARD:
VICTORIA GILLET

MERIT AWARD:
JODI HABUSH SINYKIN

NEW ACTIVIST AWARD:
MEGHAN PIERCE

WILDFLOWER AWARD:
**KAREN SAMELSON
& DAVID THOMAS**

WILDFLOWER AWARD:
ERIK PETERSEN

TORCHBEARER AWARD:
DANE COUNTY PARKS

**We're excited to announce the awards of these outstanding leaders.
See you on November 17th to celebrate them and learn more about their work!**

Continued from page 7, Wildlife Update

around with no consideration of science or the importance of wolves to our ecosystems. Beyond the numbers game, most disturbing was the lack of integrity demonstrated by the board for their roles, public trust, and respect for Tribal authority.

THE BOARD EVENTUALLY SETTLED ON 300 WOLVES - OVER DOUBLE THE NUMBER SCIENTISTS SAY COULD BE CATASTROPHIC TO THE WOLF PACKS IN WISCONSIN.

Adding insult to injury, the chair of the NRB, Frederick Prehn, cast the deciding vote on the wolf quota. Prehn's seat is expired, and he has refused to vacate his position. In response to our public opposition to Prehn remaining on the board, joined by several partners in the state, Attorney General Josh Kaul took steps to remove Prehn from the Board.

Beyond the quota, we are asking the agency to exercise its existing regulatory authority to prevent a repeat of February's over-kills and unregulated ethical trespasses, including limiting the number of licenses and not issuing more licenses than the total quota number. We are also asking that rules around group hunting, night hunting, kill registration, baiting, use of hounds and motorized vehicles be clarified.

Moving forward, we need more people to join us in calling for science-based wolf management. We are producing a series of

videos to educate people on the similarities of wolf and human family dynamics and debunk recurring myths about wolves. A promotional showing of Family, a documentary about wolves and Indigenous connections, kicked off the Chapter's Environmental Justice series in late September (learn more on our website: sierraclub.org/wisconsin)

While we're working diligently to prevent the destruction of the species this year, this is a long-term problem and we need to ensure politics are separated from all natural resource management in Wisconsin. Natural resource departments have historically gotten a large portion of their funding from a small segment of the population through license fees for hunting, trapping and fishing. But a rapid shift in Americans' wildlife values has emerged over the last decade in response to growing awareness of the extinction crisis we could face. Oversight bodies like the governor-appointed NRB fail to reflect these shifting values. The team will continue to do the important work of preserving the iconic and ecologically important grey wolf. To learn more about the team or to get involved, email elizabeth.ward@sierraclub.org.

Valerie Gibbons
Wildlife Team member

VOLUNTEER WITH US!

Want to make more of a difference but not sure where to start? Our volunteering program is built like a 'choose your own adventure' story! There are opportunities with different time requirements, focus area, type of volunteering, individual projects vs. teamwork and much, much more. Pick and choose from these opportunities to build your perfect volunteer experience! There are no requirements or prerequisites to start volunteering with us, and we want to help you find the perfect volunteer role for your interests, desired time commitment and type of volunteer experience. Want to learn more or to sign up? Visit <https://www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/volunteer>

Continued from page 6, Legislative Review

helping the party maintain political control. Wisconsin has been on the national stage when it comes to gerrymandering, and redistricting that was done in 2011 is often used as one of the worst examples of gerrymandering in United States history. As the process unfurls, we'll be advocating for legislation that empowers people across Wisconsin. We hope you'll join us!

If you're interested in getting involved in our legislative committee, email Jadine Sonoda at jadine.sonoda@sierraclub.org.

Elyssa Emrich
Legislative Committee member

Will Keenan
Legislative and Electoral Project Aide

Don Ferber
Chapter Executive Committee Member

Jadine Sonoda
Campaign Coordinator

GREEN REVIEW

THE BIRDMAN OF KOSHKONGONG:

THE LIFE OF NATURALIST THURE KUMLIEN

By Martha Bergland, University of Wisconsin Press, 2021, 303 pages

The Birdman of Koshkongong is a beautiful biography, rich in the detailed and respectful unearthing of history, place, science, people, culture and vanishing wilderness. Bergland may sense fatigue in our times for yet another biography of a white male. Early in the book, she shares a poem by Kumlien's mother; the verse laments how "bliss" might be usurped by marriage and motherhood. Women in this biography do have a say by virtue of their tether to the specific roles of their culture. Implicit is the notion that while Kumlien could pursue his passion through brawn and intellect, women's narrow range of opportunity blunted talents and dreams.

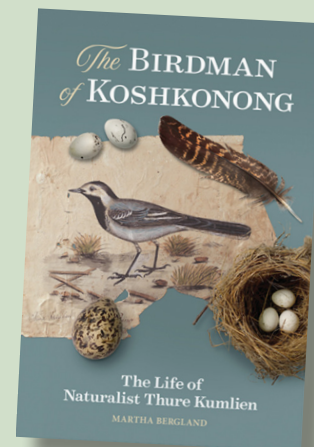
Bergland offers a similar nod of respect to the Native Americans who lived in scarce numbers as refugees in the land that had been theirs; she depicts Kumlien knowingly walking trails worn by Indigenous nations.

The Birdman guides the reader through an immigrant life: Sweden to Wisconsin. During the 1800s, Kumlien worked to build a life that indulged his naturalist passions while wilderness dissipated. Despite most of his life lived in pioneer poverty, food was plentiful because he could hunt, fish and forage, and he owned land. His wife and sister-in-law met the challenge with ardor. Kumlien, with a talent for friendship as well as ornithology, botany, taxidermy and entomology collected accounts and natural specimens for the museums and collectors of the western world and corresponded with leading naturalists of his day. He discovered several new species of birds and plants and contributed to the bedrock of nature knowledge about Midwest flora and fauna.

Bergland weaves research into a dramatic narrative of the specific gains and losses entwined within the transformation from wilderness to civilization. Within this tale of graves and gains, Kumlien's long suffering wife never lives in the long-promised grand home, yet a hardscrabble career finally brings him a predictable income as the curator of the new Milwaukee Museum. Danger and hardship follow him while he maintains his commitment to a life lived in proximity to the natural world. His death presents as one sacrifice of many. The Birdman of Koshkongong casts a wide net in the scope of questions and it raises mulls as it considers the "magnificence of the world we are trying to save." (p.250)

The University of Wisconsin Press provided a copy of The Birdman of Koshkongong for review.

Amy Lou Jenkins is the author of *Every Natural Fact*. Contact her through JackWalkerPress.com if you would like to forward a book for possible review.



VOTE FOR OUR CHAPTER'S LEADERSHIP!

Yes, it is time for YOU to elect new Chapter leadership.

The Wisconsin Chapter Executive Committee is your volunteer leadership team, made up of nine elected at-large members and six delegates appointed local groups. The Executive Committee provides direction to the Chapter on fiscal matters, policy, fundraising, and prioritizing issue work, and ensures that the Chapter evolves with the times and remains an effective organization.

Each year, members are asked to choose three volunteer leaders from a slate of candidates. These three leaders will serve as at-large delegates to the Executive Committee for a three-year term starting in January 2022 and finishing in December 2024.

**After reading the candidates' statements, use the ballot on page 15.
Each member can VOTE FOR UP TO THREE CANDIDATES!**

1) Please describe your interest in the Sierra Club, and any leadership or volunteer activities with our organization or other non-profit groups that will help you fulfill your role (See the Executive Committee Job Description).

2) What unique skills, experience, or perspective from your personal or professional background (fundraising,

legal, accounting, communications, Board, political) will you bring to the Sierra Club – Wisconsin Chapter's Executive Committee?

3) Looking forward over the next 3 years, what do you think the Chapter needs to do, or how do we need to grow and change to be effective on our issues?

4) The Chapter's current priority issues are: Protecting Our Water Resources, Moving Beyond Coal to Clean Energy, Moving Beyond Oil to Clean Transportation, Protecting Habitats from Destructive Mining, Protecting Native Forests and Wildlife. Of the Chapter's priority issues, which one are you most passionate about and why?

MICHAEL REHANI, (INCUMBENT) HE/HIM



1 - I am a problem solver. I not only enjoy coming up with plans but also thinking about how to improve them.

However, coming up with a plan is only part of the solution. I also enjoy ensuring it is being carried out well (through checking in with others/providing support when needed), facilitating communication between groups, and more.

2 - My strengths are in communication and politics-related areas. From my experience at Midwest Environmental Advocates, I know how to read a bill and

spot potential issues in it. From there, I can clearly convey these issues to an audience. At the moment, I am gaining more experience in this field of politics and communication as a member of the budget committee.

3 - We can improve through increased discussion with our members. We already do this by replying to comments, but I think we can take this a step further. It may be useful to make a weekly post that will act as a Q&A about any topic we have on the website. Another idea would be to do a weekly quiz on different topics. The answers will have explanations as to why they are right or wrong.

4 - I am most passionate about issues related to water quality and moving beyond coal to clean energy. I would guess it is likely because they are issues I have read a lot about. The more I read about it, the more interested I am in the issue, which leads me to learn more.

JAMES DAVIES, (INCUMBENT) HE/HIM



1 - Hello and thanks for taking the time to read my responses and being active in the Sierra Club. I am currently involved in the

Sierra Club Transportation Equity Team and serve as Secretary on the State Chapter Executive Committee. I'm interested in continuing my involvement with the Sierra Club because I believe it is a highly effective organization at advocating for our shared environment. I also believe that unfortunately the numerous environmental issues we are currently facing are at crisis points and bold action and leadership are necessary.

2 - Working for a nonprofit in my day job gives me a good perspective to help serve on a nonprofit board. I'm also an attorney admitted to the Wisconsin Bar and would look forward to using those skills in service of the Sierra Club.

3 - The Wisconsin Chapter is most successful when it builds broad coalitions to move our issues forward. I think continuing these efforts to maximize the breadth of our coalitions on each issue we confront is the key to long-term success. Specifically, I think it is ever more important for the Chapter to reach out to, engage, and include diverse perspectives and people in the planning and execution of Chapter projects.

4 - Moving Beyond Coal to Clean Energy and Moving beyond Oil to Clean Transportation are my top priorities. Together, the transportation and power generation sectors account for 57% of US greenhouse gas emissions. If we can't get the climate crisis under control, all the other areas the Sierra Club works on will be made exponentially more difficult.

**NANDITA CHITTAJALLU,
(INCUMBENT) SHE/HER**



my senior year and used the position to raise hundreds of dollars to support a land purchase Yellowstone National Park was pursuing to support wildlife, in particular wolves. After high school, I continued to be involved with wildlife and environmental causes including wildlife rehabilitation. When I moved

1 - My passion for the Sierra Club began in Indiana in my high school's chapter where became the Vice President

to Madison, I became involved with our Chapter.

2 - As a former project manager responsible for multi-year projects including budget reviews and creating and maintaining relationships with project stakeholders, I hope to support the chapter's Executive Committee as we tackle important matters by providing big picture insights while not losing sight of the finer details. In addition to the skills that I obtained as a project manager, I have experience envisioning, directing, and executing fundraisers for various environmental causes.

3 - The environmental crises Sierra Club is attempting to address will impact future generations regardless of an individual's background. As a result, I believe we need to engage local communities of all ages and ethnicities. This outreach will need to be engaging, exciting, and pertinent in order to instill an emotional connection. I would also love to see our chapter focus more energy internally as we work to engage our current members and externally as we reach out to other local non-profits.

4 - Due to my background as a wildlife lover and avid hiker, the Wisconsin Chapter's focus on protecting native forests and wildlife is dear to my heart. It pains me to think that future generations may not be able to share these experiences and I want to ensure that this is not the case. While this cause is the nearest and dearest to my heart, as we all know, it cannot be addressed in isolation. All of these issues are interconnected. I look forward to serving the Sierra Club as we champion these issues and make it possible to protect our forests and wildlife.

Support the Wisconsin Chapter through Workplace Giving

Does your employer offer a Community Shares workplace giving campaign?

Designate your gift to the Sierra Club Foundation and you'll be supporting our work to protect Wisconsin's water, land & wildlife.

For a list of workplace campaigns or information on starting a campaign, visit the websites below.



www.communityshares.com



www.communitysharesmke.org

DECREASE PAPER WASTE

GET YOUR WISCONSIN SIERRAN VIA EMAIL

Are you looking for ways to cut out paper waste in your life? We offer an online option for receiving your Sierra Club newsletter. Instead of sending you a print copy, we can send you an email summarizing the contents of the newsletter and linking to a PDF copy. Email Cassie at cassandra.steiner@sierraclub.org to switch to an online version of the newsletter.

THREE WISCONSIN VOLUNTEERS RECOGNIZED WITH NATIONAL AWARDS

Three Wisconsin volunteers, Scott Blankman, Don Ferber and Dennis Grzezinski, were selected from a national pool of nominees to be honored for their contributions to the Sierra Club. The national Sierra Club Awards program recognizes people inside and outside the Sierra Club who have made outstanding contributions to protecting the environment. Awards are given in a variety of areas, including: conservation, outings, administration, photography, journalism and working with youth.

Scott Blankman, Wisconsin Chapter Treasurer since 2013, received the 2021 Atlas Award, which honors volunteers who have made extraordinary administrative contributions to



groups, chapters and regional entities. His expertise in accounting and financial management along with his understanding of the mission of Sierra Club and the environmental issues facing our state make his contributions uniquely valuable.

Over the years, Blankman has effectively guided the Wisconsin chapter and our

local groups, making processes more efficient, improving communications and strengthening the chapter's financial position. Under his fiscal guidance, the number of chapter

staff has also grown. "Working with Scott is always a positive experience. I am especially appreciative of his patient guidance when navigating change," said Jacinda Tessmann, the Chapter Coordinator. "His contributions impact every aspect of our chapter's work and we are thrilled that his efforts are being recognized on a national stage."

In addition to his work in Wisconsin, he shares his expertise across the organization through participation on the Chapter Treasurer's Assistance Support Team, a group of seasoned volunteer Chapter Treasurers who are available for peer-to-peer support and learning.

Don Ferber received the Volunteer Service Award honoring his strong and consistent commitment to the environment and the Sierra Club. Don began his journey with Sierra Club decades ago during one of the first coal plant retirement



campaigns, and since then he has been an integral part of multiple coal plant retirements. His volunteer engagement expanded when he took on leadership roles in 2004, with the Four Lakes Group, and in 2007 when he became the group delegate to the Wisconsin Chapter Executive Committee, a position he still holds today. From 2017-2020, he served



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

as Chapter Chair, stepping up to be a leader in a time of transition and growth at the Chapter.

Don is an outstanding advocate for the organization, promoting the important work being done and recruiting volunteers and donors along the way. “His generosity of time and energy is a shining example of volunteer leadership and serves as an inspiration to all of us,” noted Dave Blouin, former Four Lakes Group Chair and current Group Executive Committee member. In addition to the incredible work Don has done with Sierra Club, he has helped foster and build many other organizations in the area, including RePower Madison, 350-Madison, MGE Shareholders for Clean Energy and more. He’s often one of the first people called to help get a new initiative off the ground.



Dennis Grzezinski, Wisconsin Chapter Legal Chair, received the Robert Bullard Environmental Justice Award for outstanding work in the area of environmental justice. Dennis has spent decades advocating for racial equity in Milwaukee’s transportation systems

and for environmental justice. In Dennis’ own words, he fights highway expansion projects “because of disparities in transportation services or availability. There’s such a disparity in what’s available to those who are richer and whiter and who have cars, and those in our community who are less rich and less white and don’t have cars.”

Dennis’s innovative work combining advocacy and litigation has stopped racially harmful highway expansion projects in the Milwaukee area and resulted in more funding for much needed mass transit. “Not only has Dennis’s meticulous work slowed harmful projects and expanded public transit options for tens of thousands of bus riders; he also taught many volunteers, local leaders and organizers like me how to effectively and righteously advocate for a better world,” said Peter Skopec, former director, Wisconsin Public Interest Research Group (WISPIRG).

Beyond Dennis’s work in the transportation sector, he also lends his legal expertise and advocacy to many other causes including increasing access to green spaces, replacing lead pipes and more.

A virtual awards ceremony was held in September to honor all the 2021 National Sierra Club award winners.

Wisconsin Chapter-Executive Committee ELECTION BALLOT 2021

Instructions: Read the candidate statements on the preceding page(s). Select up to three candidates. Indicate your choices by marking the appropriate box. Ballots clipped from *The Sierran* must have a legible membership number on the back to be valid. One vote per member. “Voter 2” column for use in households with a “joint membership.”

Voter #1:

- Nandita Chittajallu
- James Davies
- Michael Rehani
- Write In: _____



Voter #2:

- Nandita Chittajallu
- James Davies
- Michael Rehani
- Write In: _____

Online: https://www.sierraclub.org/WI_ExCom_Candidates

Mailed ballots must be postmarked by November 12, 2021

Mail to: Mary Reames, 4121 Meyer Ave., Madison, WI 53711



SIERRA CLUB

WISCONSIN CHAPTER

754 Williamson Street

Madison, WI 53703

Our newsletter is printed on recycled paper

CALENDAR

OCTOBER 7

Thru-hiking the Ice Age Trail

6:30 p.m.

Emily Ford on Race and Outdoor Recreation, online, sierraclub.org/wisconsin

OCTOBER 14

Virtual Volunteer Night

6:30 p.m.

Registration required to receive the zoom call link. sierraclub.org/wisconsin

OCTOBER 19

Coal, Gas and Public Health

7:00 p.m.

On the electric sector & environmental justice, online, sierraclub.org/wisconsin

NOVEMBER 3

Uprooting Racism, Seeding Sovereignty

6:30 p.m.

Virtual Keynote, online, sierraclub.org/wisconsin

NOVEMBER 10

Virtual Volunteer Night

6:30 p.m.

Registration required to receive the zoom call link. sierraclub.org/wisconsin

VOLUME 59 / NUMBER 3 OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2021

NOVEMBER 17

Chapter Awards Celebration

6:30 p.m.

Online, sierraclub.org/wisconsin

NOVEMBER 30

Giving Tuesday

Give to support our work, sierraclub.org/wisconsin

DECEMBER 8

Virtual Volunteer Night

6:30 p.m.

Registration required to receive the zoom call link. sierraclub.org/wisconsin

DECEMBER 9

Indigenous Resistance to Mining in Wisconsin

7:00 p.m.

Panel Discussion, online, sierraclub.org/wisconsin

DECEMBER 24 - JANUARY 3

Winter Break

Sierra Club Offices Closed

JANUARY 6

Environmental Justice in Sierra Club

6:00 p.m.

Panel Discussion with Sierra Club Leaders, online, sierraclub.org/wisconsin



OUR MEMBERS IN ACTION

The Coulee Region Group partnered with Wisconsin Conservation Voters, Wisconsin Environment and Solar on La Crosse Schools to host an art build and press conference calling on Rep. Ron Kind to support a federal infrastructure package that also prioritizes climate action.

