

THE MUIR VIEW



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


Wisconsin's Transportation Budget Kicks Local Funding to the Curb

By Elizabeth Ward, Conservation Programs Coordinator-John Muir Chapter

As we gear up for the debate over the next Biennial Budget, all eyes will be on the now constitutionally segregated Transportation Budget. With declining gas tax revenues (as Wisconsinites drive less and our vehicles get more efficient), there has been much debate in the media over how to cover the cost of maintaining Wisconsin's local roads and highways. The Sierra Club and other groups will be working hard in coming months to point out that our budget problem is not just about bridging revenue gaps, but also about making sure that we don't keep building costly highways with taxpayer dollars that don't necessarily meet our changing mobility needs.

Transportation: an environmental issue?

The Transportation Budget is one of those issues that grabs public interest, but it is rarely seen as an environmental issue. In fact, the transportation sector is the second-largest and fastest-growing source of greenhouse gases, emitting 1,739.5 million metric tons of carbon dioxide (CO₂) annually according to the EPA (with diesel creating about 15% more emis-

sions per gallon than gasoline when burned due to the higher carbon content of that fuel). Cars, trucks, and other vehicles also emit other toxins, including, carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen oxides (NO_x), particulate matter (PM), and benzene. As a result, people living near roadways have a higher incidence of asthma,  Continued on pg. 6



Chapter Awards Recognize Outstanding Volunteer Accomplishments


By Shahla Werner, Director, John Muir Chapter

Each year the John Muir Chapter pauses to recognize a handful of individuals and organizations whose actions have made a difference in our efforts on statewide environmental issues. This year's awards were presented when 100 Sierra Club members and supporters from throughout Wisconsin gathered at the Phantome Lake YMCA Camp for our Autumn Assembly, October 10-12. Award winners included:

State Senator Bob Jauch received the **Torchbearer Award**, given to those external to the club for consistently promoting practices or policies that protect the environment. Sen. Jauch earned the award for his decades of public service in the state legislature, where he represented constituents in northwestern Wis-



consin from the scenic shores of Lake Superior to the Penokee Hills to the Chequamegon Nicolet National Forest. His environmental accomplishments include vocally opposing the bill to gut mining safeguards written by and for out-of-state iron mining company Gogebic Taconite (GTAC), supporting the Great Lakes Compact, and authoring legislation to protect the Totogatic and Brunswiler Rivers under the State Wild Rivers Program.

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FROM THE CHAIR

The early arrival of winter weather gave us a jolt this fall. A freeze sweetens kale plants in the garden, but this weather went overboard, and our kale was downright brittle when we harvested. Yet climate change skeptics may be disappointed in seizing on this regional weather pattern to say it's all a hoax. So far scientists are suggesting that melting polar ice is releasing the relative warmth from arctic waters into the atmosphere. This "warm" air then presses the jet stream south, bringing us polar air, which is "cold" to us. Such anomalies may continue with general warming. But what else might happen? Our economy, and perhaps our species, is threatened by extreme climate change. Hence we continue to do everything we can to reduce greenhouse gases and stabilize our global climate!

My annual November hunt in northern Wisconsin will be long past when you read this. Fans of the deer will be pleased that a two-day snowstorm ended my bow hunting pursuit prematurely, but as I write this, I am still looking to Thanksgiving week and the gun deer hunt. (Last year's harvest has dwindled to a few morsels of venison remaining in the freezer.) By the time this Muir View arrives though I hope to be outdoors regularly on cross-country skis, enjoying that magical blend of solitude and aerobic exercise and preparing for my 28th Birkebeiner in late February.

We can't overlook November's mid-term election. There were candidates we liked a lot. Some we liked much less. But the voters of Wisconsin spoke -- or at least some of them did. (Did you? -- It matters.) We had wins but more than our share of losses. (See Dave Blouin's article on page 4.) As a consequence we will likely fight two more years of regressive environmental legislation, lax state agency rule-making and enforcement. Sadly, this affects public health, with contaminated or exhausted groundwater due to destructive farming practices and the threat of silicosis from dust in the air around frac sand operations. We're seeing new utility rates that discourage families

from investing in solar and wind alternatives, and transportation policy that sacrifices neighborhoods to bigger freeways, whether or not trends indicate they are necessary. New taxes may penalize families for owning fuel-efficient cars.

The political tide will turn eventually, but we will need to work for it. On the brighter side, we've recently celebrated 50 years of wilderness preservation and helped acquire new Wisconsin public land where John Muir spent his formative years. So we've continued to explore,

enjoy and protect Our Wild Wisconsin. We've led in closing dirty coal plants, stimulated new solar installations and slowed the spread of "extreme oil" from Canadian Tar Sands. No mother wants a poisonous oil spill in her children's neighborhood or upstream on a nearby river.

The John Muir Chapter of Sierra Club has a long history of grassroots strength, activism and results. Our members around the state are the key, and we are growing. We have adopted a new map of local Sierra Club groups in Wisconsin, aligning local groups along county boundaries. Regions without a local group are now called "territories," fertile ground for organizing new efforts around a local issue. Of course our members can also choose which group they belong to regardless of geographic location.

We are financially solid, but we could do more with increased financial resources

and staff. As many of you know we are blessed to have Shahla Werner, Jacinda Tessmann and Elizabeth Ward working hard and effectively out of our Madison office. If you have the wherewithal to help expand this work with a major donation to the club, now or in the future, give Chapter Director Shahla Werner a call at 608-256-0565. A gift to the Sierra Club John Muir Chapter is a gift to quality of life for future generations in Wisconsin.

Jim Kerler

Chair, Sierra Club-John Muir Chapter



THE MUIR VIEW

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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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Dr. Pat McManus, Reverend Willie Brisco, Karyn Rotker, and Dennis Grzezinski shared the **Good Citizen Award** this year, given to individuals external to the club who champion innovative programs or processes that protect the environment. They earned this award for their efforts to organize and file a lawsuit against the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) and the National Highway Administration for failing to address the health and transit needs of Milwaukee's inner city in reconstructing the Zoo Interchange in Milwaukee County.

Jim Steffens received the **JJ & Pat Werner Award**, given to Sierra Club leaders in the John Muir Chapter who display an undying

commitment to the goals and missions of the John Muir Chapter. Among other things, Jim earned this lifetime achievement award for his past service as Chapter Chair and Council of Club Leaders representative, and for his ongoing work on the Personnel, Membership and Finance Committees and the National Sierra Club's Awards Committee.

Mining Subcommittee Member Laurie Szpot received the **New Activist**

Award for her enthusiastic participation in Sierra Club issues and in the organization, for her participation in a planning session to create a mining campaign plan with national Sierra Club representatives, her assistance with the Gaylord Nelson Wilderness Act Apostle Islands Boat Tour, and for her fantastic work posting compelling updates to our Facebook page that helped us exceed 2,500 fans in 2014 without the use of any paid advertisements.

Former teacher, Girl Scout and sand mining activist Barb Flom received the **Merit Award**, given to a Sierra Club leader who actively carries the Sierra Club message to decision-makers and the concerned public. Barb refused to

sign a gag order and accept funds from a frac sand mining company that was proposing to mine on her family's land, and she has empowered local community members to engage in fights to protect habitat, public health and the bucolic lifestyle in western Wisconsin. Flom has also been crucial in helping the chapter devise effective strategies for supporting local groups seeking increased regulation and oversight of Wisconsin's frac sand boom.

Writer, public speaker and backpacker Eric Hansen received the **Wildflower Award**, given to a mentor for new and existing activists and to an educator who promotes a positive image for the Club. Eric's books on hiking trails in Wisconsin and Michigan's Upper Peninsula help guide and connect people to outstanding natural features in our local region. His participation in 350.org and Sierra Club, and his editorials on threats that tar sands oil pipelines pose to our fresh water resources are compelling and thought-provoking enough to move public opinion into our corner.

Is there an environmental champion who you feel deserves recognition for contributions to the Sierra Club John Muir Chapter's mission? Please visit the website for details on how to make a nomination: www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin or contact Awards Chair Lacinda Athen at lacinda.athen@gmail.com for a nomination form.

National Sierra Club Awards received



Autumn Assembly keynote Ron Seely recently received a prestigious national Sierra Club award. The John Muir Chapter nominated Seely for the David Brower Award in recognition of his award-winning reporting on environmental issues with the *Wisconsin State Journal* and the Center for Investigative Journalism. The award was presented at a ceremony in San Francisco in November.



Members of the John Muir Chapter Fundraising Committee were honored with the national Sierra Club's Denny & Ida Wilcher Award which included a \$3,000 gift to the chapter. The award recognized the teams' successful efforts to garner sponsorships and ticket

sales for our 50th Anniversary Celebration featuring Michale Brune in 2013. Don Ferber accepted the award at a ceremony in San Francisco in November. (Pictured from left: Liz Wessel, Gary Werner, Don Ferber, Caryl Terrell, Seth Nowak)

DEADLINE FOR APRIL-JUNE 2015 ISSUE IS FEBRUARY 15

2014 Post-election Wrap-up

By Dave Blouin, John Muir Chapter Political Committee Chair

There's no getting around the fact that the 2014 elections were not kind to the John Muir Chapter and our goals. The mid-term election results were not entirely unexpected yet were disappointing since Sierra Club members throughout the state worked so hard to elect strong environmental candidates in a number of key races. Still, I want to thank every member who turned out to help on races around the state; we heard thanks and appreciation from many candidates who treasure our endorsement and the help we provided for their races.

There are clear reasons why these elections favored GOP candidates. Amidst an already hyper-partisan atmosphere, these factors included attacks on democracy via active voter suppression (disguised as voter "rights" measures) and negative campaigning by candidates and their "dark money" surrogates. Dark money is the legal, anonymous and unlimited contributions to campaigns, independent of individual candidates, for phony issue ads and often outright lies about candidates. Other important factors include the recent gerrymandering of state and federal districts to favor incumbents and move voters favorable to the GOP into like-voting districts along with a concerted effort to tie state and federal candidates to unpopular former and current officials.

Lest you think I'm deliberately beating up on the GOP, I should remind readers that the Sierra Club is officially a non-partisan organization. The other side deserves blame for some of the same infractions, but to be clear: the GOP has become increasingly and openly hostile to Sierra Club goals in recent years. We need only reference our own recent legislative scorecards demonstrating party-line voting on every piece of legislation marred only by the occasional brave vote taken by officials like outgoing Senator Dale Schultz on mining legislation.

While we had no expectation that the state Assembly GOP majority would change, the losses in the Senate that increased the GOP majority there and the office of the Governor will make our work influencing the next budget and legislative session even more difficult. Bright spots in state elections included returning Representatives Ron Kind, Mark

Pocan, and Gwen Moore to Congress. Kathleen Vinehout and Janet Bewley won tight state Senate races with Bewley set to replace retiring State Senator Bob Jauch. Most endorsed incumbents on the Assembly side were reelected and new candidates elected included Beth Meyers in Bayfield, Amanda Stuck in Appleton and Dave Considine in Portage.

Former John Muir Chapter Chair and Assembly Representative Penny Bernard Schaber lost her bid for state Senate despite strong grassroots support and a very positive campaign. This was a key race where both the Sierra Club and allied groups put many resources, including volunteers and advertising, to work but came up short. That race is a good example of how gerrymandering has made a district more partisan than it had been previously and thus, much harder to win.

We're encouraged that Kelly Westlund wants to run against Sean Duffy again in 2016. We endorsed Kelly because she's a smart, strong and tireless campaigner who is committed to maintaining our environment. She has emerged as an articulate spokesperson for progressive causes in northwestern Wisconsin and we're thrilled that she's not backing away from another fight.

We know that polling repeatedly demonstrates that voters – across party lines – do care about their environment and their future. They do not want to be burdened with dirty energy and the resulting pollution. They want clean air and water for their families and children. They want action on climate change, on voter rights and democracy and on getting unlimited, polluter money out of politics. They want a clean energy economy that creates jobs and increases our quality of life.

Our job is to make sure that our elected officials understand these issues, know what our expectations are and realize that there will be consequences to their votes. We also can do more to emphasize voter education and the importance of voting for your best interests, not against them. We are absolutely right on these issues and will do more to elevate their profile and importance in our neighborhoods and communities to win in the next round of elections. We've been down before but we keep bouncing back, and I'm convinced that we can build on the great work we did in this election to make a difference in 2016.



Maureen Birk, Sally Peck, Penny Bernard Schaber & Laura DeGolier attend a house-party fundraiser for Penny's senate bid at Joe & Mary Jo Weidert's Menasha home.

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We also thank Ron Horn, Carol Johnson, Don Ferber, Sue Sedlachek, Melissa and Jay Warner, Jeff Sytsma, Gerry Mullins, Caryl Terrell and Liz Wessel for their individual item donations!

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☞ **Transportation** *Continued from pg. 1*

cardiovascular disease, reduced lung function, low birth weight infants, childhood leukemia, and premature death. Transportation also has a significant impact on where and how we live, impacting sprawl and habitat protection.

Our transportation sector also fuels our dependence on oil. The BP Deepwater Horizon Disaster, which claimed 11 human lives, spilled 200 million gallons of oil, and 1.8 million gallons of toxic dispersants into the Gulf, illustrates the horrific price we are paying for our dependence on oil. The US consumes 19.6 million barrels of oil per day (each barrel contains 42 gallons), or 22% of the world's total, despite having only 4.43% of the world's population. The cost of our oil dependence is high, with the US spending \$190 billion per year on overseas oil. As global oil supply decreases, we go to greater extremes to get it, from deepwater, offshore drilling to destroying boreal forests in order to extract tar sands oil in Canada. Until we can kick our addiction to oil, we will continue to clamor for every last drop, whether that means leaving a legacy of water pollution from the Gulf Coast to Michigan's Kalamazoo River or risking community safety with horrific freight rail accidents.

Transportation in Wisconsin

Because of all the environmental issues surrounding transportation, the Sierra Club advocates for clean transportation alternatives including taking the bus or train, walking, biking, and driving a hybrid or an electric vehicle. In 2010 we fought hard for the high-speed rail train that would have provided a clean alternative to driving to and from Milwaukee and eventually would have provided regional transportation from Chicago to Minneapolis. Once that project was blocked, we focused our energy on encouraging people to use mass transit to reduce emissions from driving (also known as reducing vehicle miles traveled). As we began working to expand transit options, one thing became clear: we need better funding and funding mechanisms to support our transit systems.

Unfortunately, most cities in Wisconsin have transit systems that are not adequate to address mobility needs. Transfers, inconvenient routes, or long trips make mass transit difficult or impossible for some. Though the demand for more buses, more stops, and convenience is high, funding for transit systems has been slashed. What's more, the legislature won't allow communities to form regional transit authorities, a tool available almost everywhere else in the nation for raising local, dedicated transit funds. Transit funding cuts in the 2011-13 and 2013-15 state budgets

have resulted in the elimination of many bus routes, leaving thousands with limited or no access to jobs, shopping, school, medical appointments and recreation.



The reality is most of these cuts have occurred in order to increase the budget for highway expansions. Of the \$3 billion Transportation Budget, nearly \$2 billion is used for highways. The ballooning budget for expanding highways has been gobbling up funding for transit, biking and walking infrastructure, and even local road reimbursements (evident by the multiplying potholes in communities across Wisconsin), like a game of "Hungry, Hungry Highways." For the last 15 years, highway expansion spending has increased over 100%.

Increased highway spending has also led to growing debt within the Transportation Budget. In 2000, 5% of the Transportation Budget was spent paying off the debt. In the 2013 budget, 16% was allocated to paying off our debt, and a recent Legislative Fiscal Bureau memo showed debt could soon be 1/5th of the Transportation Budget. We cannot continue on this downward trajectory in which we continue to use credit to pay for these projects and force our children to foot the bill.

Changing Trends

These funding changes are happening despite the fact that Wisconsinites are driving 8.4% less now than they did in 2003. Demographic shifts in our state's population suggest that that this trend is likely to continue in coming years.

Residents across Wisconsin are aging. A study by the Department of Administration found that by 2035, over 25% of Wisconsin will be 65 or older. Some counties, especially our rural counties could have elderly populations close to 40%. People often outlive their ability to drive, men by 6 years and women by 10. Wisconsin needs options like transit in place to allow those who cannot drive to go grocery shopping, get to doctor's appointments, get to work, and socialize in order to avoid social isolation.

On the other side of the spectrum, young people are seeking transportation options other than driving. Reports by the U.S. Public Interest Research Group show that millennials (ages 16-34) drove 23% fewer miles than in 2001. This is happening because young people prefer to live in cities where they

can walk to work, restaurants, and entertainment; ride the bus or train while using their smart phones; and avoid paying for a car in order to pay off student loan debts.

2015-17 Biennial Budget

Despite our desperate need to reform transportation spending, Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) Secretary Gottlieb submitted a budget request just days after the election that shows complete disregard for Wisconsin's changing transportation needs and instead proposed more wasteful highway spending. For instance, WisDOT proposed \$751 million in new fees by instituting a 'highway use fee' on the purchase of new vehicles (averaging \$800 for a typical vehicle around \$32,000), an increase to the gas tax, and even a \$50 tax on those who own electric and hybrid vehicles, blaming budget shortfalls on drivers who invest in efficient vehicles for paying less gas tax rather than curbing wasteful highway spending. A better way to balance our Transportation budget would be to cancel unnecessary highway proposals and fix our local infrastructure first, instead of penalizing those who help reduce air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, and oil dependence.

The budget recommends increasing highway funding by hundreds of millions, including almost \$800 million for highway expansions

in Southeastern Wisconsin. At the same time, local communities get a measly 3% increase in state reimbursements. Though transit funding gets some increases, the budget proposes removing transit from the transportation fund and instead funding it through the state's General Fund. This is extremely concerning. By funding transit systems through the General Fund, funding levels will be jeopardized by forcing transit to compete with schools, police, fire, and other needs.

Case-Study: Double-Decker Highway Boondoggle

Ironically, the same day WisDOT released its budget proposal, it also released the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed expansion of the I-94 Interstate between the Zoo and Marquette Interchanges. WisDOT proposed two options for this project: 1.) an expansion that included a double-decker highway, with five lanes on-top and five below, or 2.) an expansion that

reduced lane size and removed the shoulders of the road to increase the number of lanes in each direction. Both options proposed expanding the highway, no transit alternatives were studied. Both incredibly expensive options (\$1.2 billion and \$800 million respectively) would cost more than all state funding for county, city, village, and town roads currently get in a year in Wisconsin.

Of course, an expansion is not needed, but funding for local roads and transit desperately is. A report by 1000 Friends of Wisconsin found that while WisDOT is projecting that traffic in the corridor will grow 23.3% by 2040, Wisconsinites have actually driven almost 8% less on that stretch of road since 2000. While driving in the corridor has decreased, the demand for transit has risen. Cuts to Milwaukee's transit system in 2011 left 13,000 people unable to access their jobs. This past summer, the Sierra Club joined the Coalition for More Responsible Transportation (CMRT), a coalition of organizations

concerned about the proposal. CMRT will continue to fight for a transit alternative to this wasteful expansion.

All Hands on Deck

With a single party controlling both houses of the Legislature as well as the Governor's office, it will be an uphill battle to stop the fast-tracked budget from slashing transit funding in Wisconsin, penalizing those who choose cleaner cars, and increasing taxes for all of us. The budget is on a path to increase funding for unnecessary highway expansions while cutting critical transit funding. We will need everyone to contact their legislators, talk to their neighbors, write letters-to-the-editor, and more in order to get the attention of Governor Walker and the legislature.

If you can help get Wisconsin's transportation funding in line with the needs of the 21st Century, contact Elizabeth Ward at elizabeth.ward@sierraclub.org or (608) 256-0565.

Mining Committee has busy Autumn

The John Muir Chapter Mining Committee hosted a screening of the Al Jazeera documentary "Wisconsin's Mining Standoff" at the Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute at Northland College on Friday, September 26th, 2014. The documentary was created by Milwaukee's 371 Productions and chronicles the fight against Gogebic Taconite's open pit mine proposal. More than 70 are residents turned out for the screening and heard from an expert panel that included Faye Koonsman of the O'dovero family which farms directly adjacent to the proposed mine, Frank Koehn, President of the Mining Impact Coalition of Wisconsin, Chairman Mike Wiggins, Jr. of the Bad River Band of the Lake Superior Ojibwe and Devon Cupery of 371 Productions. Attendees heard how GTac wrote the new iron mining law that gutted environmental regulations and how the Sierra Club and others worked together in 2014 to repeal the law that we call the Bad River Watershed Destruction Act. The Mining committee has also sponsored showings around the state and plans to schedule more in 2015.



In late September, members of the Mining Committee traveled to Minnesota's Mesabi Iron Range to witness the devastation caused by decades of open pit taconite mining identical to what is proposed by Gogebic Taconite in the Penokees and the Bad River Watershed of Lake Superior. The photo above shows a very small part of what is currently the world's largest open pit taconite mine, the Rust Hull Mahoning mine in Hibbing, MN owned by Cliffs Natural Resources. GTac's proposal could become the world's largest open pit taconite mine if it gains permits and expands beyond the current Phase 1 proposal.

ISSUES AT A GLANCE

Chapter Elections

Thank you to all who cast a vote in this year's 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 Don Hammes and Carol Johnson to its ranks, along with returning member Eric Uram. Each will serve a three-year term.

Three at-large seats will be up for election next year with terms to start in 2016. Watch for an invitation to apply for candidacy in the July issue of the Muir View.

River Touring Section Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the John Muir Chapter's River Touring Section will be held Saturday, January 10, 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, eddyout@gmail.com

UPCOMING CHANGES WORTH NOTING

A new chapter website will be unveiled in early 2015. The new site promises to be user friendly whether you use a computer, tablet or phone. Watch for its official launch then bookmark the new web address - sierraclub.org/wisconsin - so you can visit often.

The John Muir Chapter office will be moving in 2015. Beginning March 1st you can find us at 754 Williamson Street, Madison, WI 53703. Our new offices will be located on the ground floor of the Wisconsin Council of the Blind and Visually Impaired building. The move offers a great work environment for our staff at an easy to access location for our volunteers and interns. Our phone number will remain 608-256-0565.

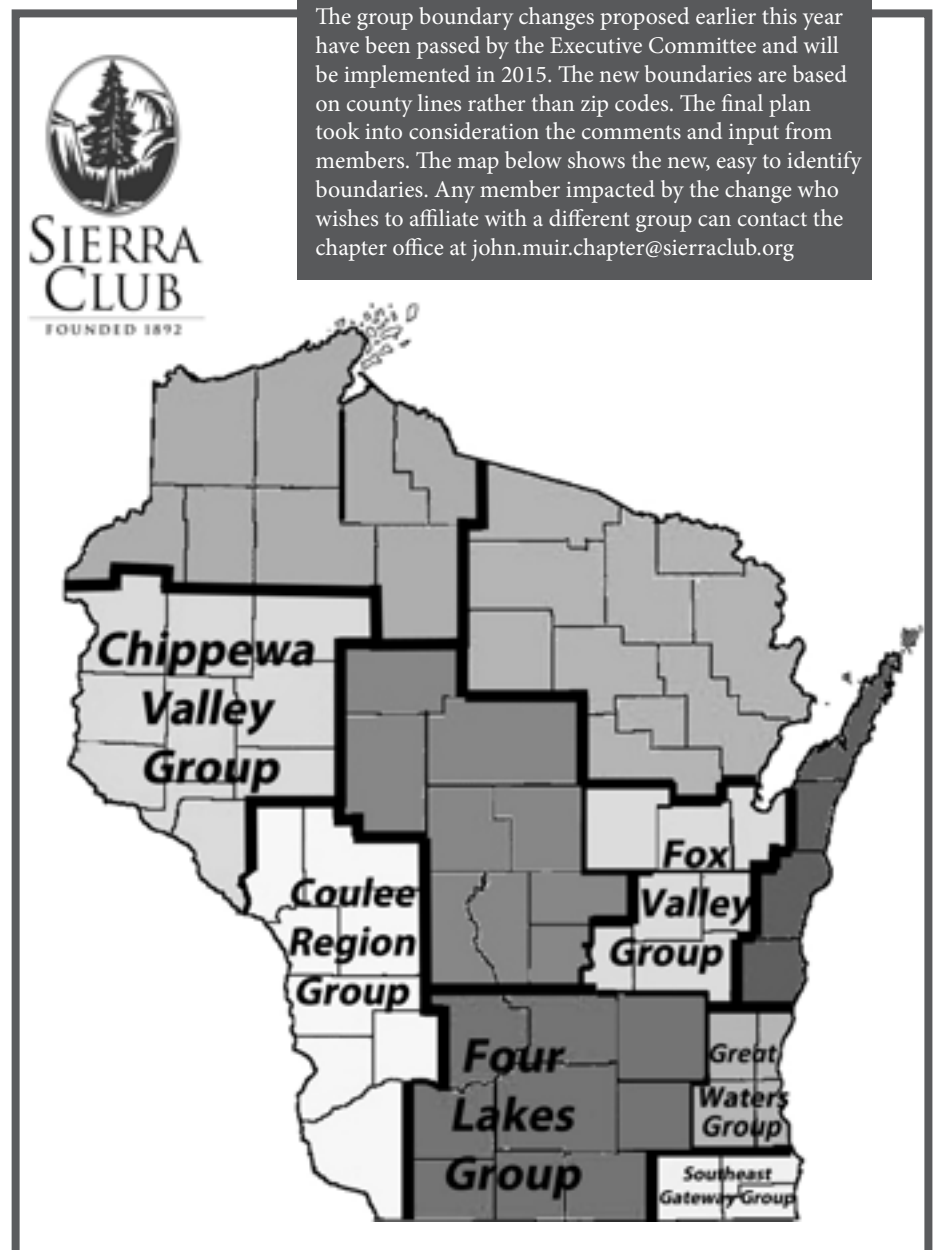
Turn your passion into action

Our statewide subcommittees are looking for dedicated volunteers who are willing to turn their passion into action. Whether you champion clean energy, oppose destructive mining, advocate for forests and wildlife or think clean transportation is the solution to climate change, we may have an opportunity for you to get more involved. One voice alone can easily be lost, but together we can raise our voices and be heard. Email john.muir.chapter@sierraclub.org to express your interest and indicate which committee you are interested in:

- Clean Energy
- Mining (taconite and frac sand)
- Water Protection
- Clean Transportation
- Protecting native forests and wildlife
- Fundraising
- Membership
- Tar Sands

John Muir Chapter Group Boundary Change

The group boundary changes proposed earlier this year have been passed by the Executive Committee and will be implemented in 2015. The new boundaries are based on county lines rather than zip codes. The final plan took into consideration the comments and input from members. The map below shows the new, easy to identify boundaries. Any member impacted by the change who wishes to affiliate with a different group can contact the chapter office at john.muir.chapter@sierraclub.org





Sierra Club fights unfair rate hikes

Late in 2014 John Muir Chapter and allies worked tirelessly to oppose utility rate hikes requested by We Energies, Wisconsin Public Service and Madison Gas and Electric. The radical changes penalize low-income customers and those who invest in renewables and efficiency. In response, the chapter helped found a coalition of allies, led educational forums and press conferences across the state, encouraged public comment from members and succeeded in publishing editorials against these hikes. In spite of the public outcry against these unreasonable increases the PSC (led by a Governor Walker appointee) voted to approve all three requests. The chapter and its' allies remain committed to promoting clean, renewable energy in Wisconsin.

Pictured are Heidi Speight and sons Sylvan and Wyatt.

PEOPLE'S CLIMATE MARCH

Sierra Club helped organize the largest climate march in history last September. Over 400,000 concerned citizens from across the nation-and Canada-converged on New York City to draw attention to the urgency surrounding the need for climate change action. The march coincided with the United Nation's Climate Summit attended by world leaders. The John Muir Chapter and Wisconsin were well represented with multiple buses (co-sponsored by the Four Lakes Group) departing from around the state. Sierra Club Board Vice President, Spencer Black fired-up the Wisconsin contingent at the march. Pictured are Diana and Alan Lawrence of Sierra Club's Fox Valley Group.



WILDERNESS ACT CELEBRATION

In celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act and to highlight threats posed by the proposed taconite mine, the John Muir Chapter hosted a two hour boat tour on Lake Superior. The September 26th event, attended by over 100 people, explored portions of the 35,000 acre Gaylord Nelson Wilderness Area and the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore. Guest speakers included: Tia Nelson, daughter of former Senator and pioneering conservationist Gaylord Nelson; Mike Wiggins Jr., Chair, Bad River Band of the Lake Superior Ojibwe; Neil Howk, Assistant Chief of Interpretation and Education, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, National Park Service; and Dave Blouin, Mining Committee Chair, Sierra Club - John Muir Chapter.

Photo by Laurie Szpot.

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

Your generous contributions—above and beyond your membership dues—provided crucial support for our local grassroots campaigns to protect Wisconsin's air, water and wild places for future generations.

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These donations were made from November 1, 2013 through October 31, 2014. Thanks also go out to our many contributors who prefer to remain anonymous. We try to acknowledge every donor, if you name is not listed, please know that we greatly appreciate your support.

New Subcommittee Formed to Protect Native Forests, Wolves and Other Wildlife



By Shahla Werner, Director-John Muir Chapter

Sierra Club's new Protecting Native Forests & Wildlife Subcommittee convened on November 7 in Fond du Lac to take the first steps towards developing effective, grassroots campaigns to protect Wisconsin's wolves, our north woods and the associated economic and ecological resources that depend on them. We are fortunate to have recruited talented members who represent broad geographic areas; varying skills including research, litigation, oral and written communications and facilitation; and even diverse views on hunting. The group's goals are to restore science-based management to natural resources; to ensure that a broad set of recreational uses (and users) are welcomed on public lands and waters; and to ensure that cherished habitats and the species that depend on them are sustained for generations to come.

Our subcommittee volunteers have done a lot in 2014, even prior to our in-person meeting. Members attended Natural Resource Board and Wolf Advisory Committee (WAC) meetings, although we have not been allowed to serve on the WAC, and voiced concerns about the 2014 wolf quota which allowed for the hunting and trapping of at least 150 wolves. Members echoed the serious concerns of scientists from throughout the nation who

outlined issues with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' deficiencies in grey wolf management and monitoring to the US Fish and Wildlife Service. They also sounded the alarms about the rapid pace of this year's wolf season. Although slated to run from October 15, 2014 to February 28, 2015, at least 142 wolves had already been killed by November 15 (85 percent of those in traps). Although the season will likely be closed before you read this newsletter, lag times in reporting, exceeding quotas in zones 1 and 2 and poaching may result in reducing populations beyond sustainable levels. Our efforts will continue in 2015 as we gear up for the spring Conservation Congress hearings and urge the legislature to end costly depredation payments for hunting hounds, amounting to \$500,000 since 1985. We will also support maintaining large tracts of intact older growth forest in the Chequamegon Nicolet National Forest to maintain biodiversity and maximize carbon sequestration to counteract climate change and deer browsing impacts. Please contact Chapter Director Shahla Werner at shahla.werner@sierraclub.org if you are interested in assisting the efforts of this new subcommittee dedicated to protecting native forests & wildlife for future generations.

EXPLORE, ENJOY AND PROTECT WISCONSIN

Support your local Sierra Club



When you make a donation to the John Muir Chapter, you support the Sierra Club's work in your 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.

Please be as generous as you are able. Your contributions, above and beyond membership dues, are an important part of the Chapter's budget.

Contributions, gifts and dues to the Sierra Club-John Muir Chapter are not tax-deductible.

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222 S. Hamilton St., Ste 11
Madison, WI 53703

Online contributions:
www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin

\$50 \$100 \$250 \$500 other amount: _____

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Please keep my gift anonymous

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN FOR 2015

Quetico/Boundary Waters Paddling Adventures

Don't miss the opportunity to paddle the wild Northwoods on canoe trips offered by John Muir Chapter Outings in 2015. Spanning the international border between Northeast Minnesota and Southwest Ontario, this gem in the heart of North America 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.

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

Fees generally run \$600 per person, but can vary. Trips normally last 8 days/7 nights from start (put-in) to finish (take-out). Crews can be limited by trip leaders up to a maximum of nine. Fees include all group supplies, equipment, food and lodging – including park permits and taxes. Not included are personal pre/post trip travel costs, passports, permits and fishing licenses. Participants supply their own camping gear and clothing. Contact trip leaders for additional information about registration – including where to send your \$100 (refundable) deposit to reserve your spot.

Fees include support for the John Muir Chapter Outings Program and its ability to continue offering these trips annually. Additional contributions to this fund are always welcome.



June 20-28, 2015

(2 travel days, canoe trip: 8 days, 7 nights)

Leader: David Thomas 414-344-1044, thomasdp@thomerwald.net

Trip Departure Point: Moose Lake - Ely, MN area.

Trip Cost: \$600

Joined by his wife Diane, David will lead a trip to experience the long days and short nights around the summer solstice.

August 7-16, 2015

(2 travel days, canoe trip: 8 days, 7 nights)

Leader: Vicki Christianson 715-827-0379 vchristianson@cornell.k12.wi.us

Trip Departure Point: Moose Lake - Ely, MN area.

Trip Cost: \$600

Participants get to enjoy a variety of lakes, portages, streams, wildlife, waterfalls, Ojibway pictographs and fishing opportunities.

July 31-August 9, 2015

(2 travel days, canoe trip: 8 days, 7 nights)

Leader: Nancy McDermott 608-238-1421 njmcderm@gmail.com

Trip Departure Point: Atikokan, ON area.

Trip Cost: \$600

Will Stahl, certified paddling instructor, joins Nancy in leading this trip, which enters from Canada to reduce portages and provide wilderness fishing opportunities with more base camp days. Get on the waiting list, this will fill up fast.

August 27-September 7, 2015

(2 travel days, canoe trip: 8 days, 7 nights)

Co-leaders: Peter Brands 262-888-3516 pbrands@gmail.com and Tim Karaskiewicz

Trip departure point Ely, Mn area

Trip cost \$600

This ultralight trip will prioritize photography, drawing, painting or fishing opportunities especially on layover days.

Other trips of interest:

June 19-23, 2015 (5 days, 4 nights)

Sylvania Wilderness Service Project

Leader: Dan Wallace, 608-835-5144, dwallace@src.wisc.edu

Trip Departure point:

Trip cost: \$50/ person

Help stop invasive non-native thistles in the UP Michigan Sylvania Wilderness Area. Additional recreation opportunities, including hiking and canoeing. Reserve by June 10. See: www.friendsofsylvania.org for background. Limited to 11.

August 14-17, 2015

(4 days, 3 nights)

Leader: Eric Uram 608-233-4120, Eric.Uram@Headwater.US

Departure point: TBD

Trip cost: \$150

Enjoy a summer float on a father-child outing to prepare younger campers for longer trips away from cars. Paddle a

National Wild and Scenic River in Northern Wisconsin. Limited to 8.

September 24-27, 2015

(4 days, 3 nights)

Leaders: Janet Clear - 608-833-1339, janetclear@gmail.com; Nancy McDermott - 608-238-1421, njmcderm@gmail.com

Departure point: Trego, WI

Trip cost: \$150

Enjoy the autumn colors on a leisurely float on a women-only trip covering 25 miles of the National Wild and Scenic Namekagon River in Northern Wisconsin. Limited to 6.

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 trip 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 interests 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.

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

GREEN REVIEW

by Amy Lou Jenkins

Living a Land Ethic: A History of Cooperative Conservation on the Leopold Memorial Preserve, by Stephen A. Laubach. University of Wisconsin Press, 2014, 107 pages.

About a decade ago, I asked dear friend Nina Leopold Bradley, daughter of Aldo Leopold, about the relationship between the Leopold Study Preserve, the Sand County Foundation, and the Aldo Leopold Foundation in Baraboo, Wisconsin. She said, “It’s complicated” and in my memory she uncharacteristically rolled her eyes before changing the subject. The subtle hint at complexity and conflict served as my only answer. Nina died in her Leopold Preserve home in 2011 at age 93. Stephen Laubach has finally answered the complicated questions about how many organizations and individuals cooperated in honoring and managing the Leopold Preserve and associated organizations in *Living a Land Ethic*.

Most lovers of literature and conservation ideas revere Leopold’s *A Sand County Almanac* for its moving and cogent treatment of the cultural and scientific exploration of land use, conservation, and environmental ethics. The *Almanac* oozes with inspiration and ethical ideals that might have only collected dust. But passion for the ideas spurred organizations such as the Study Preserve and Aldo Leopold Foundation.

Beneath the many organizations related to the Foundation is a story of generational, political, and ideological conflict and cooperation. The chronicles of this land inspired some of the most important ideas that underpin the very science and movement of conservation. Laubach offers an historical overview of the land before and during the Aldo Leopold family years.

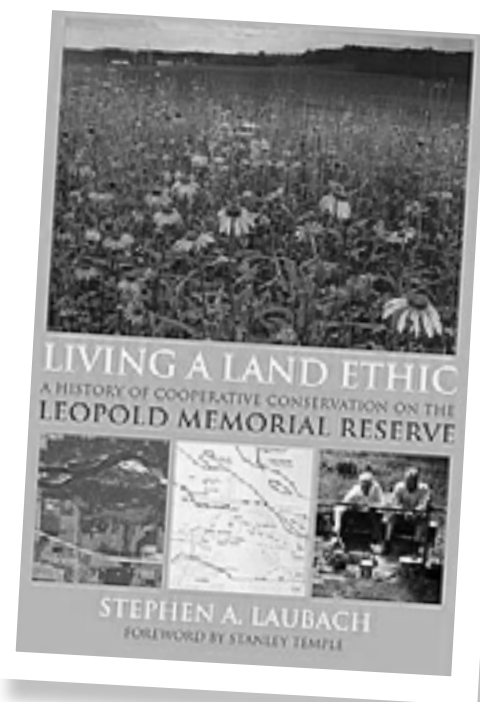
The centerpiece of the Study Preserve has always been an old chicken coop. Aldo and his family cleaned it out and added a few human necessities including a fireplace, windows and sleeping platforms. This old coop that they called “the shack” is now a registered National Historic Landmark. Aldo didn’t mind that the land was worn out farmland. In fact, the opportunity to rewild the fallow farmland served as an important scientific draw.

Laubach offers us a more sympathetic look at the previous owner of the land than had been previously provided in literature. Leopold humorously called the former owner a moonshiner, and folklore has sought to portray the

previous owners as callously using up the land. Laubach unearths information that humanizes farmers – William and Carolina Baxter and Jacob and Emma Alexander. They followed the farming practices of the times in hardscrabble decades of working the sandy soil. Low fertility was not conducive to the agricultural practices in use between the mid-1800s and 1936 when Leopold bought the land. Laubach’s search for accurate portrayals is perhaps more helpful than the mythology that by contrast seeks to unnecessarily elevate Leopold’s conservation efforts. The truth of people working very hard while rescinding the fecundity of the land and their own livelihood is a more realistic look at well-meaning work for short-term, unsustainable benefit. The story of people doing their best while destroying the land calls out for the scientific and ethical progress that Leopold articulated in *A Sand County Almanac*.

Nina, whose Leopold Preserve home was a point of controversy for conflicting organizational opinions (that might have explained the perceived eye-rolling), marveled at the accomplishments and depth of research possible on a little plot of land. Laubach animates her wonder at how much there is to learn while studying the land. Hundreds of scientists and researchers have helped to advance the science of land management and natural systems at the Leopold Preserve.

The mix of people who love the land, revere Leopold, and seek scientific accuracy doesn’t always engender harmony. As landowners joined the Leopolds in their mission to protect land and foster the science of land husbandry, conflicts arose. The conflicts were often tied to interpretation of ideologies and shifts in focus. The oldest Leopold son, Starker, advocated for serious science study and considered donating the land to the University of Wisconsin. Daughter, Nina, who lived at The Preserve with her husband, emphasized prairie restoration and mentorship of scientists. Neighbors wanted to ride their horses where they wished. Some Leopold grandchildren wanted the compound to remain a private entity—while working with universities and nonprofits to advance the ethics and science of land conservation. Conflicts continue to arise. Should the Leopold foundation seek to acquire more land to buffer



the shack and support research? Should land be sold? Can private owners be enticed to manage their land according to sound land practices? How much public money should be used? Questions arise, times change, new generations assume authority, and it’s not easy to retain focus.

Good-intentioned environmentalists tried to speak for Aldo Leopold, and there has thus far been a Leopold grown child here to caution against trying to end an argument with a Leopold quote or interpretation as an excuse to proclaim rightness without listening. In this account of a living land ethic, we find people who are willing to listen to each other—even though it’s neither easy nor fashionable to listen to those with opposing opinions. Laubach shows us that the mission, which might be abbreviated as learning to live on a piece of land without spoiling it, has withstood the complexities inherent to people and organizations because of respect for land, science, conservation and people.

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.

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JOHN MUIR CHAPTER CALENDAR

Events Calendar:

- January 9** **RENEW WI Policy Summit**
UW-Madison, www.renewwisconsin.org/
- January 10** **Sierra Club-River Touring Section Meeting**
wisconsin.sierraclub.org/rts/
- February 2** **World Wetlands Day**
www.worldwetlandsday.org
- February 26-28** **MOSES Organic Farming Conference**
LaCrosse, WI, mosesorganic.org/conference
- February 27** **WI Environmental Health Network**
 Making the Connection Conference
UW-Madison, WEHNmail@gmail.com
- March 13-15** **Canoecopia**
*Alliant Energy Center, Madison,
www.canoecopia.com*
- March 21** **Prairie Enthusiasts' Annual Prairie Conference & Banquet**
*UW-Stevens Point,
www.theprairieenthusiasts.org/*
- March 22** **UN World Water Day**
www.unwater.org/worldwaterday/

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

- Jan 10** **Executive Committee Meeting**
 10:00 a.m., MATC - Portage Campus,
 330 W. Collins St., Portage

Website: <http://wisconsin.sierraclub.org>
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15b2	Mailed in-county paid subscriptions stated on PS form 3541	0	0
15b3	Paid distribution outside the mails including sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors, counter sales, and other paid distribution outside USPS	0	0
15b4	Paid distribution by other classes of mail through the USPS (e.g. first-class mail)	1	1
15c	Total paid distribution	12,275	12,311
15d1	Free or nominal rate outside-county copies included on PS form 3541	0	0
15d2	Free or nominal rate in-county copies included on PS form 3541	0	0
15d3	Free or nominal rate copies mailed at other classes through the USPS (e.g. first-class mail)	23	47
15d4	Free or nominal rate distribution outside the mail	135	173
15e	Total free or nominal rate distribution	158	220
15f	Total distribution	12,433	12,531
15g	Copies not distributed	223	123
15h	Total	12,656	12,654
15i	Percent paid	98.73%	98.24%
16	Statement of Ownership will be printed in the January/February/March issue of this publication.		
17	Signature and title of editor, publisher, business manager, or owner		


 Jacinda Tessmann
 Chapter Coordinator