



Sierra

Newsletter of the Coulee Region Group
NOVEMBER 2022

"We had our chance to make incremental changes, but that time is over. Only a root-and-branch transformation of our economies and societies can save us from accelerating climate disaster." - Inger Andersen, Executive Director of UNEP, October 27, 2022



For clean air and water. For the Inflation Reduction Act and all climate action planned for the coming years. For the work to stop plastic pollution and mass extinctions. For protection of the coral reefs and the Arctic. For protections for workers from dangerous pesticides and for communities from oil spills, oil bomb trains, and PFAS. For science-based policies. For professional, non-partisan public servants. For independent judges. For compassion and care for the Earth and its creatures. For US!

If you still have an absentee ballot, DO NOT MAIL IT. You are able to drop it off at your municipal clerk's office on November 8. If you plan to vote in person, be prepared to wait. Dress for the weather. Take your MASK and take your voter ID. If you have questions about what is an acceptable ID, see bringit.wi.gov.

The Sierra Club Wisconsin Chapter has endorsed candidates. See sierraclub.org/wisconsin/immediate-release-sierra-club-announces-2022-wisconsin-endorsements

**GET OUT THE VOTE
VOLUNTEER NIGHT**

NOVEMBER 2, 2022

6:30 PM

tinyurl.com/wisc-gotv1102



TCMC Information - November 1

A public information session will be held on Tuesday, November 1 from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. about the planned second Amtrak line from the Twin Cities to Milwaukee and Chicago (TCMC). The initiative will improve rail crossings and other infrastructure allowing passenger trains to bypass freight, making schedules more reliable. The second line is expected to start in about a year. For more information about the project and how to participate, visit <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/news/2022/10/24-d6-rail-project.html>

Vote in Chapter Election!

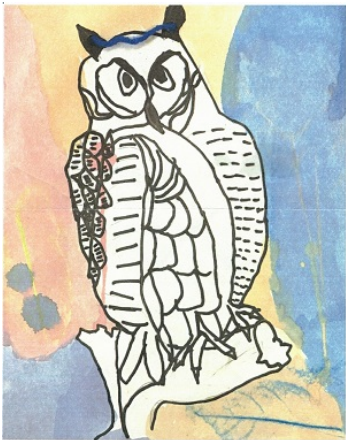
This year, four individuals have been nominated to run for three open at-large seats for the Sierra Club Wisconsin Chapter Executive Committee. Those elected will start their three-year term in January 2023.

Vote online or by mail using the ballot in the Wisconsin Sierran newsletter. The voting email was sent on September 30 with subject: "Help elect our chapter leadership-Executive Committee ballot enclosed." Email wisconsin.chapter@sierraclub.org for help.

Environmental Education Grants

CRSC is offering grants of up to \$200 each for **environmental education projects to schools or community organizations involving young people at the elementary and middle school level** within the CRSC region: Crawford, Grant, Jackson, La Crosse, Monroe, Richland, Trempealeau, and Vernon counties.

Applications may be completed online, emailed or mailed. **The deadline for applications is January 6, 2023.** For more information, visit sierraclub.org/wisconsin/coulee/Education or tinyurl.com/CRSC-Education.



Funding for our environmental grants is possible thanks to an annual grant from the Paul E. Stry Foundation, shared dues from Sierra Club memberships, and donations made by community members. To learn more about donating to help support environmental education, please email CRSierraClub@gmail.com.

CRSC Board Nominations

The Coulee Region Sierra Club will hold elections for its board of directors in December. The board meets monthly to plan events, coordinate with the state Sierra Club, and network with local and regional partners and allies on Sierra Club issues.

We will elect three board members. Terms are two years and begin in January 2023. Please email CRSierraClub@gmail.com with your name, contact information, and a brief paragraph describing your experience and interests and why you would like to be on the board no later than November 15. If you don't do email, please call 608-315-2693.

Qualifications include Sierra Club membership and past work or interest in outdoor activities and/or environmental issues. The board is especially interested in adding members who live outside of the La Crosse area, but anyone is welcome to nominate.

The chapter is helping with our elections. Voting will be online or by paper ballot. The December newsletter will have candidate statements, the ballot, and instructions for voting by mail or online. If you don't get a newsletter you'll get a postcard with instructions. Voting will close on December 27 with results announced in January.

IRA Q&A

After scheduling issues were finally resolved, we were able to hear from Sydney Scott, a staff member from U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin's office about the Inflation Reduction Act and what it will mean for saving energy and money and reducing carbon emissions. We were not able to record the event for the public, but here are some of the highlights Ms. Scott mentioned during the half hour session.

First, it's a huge bill, more than 700 pages, that covers everything from updating the Superfund for toxic site clean up, to energy efficiency programs, to water pollution monitoring, planting trees to expand green spaces, special programs for tribal governments, and tax credits for producers and consumers to drastically expand green systems from electric vehicles to heat pumps.

Now that the bill has passed, it will be sent to agencies to create regulatory guidance over the next several months including the IRS and the Department of Energy.

See this site for an overview: www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/08/15/by-the-numbers-the-inflation-reduction-act/

The Treasury Department is seeking public comments on implementing the tax incentives in the bill. Learn more here: home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy0993 and comment by November 4.

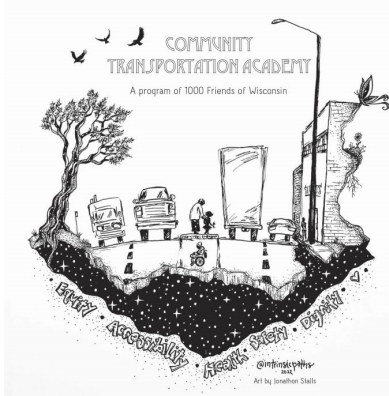
The best way to stay informed about the bill is to sign up for updates at CleanEnergy.gov where you can also find more details about specific parts.

Ms. Scott agreed that those planning to take advantage of the tax credits and rebates offered to transition to clean energy can be prepared by doing the shopping and comparing now. If you plan to get an EV, start looking now. If you think you will use the incentives to seal and weatherize your home and replace your HVAC system with a heat pump, get an energy audit through Focus on Energy now.

If you have specific questions, please email Ms. Scott at Sydney_Scott@baldwin.senate.gov

Next month, we will include a report from Focus on Energy, our state's energy efficiency and renewable energy agency, about how the IRA may affect programs and incentives they offer for 2023.

Transportation Academy



1000 Friends of Wisconsin will host a 10-week Community Transportation Academy starting in mid-February 2023 in La Crosse and online. The program will help bridge the gap between community advocates and planning entities.

Over ten weeks, participants will learn about the fundamentals of transportation planning, hear from guest speakers with local and national expertise, and have the opportunity to propose a solution to a local transportation problem. Community members will come away from the Academy with skills and knowledge to advocate for safe and accessible transportation networks that work for everyone. The first Community Transportation Academy will be held in La Crosse, Wisconsin, in Winter/Spring 2023, taught by Community Programs Director Susan Gaedert.

Register (free) by December 1 at 1kfriends.org/community-transportation-academy

Green Burial in Viroqua

The Vernon County Cemetery Association has approved reserving part of its land for green burials. Green burials are better for the environment and less expensive for families. For a green or natural burial, unembalmed individuals are wrapped in a shroud or biodegradable casket and placed in a safe but relatively shallow grave to support the transition process.

The group is currently fundraising for and educating about the process and plans. Learn more at Threshold Care Circle/Driftless Green Burial Alliance at www.thresholdcarecircle.org



No New Fossil Gas Facilities

The Wisconsin Sierra Club's Beyond Coal team is planning a press event at noon on Wednesday, November 16 near the offices of Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC). The event will draw attention to the dangers of fracked gas as emissions keep rising, and the need to move directly to renewable energy. The Club has long been talking about the climate pollution Dairyland's Nemadji Trail Energy Center plan will cause. DPC has ignored these concerns, but The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently called on them to submit plans that are aligned with President Biden's commitments on climate change. If you wish to attend or speak at the event, please email us or call 608-315-2693.

More November Events

11/ 1: Sierra Club Book Club at 7 p.m. online tinyurl.com/WISC-WolfBook

11/ 2: Climate Responsible Finance Webinar - Better Banks and Credit Cards at 3 p.m. online thirdact.org/events/better-banks-and-credit-cards/

11/ 2: Sierra Club Virtual Volunteer Night. 7 p.m. dnr.wisconsin.gov/events/57796

11/ 4: Mississippi Valley Conservancy "Save the Driftless" fundraiser at 5:30 p.m. Radisson Hotel, La Crosse. www.mississippivalleyconservancy.org/events/save-driftless-fall-fundraiser

11/4-6: Jackson in Action Fall Hike Series at Skyline Golf Course www.blackrivercountry.net/event/jackson-in-action-2022-fall-hike-series/2022-11-04/

11/10: Wisconsin Sierra Club Equity Team Annual Feedback Session at 5:30 p.m. Online. tinyurl.com/wisc-equityfeedback

11/16: Hairspray, Dusters, Refrigerants - oh My! at 6:30 p.m. online. tinyurl.com/WISC-cfchfc

11/16: Coulee Audubon meeting - chimney swifts at 7 p.m. couleeaudubon.org/html/events.html

12/ 1: Wisconsin Chapter annual awards at 6:30 p.m. online tinyurl.com/wisc-chapterawards2022

Kudos!

Congratulations to CRSC board member Cathy Van Maren who received the 2022 Individual Inspiring Sustainability Award at the Sustainability Institute ceremony on October 25. The La Crosse Public Library received the Institutional Award.