



Sierra

Newsletter of the Coulee Region Group

APRIL 2023

"To think of climate change as something that we are doing, instead of something we are being prevented from undoing, perpetuates the very ideology of the fossil-fuel economy we're trying to transform." - Dr. Genevieve Guenther

APRIL 4. OUR ENVIRONMENT DEPENDS ON IT.



myvote.wi.gov ... myvote.wi.gov ... myvote.wi.gov ... myvote.wi.gov ... myvote.wi.gov ... myvote.wi.gov ... myvote.wi.gov



SAVE THE DATE
Earth Fair
 LA CROSSE, WISCONSIN
 Make EVERY Day Earth Day
APRIL 30, 2023 11AM-5PM

Several Coulee Region communities will hold events to highlight environmental issues and actions in April. Our club will table at the **La Crosse Earth Fair**, on Sunday, April 30 from 11 to 5 p.m. at Myrick Park.

Please consider helping us table at the La Crosse Earth Fair. If you can help, email CRSierraClub@gmail.com OR call 608-315-2693.

On April 15, the Shirley M. Wright Memorial Library in Trempealeau will host a **Solar Open House** to highlight their new solar installation, funded by a RENEW Wisconsin Solar for Good grant. In addition to the solar program, the library will host a Drive Electric Earth Day event in their parking lot. Learn more about the Solar Open House at www.tinyurl.com/trempealeausolar

SOLAR OPEN HOUSE
 APRIL 15 2023
 11:00AM-1:00PM
 (PANEL PRESENTATION BEGINS AT 11:00)

Trempealeau Library
 1.4K likes • 1.5K followers

CELEBRATE EARTH DAY AT THE KICKAPOO VALLEY RESERVE

The Kickapoo Valley Reserve celebrates Earth Day annually with Roadside Cleanup. New in 2023 is a week long stewardship event - Garlic Mustard Gathering, focused on removing the invasive species, garlic mustard, from the landscape, and a Zero Waste Potluck Meal! Regular events of the April 22 event include children's events, live music, and a twilight frog walk. Download a flyer at www.tinyurl.com/kvr23earthday

Attention Xcel Customers!

Xcel Energy has proposed constructing a 210-MW combustion turbine and 9 MW RICE (reciprocating internal combustion engine) units at the location of the existing Wheaton Generating Plant. The new units would be run primarily on methane (i.e., fossil gas), with backup fuel oil firing capacity.

Although Xcel has described this as a “repowering” project, it will entail the installation of wholly new equipment and a slight increase of nameplate capacity relative to existing facilities on the site: six 50 MW generators of which only five are operational (Total nameplate capacity at the site will increase from the current 247 MW to 255 MW). Xcel claims the new facility is required to (a) meet load requirements given a projected capacity shortfall beginning in 2026; and (b) meet Xcel’s responsibilities to maintain system reliability under extreme weather conditions.

This proposal (which anticipates a 40-year life span for the project) is not only inconsistent with an executive order signed by Governor Evers setting a 2050 goal for complete decarbonization of the Wisconsin electrical grid, it also flies in the face of Xcel’s own pledge to achieve 100% carbon-free electricity by 2050.

The Wisconsin Sierra Club opposes all new fossil fuel infrastructure and will be exploring ways to fight this proposal - stay tuned for more information on how you can get involved!

Attention Dairyland Members!

the Sierra Club continues to oppose and work to stop the Nemadji Trail Energy Center, a new fossil fuel facility planned for Superior. Now, Dairyland Power Cooperative has announced it has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with an Oregon-based nuclear power company.

The Sierra Club’s Beyond Coal to Clean Energy team notes, “Despite avoiding carbon emissions, nuclear power isn’t sustainable—it still harms the environment and is too expensive. While we should safely maintain our current fleet, we shouldn’t construct any new nuclear plants.” This article, from the Environmental Working Group, discusses *Why Small Modular Nuclear Reactors Won’t Help Counter the Climate Crisis* (www.tinyurl.com/ewgsmallnukes)

The cheapest, cleanest, and simplest “energy” source is conservation which not only reduces energy needs, but provides jobs, saves money, and increases individuals’ independence.

Vernon County Energy District

Thank you to Al Buss for speaking to us about the Vernon County Energy District during an online program on Tuesday, March 28. The VCED is the first of its kind in Wisconsin, but they received advice and assistance from the Winneshiek Energy District. Their goal is to electrify everything and to generate all electricity locally.

Al talked about how they started and why, and what kinds of programming they offer. The group received grants from the PSC to do initial planning. In addition to home heating and cooling, they help people get a handle on and understand options for solar generation, fueling transportation, sealing and insulating, water heating, and more. Monitoring use has helped individuals save energy and the group plan future initiatives. VCED meets monthly in Viroqua. Learn more at www.VCED.energy.

This program was co-sponsored by CRSC and the Wisconsin Sierra Club’s Beyond Coal to Clean Energy Team. Visit <https://youtu.be/IDXr2DbScIs> to watch the video.



Drive Electric Earth Day (DEED) events, sponsored nationally by the Sierra Club, the Electric Vehicle Association, Plug-In America, and EVNoire, let neighbors learn from neighbors about electric vehicles. At DEED events, EV owners talk about their own experiences and answer questions about range, costs, charging, and more.

With transportation emissions higher than ever, a rapid transition to non-fossil fuels is critical. To be sure, we cannot simply replace all the fossil cars with electric ones. Private cars, whatever the fuel, are associated with many ills, including the cost and space needed for infrastructure, crashes and safety issues, waste, microplastic pollution, and more. But in our current built environment, where so many things are so far apart and public transit is not available, EVs can at least provide lower carbon options.

Coulee Region DEED events are scheduled for:
April 15 in Trempealeau at the Solar Open House
April 22 in Viroqua (9 a.m. to noon) at the food co-op
April 30 in La Crosse at the Earth Fair

Sign up to show and talk about your EV or to attend and learn about EVs at DriveElectricEarthDay.org.

Conservation Congress, April 3-6 and 10-13



The **Wisconsin Conservation Congress (WCC)** is a board of elected delegates from each county that gives input to the Natural Resources Board (NRB) and DNR on what priorities they should focus on. WCC and Department of Natural Resources DNR will host an open house in each county the week of April 3 to connect with the public, answer questions about resource management, and discuss local issues of importance. The WCC will also hold elections for two of the five delegate seats in each county. All events will start at 6 pm with elections at 7 pm. Coulee Region open houses are shown below.

- Crawford: 4/3, Prairie du Chien High School
- Grant: 4/4, Grant Co Youth & Ag Building, Lancaster
- Jackson: 4/6, Black River Falls Middle School
- La Crosse: 4/4, Onalaska High School
- Monroe: 4/4, Meadowview School in Sparta
- Richland: 4/3, Richland County Courthouse, #312
- Trempealeau: 4/6, Arcadia High School
- Vernon: 4/4, Viroqua High School

The following week, the Wisconsin Conservation Congress and Department of Natural Resources will offer their annual opportunity for the public to provide input on a variety of natural resource related questions and proposed rule changes. The online questionnaire will be available soon at the WCC website (dnr.wisconsin.gov/about/wcc) with online voting beginning on April 10 at noon and continuing through April 13 at noon. The State Chapter offers voting guidance and more information about how Sierra Club members can have the most impact participating in the WCC at www.tinyurl.com/wisc-23wcc

More April Events

4/ 4, 11, 18, 25: Frog Walk at Kickapoo Valley Reserve at 7:30 p.m. kvr.state.wi.us/Events/Calendar

4/ 6: Protecting Fresh Water with Native Plants 6:30 p.m. ONLINE www.tinyurl.com/WISC-Water-Plants

4/ 8: Focus on the Flyway near Stoddard, 10 a.m. www.mississippivalleyconservancy.org/events/focus-flyway

4/11: Achieving Drawdown with Jonathan Foley, 7 p.m. at UW-La Crosse and online www.uwlax.edu/events/?e=27687

4/12: Sierra Club Volunteer Night from 6:30 to 8 p.m. www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/calendar

4/15-22: Garlic mustard gathering at Kickapoo Valley Reserve kvr.state.wi.us/Events/Calendar

4/15: Driftless Dialog - Tracking Invasive Plants in Vernon County at Kickapoo Valley Reserve 12:30 p.m. kvr.state.wi.us/Events/Calendar

4/21: Forest Friday at 8:15 a.m. at the Kickapoo Valley Reserve kvr.state.wi.us/Events/Calendar

4/21-30: Green Goose Chase Kick-off <https://www.sustaininstitute.com/greengoosechase>

4/22: Tree-planting Day at Wildcat Mountain State Park from 9 a.m. to noon <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/events/67761>

4/22: Earth Day Cleanup at Castle Mound Pine Forest near Black River Falls www.tinyurl.com/fobr042223

April 29 Highway Cleanup



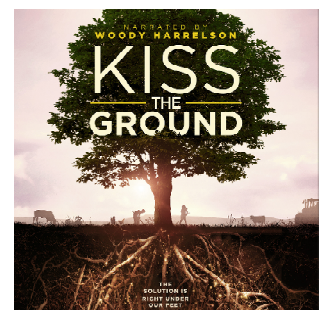
Our first highway cleanup of 2023 will be on **Saturday, April 29 at 9 a.m.** Meet at the pumping station near the intersection of River Valley Drive and Gillette. Gloves, bags, and vests provided.

April 25: Lobby Day

Wisconsin Conservation Voters is hosting an in-person Lobby Day on April 25 in Madison. There will be four asks that emphasize support for clean water, clean energy, fair elections, and support for local communities. The day will include training, speakers, meetings with legislators, and a meal. Transportation is on your own. Learn more and register at conservationvoters.org/events/conservation-lobby-day

April 26: Film

The State Water Team will host an online screening of *Kiss the Ground* on Wednesday, April 26. Narrated by Woody Harrelson, the film sheds light on regenerative agriculture. Learn more and register at www.tinyurl.com/WISCKTGFilm



High School Environmental Stewardship Award

The Coulee Region Sierra Club seeks to promote environmental stewardship through enduring, fair, and equitable action. Protection of air, water, land, wildlife habitats, and the climate is a primary goal. CRSC believes that all people of all ages can help protect the natural environment for present and future generations through active engagement.

CRSC will recognize the achievements of and award \$300 to a high school senior who demonstrates leadership, action, and environmental stewardship, and who understands the importance of civic engagement in protecting our environment.

Eligible students are those graduating from high school in 2024 who reside in the CRSC region: Crawford, Grant, Jackson, La Crosse, Monroe, Richland, Trempealeau, and Vernon counties. The application includes essays and submission of a portfolio. **The deadline for applications is July 1, 2023** with the award to be given in August. For more information and an application form, visit www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/coulee/education

Funding for these environmental grants and awards 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, please email CRSierraClub@gmail.com or call 608-315-2693.



Apply for a Solar Grant Now!



RENEW Wisconsin's Solar for Good initiative, through a generous partnership with the Couillard Solar Foundation, awards grant-funding or solar panels to mission-based nonprofits and houses of worship in Wisconsin. Apply April 1 through

May 1 at www.renewwisconsin.org/solarforgood.

National Board Endorsements

The Wisconsin Chapter recommends a vote for Rita Harris, David Holtz, and Shruti Bhatnagar in the upcoming election for the Sierra Club's Board of Directors. Learn more about how to vote and read the candidate backgrounds here: www.sierraclub.org/board-directors-election-2023

E-votes and paper ballots must be received by 11 a.m. Central Time on April 26th.

RESCHEDULED DATE

2023 PRAIRIE SPRINGS LECTURE SERIES

Achieving Drawdown
A Hopeful, Science-Based Plan to Address Climate Change

April 11th, 7:00pm

Graff Main Hall :
Hesprich Auditorium
1725 State St, La Crosse WI

www.uwlax.edu/events/?e=27687 Learn more

The MREA'S 32ND ANNUAL
ENERGY FAIR CUSTER JUNE WI 23-25

Energy Fair early bird ticket sales begin April 1.
TheEnergyFair.org

April 15
www.tinyurl.com/23cranes

Annual Midwest Crane Count