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JONATHAN ELA RECEIVES 2009 SIERRA CLUB WILLIAM COLBY AWARD

SAN FRANCISCO, Calif. – Jonathan Ela of Madison, Wis., has won the Sierra Club’s 2009 William Colby Award. He will be honored September 26 in San Francisco at the Sierra Club Honors and Awards Banquet. The William Colby Award is the Club’s highest award for service to the Club.

Ela served on the Sierra Club Political Committee for nearly a decade, and was chair of the Committee from 2005-2008. In this role, he helped build one of the most successful political programs in the non-profit arena, including the Club’s successful role in the 2008 U.S. presidential and congressional elections.

Ela spent a number of years as a Sierra Club staff member. He was assistant conservation director under Michael McCloskey from 1969-1971 and Midwest representative in Madison, Wis., from 1971-1983. He founded the Midwest Office, covering 11 Midwest states at the time of its inception. His founding this office brought a Sierra Club presence to the Midwest, when it had formerly been focused on the two coasts. From 1994-1999 Ela was an upper Mississippi River specialist, first as a volunteer and then as staff. He also was chair of the Environmental Voter Education Campaign Steering Committee from 1999-2005.

In nominating Ela for this award, Board of Directors member Barbara Frank praised him as a “visionary and strategic thinker, who is passionate and constant in his concern for the Sierra Club and for the environmental values it promotes.”

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