

THE MUIR VIEW



NEWS OF THE SIERRA CLUB IN WISCONSIN - sierraclub.org/wisconsin

Building on the Momentum of 2015

By Elizabeth Ward, Conservation Programs Coordinator

Despite the odds, the John Muir Chapter achieved some important victories for clean air and water in Wisconsin last year. However, the four staff people at the chapter or even the 16 members of our board did not make this happen alone. All 15,000 members did. That's right, the credit goes to you:

You, who supported the Sierra Club and our work by being members

You, who served on a Sierra Club committee, making the plans that helped us win

You, who testified at public hearings in Eau Claire and Green Bay and Waukesha

You, who submitted public comments and signed petitions to the Department of

Natural Resources, the Environmental Protection Agency, or President Obama

You, who went on an outing and talked about the need to protect our beautiful state

You, who kept up-to-date on the most important issues in our state.

You did this. We did this. And together, we can leverage these wins for even greater successes in 2016.

Transportation

Last year, we continued our work to address the misplaced priorities in Wisconsin's transportation spending. Working



with community members in Milwaukee and across the state, we exposed proposals that waste taxpayer money on unnecessary highway expansions. [Continued on page 3](#)

Making Wisconsin's Transportation System More Equitable

By Cassie Steiner, John Muir Chapter Apprentice

According to the EPA, 27 percent of the U.S.'s greenhouse gas emissions come from transportation, and personal vehicles contribute 83 percent of the greenhouse gas emissions in the transportation sector.

For Sierra Club members and supporters, it may not come as a surprise that transportation via car has a greater environmental impact than mass transit; however, the implications of the transportation system in the United States span beyond the environmental realm and into the social justice realm.

Transportation is an issue of environmental and racial justice. In many cities in the United States, people of color and low income families are pushed into the urban core while white and middle class families move to the suburbs. Eighty percent of people who are white live outside of cities, and 86 percent live in neighborhoods where less than 1 percent are ethnic or racial minorities. In contrast, 70 percent of people of color live in cities.

These predominantly white suburbs are growing in size and in wealth. A projected 80 percent of future growth will occur on the edge of cities where suburbs are forming. This urban sprawl shifts tax bases and jobs to the suburbs, leading to urban disinvestment. Because



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FROM THE CHAIR

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as chapter chair of the John Muir Chapter Executive Committee for the last two years.



During 2015, Wisconsin was confronted with legislation that terminated DNR scientists and environmental education programs, defunded state parks, sold off other state land, lowered groundwater and lakeshore protections, overrode local accountability for tar sands pipelines, increased anonymous money in politics, prevented investigation of political misconduct – the list goes on. Most bills were jammed through on a

party-line vote and with minimal public input allowed. The Public Service Commission approved rates that penalize low income users and those who “go green” with grid-connected solar panels and wind turbines. Wow, “have a nice day!”

Seriously, I’m confident this is not what the great majority of Wisconsin people have in mind for our state. And when the public stood up and took notice, as it did with the attempted neutering of the Open Records Law, the Governor and his lockstep legislators backed off. We should all learn from that. The John Muir Chapter of Sierra Club and our many allies continue actively working to raise awareness and bring back government that is of, by and for the people of a clean, healthy Wisconsin landscape.

In that spirit, I want to recognize the Madison-based Four Lakes Group of Sierra Club for hosting our statewide Autumn Assembly retreat in Lake Delton in October. Dave Blouin, Don Ferber, Lacinda Athen, Liz Wessel and Beverly Speer along with chapter staff Jacinda Tessmann, Elizabeth Ward and Cassie Steiner and others deserve a hearty thanks for their extensive planning and organizing. They provided a full weekend, with an outstanding

array of speakers and field trips as well as the opportunity to meet other members, reconnect with old friends and build a new and more diverse community.

Unfortunately, I had some egg on my face after promising that Sierra Club National Board President Aaron Mair would attend. Alas, he was diverted to an important national event, so I apologize to those who expected to see him. We are actively seeking another opportunity to host him.

Winter is upon us, influenced by warm waters in the equatorial Pacific Ocean – a “strong El Niño.” The National Weather Service says we can expect higher-than-average temperatures with lower-than-average precipitation across most of Wisconsin, meaning less ice on our lakes. Of course El Niño is overlaid on the continuing climate disruption we face. Hard to discern in Wisconsin over the last three years, it continues globally. As this becomes more evident, we will be challenged to make the changes we need to make on a personal and societal level.

My own philosophy on addressing climate change is summed up in a sports metaphor, “Advance the ball.” None of us can solve the problem on our own or even as an organization. What we can do is to chip away at it – by talking about it and by modeling the behavior of those around us who take the lead in their personal lives. Many of us aren’t quite ready or able to live car-free, and perhaps we can’t afford an electric car (yet!). But for many, driving a more fuel-efficient car and driving less advances the ball. The roof of my home is not suitable for an efficient photovoltaic solar panel array, but it will support a solar hot water system that reduces my fossil fuel consumption. I will install this panel to advance the ball. Other new technologies and research will contribute in coming years, magnifying our progress. So let’s keep at it!

Jim Kerler

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THE MUIR VIEW

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Please submit articles by mail or email to:

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Please include the author’s first and last names, and day and evening phone numbers at the top. Acceptance of submission contingent upon availability of space and must meet Sierra Club guidelines.

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especially as this funding comes at the expense of transit and local road funding.

Much of our work was focused on the state budget and ensuring three things:

- the boondoggle I-94 expansion in Milwaukee was not green-lighted,
- no money for new highway expansions was given, and
- there were no cuts to the previous increases for transit and local road funding.

The Joint Committee on Finance did all three by eliminating the I-94 expansion from the budget, requiring further approval for the funding for new highway expansions, and continuing the funding to our local roads and transit funding (although ultimately, we'd like this to be significantly higher). In addition, the committee called for an audit of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) to examine how the agency chooses projects like highway expansions, whether traffic forecasts are coming true and the discrepancy between spending on highway expansions compared to local transportation.

This year we are looking forward to the results of the audit, which we hope will give the Joint Committee on Finance the information it needs to reprioritize our transportation spending as we gear up for the 2017-19 budget. We're also continuing our work with the Coalition for More Responsible Transportation (CMRT) in Milwaukee to get WisDOT to go back to the drawing board on the I-94 expansion proposal and instead research expanding the local transit system in order to reduce congestion on the highway. We hope to echo this work in Madison around the proposal to expand the Beltline. We're also working with CMRT to schedule three transportation-related events around Wisconsin, one focused on local transportation needs, one on the aging populations in Wisconsin and its changing transportation needs, and an event in Milwaukee around transportation and equity.

Tar Sands

We were disappointed when the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) decided not to do any environmental analysis on Enbridge's proposed line 61 expansion. Our work with the Wisconsin Safe Energy or WiSE Alliance and 350 Madison allowed

us to push the Dane County Zoning Committee to ask questions before granting Enbridge its permits. Upon researching the risks of the proposed expansion – and noting Enbridge's fight with insurers over the \$1.2 billion clean-up costs for the tragic Kalamazoo spill – Dane County required that the company purchase \$25 million in environmental impact liability insurance. Considering Kalamazoo's record clean-up costs, the county felt that such assurances were necessary to protect taxpayers financially in the event of a spill. This was a huge victory. Unfortunately, Governor Walker and the Wisconsin Legislature undermined this local decision by banning local governments from requiring insurance. This issue is still ongoing as we learn more about what this means for Dane County.

However we've turned our attention to a new, even scarier proposal. Enbridge announced plans to build another pipeline through the heart of Wisconsin allowing Enbridge to push even more dirty oil through the state. This year we will continue to work hand in hand with concerned landowners, pipeline communities and local governments to stop this new pipeline proposal.

We are so grateful for President Obama's announcement that the Keystone XL pipeline would not be permitted because the climate change implications of the pipeline were not in our nation's interest. We will spend this year urging President Obama to apply that same standard to Enbridge's pipelines that cross the border, creating the need for the pipeline expansions in Wisconsin. If we can turn off the floodgates from Canada we can hopefully stop Line 66.

Cabin for Sale



Off the grid retreat in Michigan's upper peninsula on 78 forested acres nestled along the east branch of the Ontonagon River. Log cabin (24x36) with wood stove, solar electric, Sun-mar composting toilet and hand pump for water, surrounded by Ottawa National Forest. Paddle Upper Dam Pond and enjoy the antics of otters and beaver in perfect peace. Priceless, but we are asking \$197,000.

Call 262 567 5947

Rate Cases

We were disappointed last year when Xcel Energy and Wisconsin Public Service (WPS) both proposed increasing the mandatory fees for electricity customers. This is the fee customers pay simply for having electricity. Increasing this fee (compared to increasing the charge based on how much electricity is used), unfairly impacts low-income people, fixed-income seniors and other low-energy users. The payback for reducing electricity use or installing clean energy or energy efficient products is reduced if the bill is made up of fees that the consumer can't control. We worked with local community groups and fought back against these proposals. In a remarkable surprise, the Public Service Commission gave WPS and Xcel less than they had asked for and agreed to study the impacts on fixed fee increases. In 2016 we expect We Energies to ask for an additional mandatory fee increase. It's likely we will see other utilities ask for this as well. The John Muir Chapter will continue to fight these unfair proposals and will need the help of everyone to call out these bad ideas.

Mining

We all celebrated the huge victory when Gogebic Taconite announced what we all had known: the Penokee Hills area is too vulnerable and important to mine. There is no way to put a mine there in a way that will protect the ecology the way it is. We should all take time to celebrate this victory. There's still work to do. Unfortunately, we still have Act 1, or the Bad River Destruction Act, on the books, which allowed a potential mine in the first place. We all need to continue to band together to make sure it is repealed. Our work in northern Wisconsin is not done, either. We need to ensure the area is not so economically vulnerable and work together to come up with sustainable solutions for jobs and the economy of northern Wisconsin.

With low oil prices, we also saw the postponement and closing down of frac-sand mines throughout Wisconsin. Unfortunately in some instances operating mines were quickly shut down leaving people without work and communities without long term solutions to the damage that has already been done. In other instances operators walked away from proposals. We still need to work together to pass common sense solutions that ensure people's health, safety, air and water are not at risk.

Great Lakes Diversion

We also expect to see the decision made (and it may have been made by the time this article comes out) regarding the city of Waukesha's proposal to be the first community outside the Great Lakes Basin to take water from Lake Michigan to use for drinking water. Last year we fought hard and got thousands of comments asking the DNR to reject this proposal. If approved, all governors of Great Lakes states will have to

approve the project. There will be another hearing for this, and we will work together to get hundreds to call on these governors asking them to veto this faulty proposal.

DNR Dysfunction:

The legislature and the administration have imposed a completely one-sided, pro-business slant upon the Department of Natural Resources at the expense of the environment and the health of Wisconsinites everywhere. This is clear in many ways, including the proclamation that "Wisconsin is Open for Business," and the rush to permit factory farms and high capacity wells. It is also apparent in cuts to the DNR's budget and proposals to sell public land to political contributors.

The management of Wisconsin's natural resources has become polarized, partisan and unbalanced. To address this imbalance a multi-year campaign is being developed to address systemic problems within the agency. The goal is to bring back a DNR that is responsive to the needs of all citizens and bases its decisions on sound science and long-range planning.

Political Accountability

Despite some of our tremendous gains, especially in a political context, the reality is we aren't winning enough. With climate change coming (as can be seen with the hottest October on record), we know we need to be working as quickly as possible to ensure our water and air are protected for future generations. Unfortunately many of our wins this year are really stopping bad stuff, but they don't move us towards the clean energy economy we so desperately need to be running after.

Because of this, we will work hard in 2016 to hold the bad legislators accountable for their bad decisions, and work to replace

them with strong conservation champions in the 2016 elections. In Wisconsin, we cannot continue down this path of racing to the bottom. We will work to take back the Senate and hold the worst of the worst accountable for what they've done.

We now have new rules that protect communities from mercury and carbon pollution, and a rejection of the Keystone pipeline. That alone shows the immense importance of ensuring that our next president understands the gravity of climate change, and the importance of driving us towards a clean energy economy — one that creates a stronger economy for us all.

We need to be moving much faster, and the stalemate in Congress will not allow us to do that regardless of who the president is. We will be fighting hard to take back the power of government from the hands of Big Coal and Oil. We have some of the most important races in the country in Wisconsin.

2016 will also have a lot of important local elections. Local groups throughout the Sierra Club will also work to ensure our local elected officials are doing what they can to protect our air and water. The brave steps the Dane County Zoning Committee took shows how critical these local offices can be.

Given that we do not have the money the coal and oil industries have, we're going to need all hands on deck to make this happen. We hope to have a robust campaign and that's going to require people throughout Wisconsin joining in to ensure political victories as well as conservation wins in 2016. Please continue the journey with us by maintaining your membership, watching the *Muir View* and enews for opportunities to take action, sharing information about these issues with friends, family and colleagues or contacting us at john.muir.chapter@sierraclub.org to get more involved.

the poorer urban core has a lower rate of car ownership and a higher rate of unemployment, transit becomes more than a green alternative; transit creates the means to economic growth and a higher quality of life.

In *Highway Robbery*, Richard Bullard writes, "Transportation remains a major stumbling block for many to achieve self-sufficiency. It boils down to 'no transportation, no job,' and, more often than not, public transportation does not connect urban residents to jobs." If economic growth must occur in inner cities, access to jobs is essential.

This trend of urban sprawl also encourages a car-based culture that is detrimental not only to the environment, but to the health and safety of people who live in cities. The increase of personal cars has degraded air quality, correlating with cancer and asthma. Fifty percent of African Americans and 60 percent of Latinos live in metropolitan areas that fail to meet national air quality standards for more than one pollutant, and ethnic minorities have higher rates of cancer and asthma.

In addition to high cancer and asthma rates, people around the country are also walking and biking less. With money being poured into unnecessary highway expansions, less money goes to creating sidewalks and bike lanes, making

Outstanding Volunteers Honored

By Don Ferber, John Muir Chapter Executive Committee



From left to right: Lacinda Athen, Ronni Monroe, Kate Schulte, Judy Skog, John Engel, Mary Beth Elliot, Dave Blouin, Monny Hjerstedt, Judy Rockwell, Carl Whiting, Don Ferber & Elizabeth Ward

Where would the Sierra Club be without our outstanding volunteers? Fortunately, we don't have to find out. Each year we honor several of our many exemplary Wisconsin environmental leaders at our Autumn Assembly. While there are many deserving individuals and groups, we selected an elite few for recognition this year. Among the winners, a bit of stealth was employed to keep two awards secret, another was to the daughter of a Wisconsin environmental hero, and sadly, one was in memoriam.

The first two awards were for deserving Fox Valley Group volunteers with the awards presented by chair Alan Lawrence. John Engel didn't waste any time after retiring and, despite little experience, quickly joined the executive committee and spent long hours surveying members about their club awareness. John was also critical in planning their Earth Day event, has now become conservation chair, and is most deserving of the New Activist Award.

Monny Hjerstedt received the Wildflower Award for his long-time efforts and support for the Fox Valley Group. Monny is not only their par excellence newsletter editor, he does extensive work on publicity including flyers and videos. He also enjoys the outdoors and works on the Ice Age Trail. The Fox Valley Group is so grateful Monny stepped up when he was needed and is playing such a valuable role.

It was both in appreciation and sadness

that we presented LD Rockwell's wife Judy with the Wildflower Award after LD's recent passing. LD had been a leader with the Southeast Gateway Group and on the chapter executive committee, and his energy and good humor helped spur us all forward. He also had served as our Council of Club Leaders delegate. LD was especially proud of his work in helping support and expand the Hackmatack Wildlife Refuge. He will be much missed.

The Good Citizen Award went to the WiSE (Wisconsin Safe Energy) Alliance for its exceptional work opposing the expanded flow of Enbridge's tar sands pipeline through Wisconsin. WiSE Alliance is a collection of activists from the Sierra Club, 350 Madison and others throughout the state who have opposed a \$40 billion corporation with temerity and fearlessness. Receiving the award were Mary Beth Elliot, Carl Whiting, Ronni Monroe, Judy Skog, Kate Schulte and Don Ferber on behalf of the Alliance. Conservation Programs Coordinator Elizabeth Ward (who also deserved this award for her work with the alliance, but is not eligible as chapter staff) presented the award.

Ron Haeger was given the Merit Award by the Four Lakes Group for his leadership in Madison with ICO – formerly Inner City Youth Outings and now Inspiring Connections Outdoors. Ron took over as chair and shepherded ICO forward in serving disadvantaged youth in our community. Ron and other volunteers helped expose many who

might not have the opportunity otherwise to the wonders of nature. Ron is moving away, but leaves a legacy behind of helping diversify the Sierra Club's reach.

There is no better or more deserving person of the Torchbearer Award than Tia Nelson, daughter of Earth Day founder Gaylord Nelson. Tia has carried on her father's legacy of concern for the environment, standing up for good science in the face of adverse winds. She had recently resigned from her position as executive secretary of Wisconsin's Board of Commissioners of Public Lands after being hamstrung in her duties and being told she could not mention climate change. But in leaving this position, she has accepted another to help carry on her work and her father's legacy. Thank you, Tia!

Lacinda Athen was not only the mistress of ceremonies and chair of the awards committee, but has done an outstanding job with the chapter and Four Lakes group websites over the years and regularly sends out the engaging Four Lakes E-news. By being sneaky, the Four Lakes Group carefully concealed her nominations and surprised her with the Wildflower Award for her great chapter and group support. Without her tireless work, our websites and communications would not be what they are today, nor would our awards ceremony.

Even more misdirection was needed to hide from Dave Blouin (who helped plan the Autumn Assembly), his nomination for the JJ and Pat Werner Award. Though Dave was surprised, he shouldn't have been, given all his exemplary work and great leadership over the years. He has led our state mining work with two major victories and is chair of our chapter and Four Lakes Group political committees. In addition, he has served ably as Four Lakes Group chair for several years. While Dave never garners attention for himself, his receiving our top chapter activist award helps shed some light on just how valuable he has been to the chapter.

We know many others deserve awards. Please think ahead as to who we should recognize next year. We also hope this may inspire you and that next year we can honor you for your contributions to the Sierra Club.

ISSUES AT A GLANCE

Chapter Election Results

Thank you to all who cast a vote in this year's John Muir Chapter Executive Committee election and to the candidates who ran for office. By participating in elections for the chapter's volunteer leadership you're taking an active role in shaping the direction and policy of the John Muir Chapter.

As a result of the election, in January the Executive Committee will welcome Doug Harrod to its ranks, along with returning members Jim Kerler and Liz Wessel. Each will serve a three-year term.

Three at-large seats will be up for election next fall with terms to start in 2017. Watch for an invitation to apply for candidacy in the July issue of the *Muir View*.

Tools to Keep You Informed

In today's fast-paced world it's hard to stay informed. Urgent issues surrounding bad legislation, such as hearings and votes being scheduled on short notice, seem to be happening more frequently. And fun-filled events and outings aren't always planned months in advance. So if you solely rely on our quarterly newsletter to stay up-to-date, you might be missing out.

We view the *Muir View* as an important tool to give in-depth information on the chapter's campaigns and the issues that concern us, but it only reflects a fraction of what goes on in any given quarter. To find out about opportunities to take action on the issues, we encourage you to subscribe to the chapter's monthly e-news and action alerts, follow us on Facebook and Twitter and check out our Wednesday blog called *Muir Musings*.

Here's what you need to know:

Monthly e-news: sign-up online at sierraclub.org/Wisconsin

Facebook: Sierra Club Wisconsin

Twitter: @SierraClubWI

Muir Musings Blog: <http://www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/muir-musings>



Backyard Hero Award

John Muir Chapter volunteer Larese Jordan has been recognized as a 2015 Backyard Hero by Community Shares of Wisconsin.

Larese has been an outstanding office volunteer for almost three years. He originally came on board to help with some short term projects but quickly became an integral part of daily operations. Larese has helped preserve Sierra Club history by converting chapter newsletters dating back to 1963 into electronic format. When that project was complete, he quickly mastered the ins and outs of data management and now puts those skills to use supporting the chapter's conservation work. Thanks to his excellent computer skills, easy-going nature and dependability, Larese has become an indispensable member of the John Muir Chapter team.

Backyard Heroes is a monthly volunteer recognition program hosted by Community Shares of Wisconsin to give recognition to those volunteers whose important work often flies under the radar. Larese received his award at the Community Shares of Wisconsin annual awards ceremony in September.

Legislature to Rollback Wisconsin's Energy Safeguards

Unfortunately, the bad idea to repeal the "Nuclear Moratorium" law has been resurrected. Wisconsin statutes currently require utilities to show that building a new nuclear plant will save ratepayers money and that a safe, federally licensed site is available to permanently store radioactive waste. Even though these commonsense conditions simply protect all Wisconsin residents, ratepayers and future generations, the legislature has proposed eliminating this law.

Nuclear energy production is an accident waiting to happen. Nuclear energy is vulnerable to natural disasters, terrorism, and human error that can lead to meltdowns and severe radiation leaks, as shown by the tsunami and earthquake in Fukushima, Japan in 2011, and at Three Mile Island in 1979, and at Chernobyl in 1986.

Even if nothing goes wrong, nuclear ener-

gy is wrong for Wisconsin — it's the most expensive form of electricity and produces radioactive waste that will be around for hundreds of thousands of years. It's also unnecessary given we have better, more realistic options. Wind, solar and energy efficiency are much cheaper than nuclear and do not come with the incredible drawbacks. This 20th Century form of energy will not be the future in Wisconsin. We have better alternatives that our neighboring states have already embraced.

Removing the nuclear moratorium is ridiculous, untimely, irresponsible and unsafe. It would be like talking about removing the ban on lead-based paints. At the time of this article, this bad idea has passed through committee but had not yet been voted on. Go to sierraclub.org/Wisconsin to find the most up-to-date news and take action.



River Touring Section Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the John Muir Chapter's River Touring Section will be held Saturday, January 9, 2015 at the Summit Village Hall located at 2911 N. Dousman Rd., outside of Oconomowoc. Socializing starts at 11 a.m. with a potluck lunch at noon and short business meeting.

Please bring a dish to share and your own plates, cups and utensils. RTS will provide beverages. For details contact: Rich Krieg, 920-660-3557, or email richkrieg@new.rr.com.

Hounding incident Survey

The Protecting Native Forests and Wildlife Subcommittee of the Sierra Club-John Muir Chapter is conducting a survey to determine the frequency and severity of hounding-related incidents.

The survey provides a vehicle for the committee to record and collect reports of adverse or injurious, unpleasant or unwelcome incidents involving hunting hounds in Wisconsin, Michigan or other states where hounds are used to pursue and harry wildlife. The survey data will be used to gauge the prevalence of such incidents, which the committee has learned are not tracked by the Department of Natural Resources. You do not need to be a land owner. You may file a report on another's behalf. Anonymity of respondents will be protected.

Take the survey here: <http://tinyurl.com/houndingsurvey>

Two Train Derailments in Two Days Bring Risks Home

In a single November weekend two train derailments in Wisconsin communities illustrated the risks of transporting fuels by rail. In Alma, five tanker cars derailed and 18,000 gallons of ethanol spilled into the Mississippi River. The next day, 13 tankers derailed in Watertown, spilling 500 gallons of crude oil. Thirty-five homes had to be evacuated. Luckily, the derailed cars did not explode. For Sierra Club supporter and activist Sarah, the Watertown derailment hit too close-to-home with the realization that, had there been an explosion, she, her husband and her five children could have been seriously injured.

In July of 2013, 74 train cars rolling downhill derailed in the Town of Lac Megantic in Canada. The subsequent explosion resulted in the death of 47 people. The recent derailments are a reminder that similar incidents are a real possibility in Wisconsin.

The number of train cars carrying oil in the United States has grown from about 6,000 car loads a week in 2006 to almost 16,000 carloads a week today. Unfortunately, the combination of dangerous fuel and aging rail infrastructure has resulted in recurring disasters, with thousands of derailments causing explosions and oil spills that threaten communities. A total of 1.15 million gallons of crude oil spilled from trains in 2013, more than in the past four decades combined. More derailments occurred in 2014 than any other year on record. Several fiery explosions and spills marked the first few months of 2015.

The oil being transported by rail through Wisconsin poses both environmental and safety risks, yet those tankers won't benefit our state. They are headed south and will likely one day be exported. It's essential to work together to ensure that the safety of Wisconsin communities comes before the goals of those looking to profit from oil export.

Volunteer Opportunity: Political Committee

Everyone is sure to have noticed by now that 2016 is a major election year at the local, state and national levels. The John Muir Chapter (JMC) is gearing up to help educate members and the public about a host of issues around the elections, including voting records of elected officials, important public stands and statements of candidates, whether or not candidates support chapter conservation policy goals, and any potential candidate endorsements. 2016 is going to be a busy

and exciting time to work on supporting conservation goals via the political process and members will want to watch for much more information next spring. The JMC is one of the very few statewide conservation organizations that has a robust and active political program and is always looking for members interested in becoming more involved. For more information, contact JMC Political Chair Dave Blouin at burroak15@gmail.com or 608-233-8455.

High-Capacity Well Legislation

In October, Sen. Robert Cowles and Rep. Scott Krug introduced SB 291. This bill is an attempt to create a comprehensive approach to managing high capacity wells in Wisconsin. The proliferation of high capacity wells allowed by the DNR has caused problems in several parts of the state such as the Central Sands where people's wells have run dry, and streams and lakes have had their levels drop dramatically. As currently drafted, SB291 it comes up short in several areas. It does not allow the DNR to

consider the cumulative impacts of wells drawing on the same aquifer, it does not adequately protect the rights of neighbors, and it eliminates the review of changes to existing wells. On the positive side, there are some provisions to protect the in-stream flows and lake levels and to designate sensitive areas and allow for greater protection of them. Unfortunately, even these latter two need to be altered to be truly effective. The John Muir Chapter testified against the bill as drafted.

Thank You to Our Donors

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

A James Abele, Richard Adelman, Loraine Adkins, Katherine Ahern, Candis Ahrendt, Amy Ahrens, Wendy & Randy Aide, Richard A. Albert, Barbara Albrecht, Col. John Adridge & Dr. Diane Muri, Charles Alsteen, Todd Ambs, Suzanne Ammerman, Fay Amory, Joseph E. Ancel, D. R. Anderson & J. Nugent, Dennis & Kathleen Anderson, Edward Anderson Jr., Janet Anderson, Jeffrey Anderson, Kathy Anderson, Jerold Apps, Deb Archer, Beverly Armstrong, Mike & Margaret Arney, Kate Atkins, Autoscribe Informatics

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MEMORIALS were received in memory of Joel, Greve, Leon Riemer, LaVern "LD" Rockwell and Dorothy Theide. The Jonathan Ela Activist fund also received multiple donations in Jonathan's memory.

These donations were made from November 1, 2014 through October 31, 2015. Thanks also go out to our many contributors who prefer to remain anonymous. We try to acknowledge every donor; if your name is not listed, please know that we greatly appreciate your support.

WI Transportation *Continued from page 4*


walking or biking less desirable and more dangerous. Minority communities experience a disproportionate number of pedestrian deaths than their white counterparts.

The inequity stemming from transportation is not just a nation-wide problem, nor is it in the past; it impacts Wisconsin now and in direct ways. Earlier this year, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation proposed an expansion of I-94 in Milwaukee. This unnecessary project would have cost over a billion dollars, and a transit alternative was never considered.

After the filing of many comments from the public that highlight-

ed the racism, classism, environmental impacts and high economic costs of the project, the I-94 expansion was put on pause. However, the trend of highway expansion without equitable solutions that fix local roads or provide affordable and safe transit options is sure to continue.

Wisconsin needs to create a more equitable and environmentally-sound transportation system, and the Sierra Club - John Muir Chapter has been part of a coalition working to achieve that. To support this effort, there will be several transportation summits throughout Wisconsin in 2016. More information will be available on the John Muir Chapter website sierraclub.org/wisconsin or by emailing cassandra.steiner@sierraclub.org.

<p>Support Your LOCAL Sierra Club</p>	<p>Contributions really do make a difference to us, and are an important part of the John Muir Chapter's budget.</p> <p>When you make a donation to the John Muir Chapter, you support the Sierra Club's work in Wisconsin's own backyard. 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.</p> <p>Please be as generous as you are able—and remember, these funds directly affect your way of life in your neighborhood.</p> <p>Contributions, gifts and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax-deductible.</p>	
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In Memoriam: LaVern "LD" Rockwell

On August 30, 2015 the Sierra Club lost an enthusiastic and energetic leader when LaVern "LD" Rockwell passed away unexpectedly. LD was elected to the John Muir Chapter Executive Committee in 2011 and was serving his second term. He was also a member of the chapter political committee and was deeply committed to enacting the club's goals, understanding that political engagement and winning elections were key to our success. He also served as the chapter's Council of Club Leaders delegate from 2013-15 and was an active member of the Southeast Gateway Group serving as its executive committee chair and conservation co-chair.

LD was currently working to advance the Military Outdoors program in Wisconsin. As a proud, twenty-year veteran of the Air Force, LD saw that the needs of returning veterans could be addressed by a program like Military Outdoors. He was also

a peace activist, serving as vice president of Veterans for Peace in Milwaukee and served on the board of Friends of Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge.



The Sierra Club Board of Directors recognized LD at the annual meeting in early September. LD had also been selected to receive the chapter's 2015 Wildflower Award which recognizes leaders who exemplify all that is wonderful in the environment and the club. An excerpt from a memorial written by staff and fellow leaders sums it up nicely, "Generous with his time, resources and energy, LD set a positive example for all he came in contact with at the club. As a colleague he was supportive of everyone around him and encouraging of his fellow leaders. His cheerful demeanor and can-do attitude made him a pleasure to work with. In short, LD was that rare activist whose shoes really are too big to fill but whose legacy will long be remembered." The award was accepted by LD's wife Judy who is also a club leader, serving as the Southeast Gateway Group delegate to the chapter Executive Committee.

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GREEN REVIEW

Rachel Carson and Her Sisters: Extraordinary Women Who Have Shaped America's Environment, By Dr. Robert K. Musil, Rutgers University Press; First Paperback Edition, 2015, 256 pages.



Could it be that Rachel Carson, for all her contributions as a scientist, environmentalist, activist and purveyor of wonder, is a token female? Was she the first woman to have an impact on environmentalism? She has been remembered; she remains controversial, but she was not the first or last significant woman to have an impact on the movement to care for the biotas of our delicate planet.

In 2007, Dr. Musil heard talk show hosts Glenn Beck and Rush Limbaugh spew fresh attacks on Carson more than four decades after she died of breast cancer. Why the venom? Musil's question prompted a reading of *Silent Spring* and several biographies. He realized that there "had been a lot of Rachel Carsons." These women have faced attacks and been largely relegated to obscurity, yet this lineage of women still fights for the life on Earth.

Musil begins with Rachel Carson and those who influenced her: most importantly her mother. Maria McLeon Carson, influenced by her own mother, instilled in Rachel an "emotional identification with birds and nature and a penchant for careful observation and scientific method." Musil identifies more than a half century of accumulated writings and discoveries by women who

built the platform for Carson's life work.

Four years before Thoreau published *Walden*, Susan Fenimore Cooper was America's first popular nature writer. The daughter of novelist James Fenimore Cooper, her 1850 *Rural Hours* was as popular as *Silent Spring* in its day. Perhaps it's not surprising that this romantic chronicle of natural progressions of the seasons in Upstate New York has fallen out of favor. Without direct outrage, Musil seems to suggest that there is an injustice to Cooper's literary contributions, which also includes then-famous essays and poems, being lost in the folds of history. The lineage of wonder and lamentation in the nature writing surely goes back to this shadowy figure from the past.

Musil ties lines of implication through his tales making this book more than a collection of mini-biographies. For example, the reader comes to understand that Cooper published in magazines such as *St. Nicholas* and little Rachel Carson was reading that same magazine. Although their lives did not overlap, their values did.

Inequity permeates the lives of many of Musil's should-be-famous subjects. America's first female professional ornithologist, Graceanna Lewis, was able to briefly penetrate the male world of scientific study of birds and publish a volume of *Natural History of Birds*. When her singular male mentor and advocate died, she was relegated to outsider status. Florence Merriam, who became the first student environmental organizer and a source inspiration to the sport of bird-watching, couldn't get a science degree from Smith College because the women's college didn't have a full science major. In 1889 her first book, *Birds through the Opera Glass*, suggests a startling change to the sport of bird-watching: how about we watch the birds without shooting them?

As female naturalists were able to study and write, their scope of contribution widened under their glass ceiling. Women such as Alice Hamilton, who is the "mother of industrial toxicology and the founder of pollution toxicology," fought to protect every living thing against the dangers of benzene and mercury as early as 1916. Mary Amdur studied particles in the air and their dramat-

ic and deleterious effect on guinea pigs and humans. But when she attempted to publish her findings in 1956, she was strong-armed by tough guys in leather jackets and threatened by her Harvard University superior to withdraw her paper or be fired. She refused and was fired. She continued to study, publish and promote green initiatives and did influence the scientists who, years later, admitted, "She got it right years before the rest of us."

Strong-arm tactics against female scientists litter the accounts of women at work in environmental science. Devra Davis, Ph.D., as presented by Musil, seems to be half scientist, half warrior, which we all should be thankful for. She has participated in hundreds of studies, authored books and done her best to protect people from pollutants. She's the scientist who convinced the Federal Aviation Administration to ban smoking on planes. Despite her collected evidence about harm to human lungs, the ban was passed only when she identified that the "gunky yellow stuff" also fouls the engines and instruments in the aircraft.

Accounts of these women and many more weave a sense of wonder with science and a sensitivity to truth. If there are things that the nation needs as much as environmental intelligence, they might be critical thinking and truth. For example, Musil notes about three quarters through the book that vitriol toward Carson is rooted in the claim that she is responsible for genocide by malaria in Africa after the banning of DDT. "DDT was not immediately banned, as a few cranks have contended." It was granted a public health exception and phased out as alternatives were developed. The nation would indeed be a far superior place if it were more informed by Musil and his extraordinary "sisters" than by the noise of shells, exploiters, polluters, strong-armers and cranks. I hope everyone reads this book.

Amy Lou Jenkins is the author of *Every Natural Fact: Five Seasons of Open-Air Parenting*. Contact her through her site at www.AmyLouJenkins.com if you'd like to offer a book for possible review.

2016 Paddling Adventures in Quetico and Wisconsin

Don't miss the opportunity to enjoy the wild northwoods on canoe and other outings offered by John Muir Chapter. In addition to outings to Quetico Provincial Park, an annual offering since 2004, we have several other options in Wisconsin, some in locations governed by the National Park Service (NPS) and in commemoration of the NPS 100-year anniversary in 2016.

Wisconsin Wilderness Outings Commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the National Park Service

Join the Sierra Club in celebrating the centennial of the National Park Service (NPS). The Centennial will celebrate the achievements of the past 100 years, but it is really about the future. It's about kicking off a second century of stewardship for America's national parks and for communities across the nation. Most importantly, it's about inviting you to join us. The chapter is offering four outings in Wisconsin in areas governed by the NPS.

Apostle Islands. NPS-100 Outing Date TBD

(3-6 days, 2-5 nights; island camp/hike; optional sea-kayaking)
Leader: David Thomas - 414-344-1044, thomasdp@thomerwald.net
Outing Location: Apostle Islands National Lakeshore
Outing Cost: TBD

Our featured NPS Centennial commemorative outing will be to the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore. This outing is still in the early planning stages, and you should visit the John Muir Chapter website sierraclub.org/Wisconsin or contact trip leader David Thomas for information as it becomes available. Trip dates will not be available until January when reservation system opens. Depending on interest, the trip may include:

Two, three or five night island camp with hiking, ranger-guided presentations and campfires with island stories.

(Cost: two nights \$125, three nights \$150, five nights \$250, including \$50 deposit.)

All-day sea kayak trip with sea-cave tour (weather permitting) (Cost: approximately \$120.)

North Country Trail Service and Backpack Outing June 24-27, 2016

(2-4 days, 1-3 nights; trail service and backpack)

Co-Leaders: David Thomas - 414-344-1044, thomasdp@thomerwald.net and Mike Stafford, gbpackr@aol.com

Outing Location: North Country Trail near Mellen, WI and Copper Falls State Park

Outing Cost: \$50

Discover the North Country Trail in Wisconsin on a two-day weekend service trip followed by an optional two days of moderate backpacking. Currently under construction, the 4,600 mile North Country Trail stretches from Upstate New York to North Dakota. You can join the hundreds of volunteers now involved in building the trail by hand. Beginner backpackers welcome. Limited to six participants.

Women's July Namekagon River Trip July 14-17, 2016

(4 days, 3 nights; women's paddling trip)

Leader: Vicki Christianson 715-827-0379 vicki.christianson@yahoo.com
Outing Departure Point: Trego, WI
Outing Cost: \$150 including \$50 deposit

Enjoy warm summer days on a women-only leisurely paddle covering 35 miles on the Namekagon and St. Croix Rivers (from County K Landing to Riverside Landing on the St. Croix) which is part of the Saint Croix National Scenic Riverway in northern Wisconsin. This section of the river offers a combination of gentle rapids and smooth flowing current on the Namekagon, followed on the last day with several small rapids near the confluence of the St. Croix. Some paddling experience recommended. Limited to eight participants.

Women's September Namekagon River Trip September 29-Oct 2, 2016

(4 days, 3 nights; women's paddling trip)

Leader: Nancy McDermott - 608-238-1421, njmcderm@gmail.com
Departure point: Trego, WI
Outing cost: \$150 including \$50 deposit

Enjoy the autumn colors on a women-only leisurely paddle covering 25 miles on Namekagon River (from County K Landing to Namekagon Trail Landing) which is part of the Saint Croix National Scenic Riverway in northern Wisconsin. This section of the river offers a combination of gentle rapids and smooth flowing current. Beginner paddlers welcome. Limited to eight participants.

Quetico Provincial Park Offerings

Spanning the international border between northeast Minnesota and southwest Ontario, this gem in the heart of North America, Quetico Provincial Park offers the largest expanse of wild, public access lands in the region. With over 2,000 lakes and almost 1.2 million acres of remote wilderness, Quetico offers travelers on its picturesque rivers and lakes a visual and personal encounter, all while navigating the rugged beauty of its towering rock cliffs, majestic waterfalls, and virgin pine and spruce forests.

Quetico Outing 1 – McDermott and Stahl July 28-August 7, 2016

(9 days, 8 nights; paddle/portage/camp)

Co-Leaders: Nancy McDermott 608-238-1421 njmcderm@gmail.com and Will Stahl 920-725-9185 wrsy55@sbcglobal.net

Outing Departure Point: Moose Lake - Ely, MN area

Outing Cost: \$675 including \$100 deposit

Enjoy a four-night base camp on Agnes Lake sandwiched between canoe travel days in and out of the park to maximize fishing and cooking delicious fresh fish meals. Participants who don't fish but enjoy eating the bounty are welcome. Limited to seven participants.

Quetico Outing 2 – McQuilkin's July 29-August 6, 2016

(8 days, 7 nights; paddle/portage/camp)

Co-Leaders: Mike 253-219-9208 sumcqu@comcast.net and Scott McQuilkin 253-988-4394 lo86blazer@aol.com,

Outing Departure Point: International Falls, MN / Atikokan, ON

Outing Cost: \$600 including \$100 deposit

Participants on this fishing-themed outing will canoe and portage a loop starting/ending at Stanton Bay on Pickerel Lake including paddling through beautiful Chatterton Lake. A three-night layover is planned. Limited to nine participants.

Quetico Outing 3 – Brands and Karaskiewicz August 5-15, 2016

(8 days, 7 nights; paddle/portage/camp)

Outing type: paddle/portage/camp
Co-leaders: Peter Brands 262-888-3516 pbrands@gmail.com and Tim Karaskiewicz 414-397-8768 tkaraskiewicz@mitchellairport.com
Outing departure point: Atikokan, ON

Outing cost: \$600 including \$100 deposit

This outing will focus on wildlife, so it will include a few early morning paddles. Great food and stary nights should make for a fulfilling trip as the dates coincide with the peak of the Perseid meteor shower. Two layover days are planned. Limited to nine participants.

☞ Paddling Adventures *Continued on page 15*



Inspiration & Camaraderie

Big take-aways from Autumn Assembly weekend

Almost 100 Sierra Club members gathered in early October for the chapter's annual Autumn Assembly. The weekend retreat, held at Perlstein Resort & Conference Center in Lake Delton, featured outings, educational sessions, brainstorming workshops and plenty of socializing with friends, old and new.

The beautiful fall weekend started with an outing to the International Crane Foundation followed by an Aldo Leopold walking tour. Saturday's sessions offered the type of in-depth insights on key environmental issues that can be hard to come by in today's world of sound bites. Experts like Mike McCabe, author of *Blue Jeans in High Places*, and James Edward Mills of the Joy Trip Project kept the audience engaged as they discussed the connection between the environment and democracy and the need to connect more people



↑ *Popcorn and storytelling around the campfire gave members from around the state a chance to connect.*

with nature. Scott Wittkopf of the Forward Institute inspired crowd reactions when he revealed the underlying belief systems that determine whether or not environmental or political messages will resonate with an individual. He then led a brainstorming session around chapter campaign messaging.

Saturday evening awards were presented to a variety of individuals whose efforts have resulted in significant contributions to the work of the chapter. The touching ceremony was a reminder of the impact we can have as individuals and of our collective strength as a club.

In a post-event survey, respondents reported feeling more energized, inspired and connected as they left the event. The only lingering question was, how do we get more of our fellow Sierrans to attend this great event? If you have thoughts on what would motivate you to attend the Assembly please share them with us at john.muir.chapter@sierraclub.org



↑ *Mike McCabe, author of Blue Jeans in High Places, speaks to a full house about the connection between the environment and democracy.*



↑ *James Edward Mills, author of The Adventure Gap, discusses the nature deficit and lack of media attention to minority achievements in the world of adventure sports*



← *Alan Lawrence, Fox Valley group chair, participates in a small group brainstorming session on environmental messaging.*

AUTUMN ASSEMBLY

A SIERRA CLUB EVENT

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paddling Adventures *(continued from page 13)*

Wilderness Camp Cooking - Devil's Lake May 13-15, 2016

(3 days, 2 nights; car camping/wilderness cooking instruction)

Leader: Nancy McDermott - 608-238-1421, njmcderm@gmail.com
Outing Location: Devil's Lake State Park

Outing cost: \$100 including \$50 deposit

Learn about wilderness cooking while enjoying a spring weekend camping at Wisconsin's most popular state park. We'll cover everything from menu planning and recipes to cooking equipment, packing, and hands-on cooking/baking. Limited to 10 participants.

Intro to Canoe Camping - Bittersweet Lakes June 10-13, 2016

(3 days, 2 nights; introduction to canoe camping)

Leader: David Thomas - 414-344-1044, thomasdp@thomerwald.net
Outing Location: Bittersweet Lakes State Natural Area, WI

Outing Cost: \$60

This outing will use the same plan-

ning and travel systems as longer Boundary Waters outings but closer to home. Bittersweet Lakes is a series of small motor-free lakes in the Northern Highland American Legion State Forest. If you've considered taking a longer wilderness trip but feel you lack experience, this is a great way to get started.

Women's Manitowish River Outing September 22-25, 2016

(4 days, 3 nights; women's paddling trip)

Leader: Janet Clear - 608-833-1339, janetclear@gmail.com
Departure point: Manitowish Waters, WI

Outing cost: \$160 including \$50 deposit

Join other women for a three-night trip covering 25-30 miles of the Manitowish River and Turtle-Flambeau Flowage in northern Wisconsin. Enjoy birds, trees and wildlife while paddling the flowing flat water river section of the flowage. Camp at state forest campsites along the way. Limited to six participants.

Outings Leaders: Our outings leaders are experienced veterans with Wilderness First Aid training and Sierra Club's Outings Leadership Training approvals in addition to their own personal outings, life and leadership experiences. For candidate participants, no experience is required, but a friendly personality, positive attitude and good physical fitness are invaluable assets.

Outings Fees: Outings fees include all group supplies, equipment, food and lodging – including park permits and taxes. Not included are personal pre/post outings travel costs, passports, permits and fishing licenses. You supply your personal camping gear and clothing. Contact outings leaders for additional information about registration – including where to send your refundable deposit to reserve your spot.

All outing fees allow participants to offer support for the John Muir Chapter Outings Program and its ability to continue offering these outings annually. Additional contributions to this fund are always welcome.

Liability Waiver & Carpooling:

While no experience is required, all participants must complete a medical history and canoe experience form, and then be approved by their outing leader before participating on any outing. Liability insurance coverage provided by Sierra Club for all participants. All forms are available for viewing by any prospective participant upon request.

In the interest of facilitating logistics for some outings, it is customary that participants make carpooling arrangements to the outing's starting point. Sierra Club outings insurance does not cover the time prior to or following the outing when crew may still travel together. Therefore, carpooling, ride sharing or similar activities are a private arrangement made among participants and not part of the offering.

CST 2087766-40. Registration as a seller of travel does not constitute approval by the State of California.

JOHN MUIR CHAPTER CALENDAR

Executive Committee Meeting

January 9 **Summit Village Hall**
 Summit Village Hall, 2911 Dousman Rd.
 Oconomowoc
 11:30 am - 3:00 pm

2016 Events Calendar:

January 9 **River Touring Section Meeting**
 Summit Village Hall, Oconomowoc
 11 am richkrieg@new.rr.com

January 21 **RENEW WI Enegy Policy Summit**
 Monona Terrace, Madison, WI
<http://www.renewwisconsin.org>

February 2 **World Wetlands Day**
www.worldwetlandsday.org

February 25-27 **MOSES Organic Farming Conference**
 La Crosse, WI
<https://mosesorganic.org/conference>

February 26 **WI Environmental Health Network
 Making the Connection Conference**
 Madison, WI
<http://www.wehnonline.org/mtc-2016>

Mar 11-13 **Canoeopia**
 Alliant Energy Center, Madison, WI
<http://www.canoeopia.com/>

Mar 22 **UN World Water Day**
<http://www.unwater.org/worldwaterday/>



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Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> \$39	<input type="checkbox"/> \$49
Supporting	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100
Contributing	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150	<input type="checkbox"/> \$175
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Student/Limited Income	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35

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**Enclose a check and mail to Sierra Club,
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