



# Sierra

Newsletter of the Coulee Region Group  
**DECEMBER 2020**

*"I was shocked to find that there's a silent war being waged against everyday people who are trying to have a say in where their power comes from." - Jonathan Scott's Power Trip (www.pbs.org/independentlens)*

**WEDNESDAY, DEC. 2 at 6 p.m.**  
**People's Budget Town Hall**  
**on Environment, Infrastructure, Economy**  
**ONLINE/DIAL-IN**  
**Register: [tiny.cc/EnviroBudget](https://tiny.cc/EnviroBudget)**  
**Watch: [wiseye.org/live/](https://wiseye.org/live/)**

The People's Budget Town Hall sessions will provide the governor with an opportunity to hear about the issues affecting our communities and our state directly from Wisconsin families and workers. Each listening session will begin with all participants in a large group meeting where they will hear from both Governor Evers and Lieutenant Governor Barnes. After the introduction, all

participants will be automatically moved to small group breakout rooms where they can have a more in-depth discussion on various budget topics. The governor and lieutenant governor will visit the breakout discussions to listen to the conversation throughout the evening.

Sierra Club members are encouraged to participate if possible. Topics range from removing the \$1+ billion in funding for the "Zombie Highway" (I-94 extension in Milwaukee) to increasing funding for public transportation, enforcing clean water rules, stopping destructive mining, planning removal of PFAS, prioritizing carbon reduction/100% renewable energy, and more.

If you can't participate in the Town Hall, you may submit comments using this link: [appengine.egov.com/apps/wi/governor/voice-an-opinion](https://appengine.egov.com/apps/wi/governor/voice-an-opinion)

**THURSDAY, DEC. 3 at 7 p.m.**  
**FILM: Sold Down the River**  
**followed by panel discussion**  
**Register: [tiny.cc/1203FilmReg](https://tiny.cc/1203FilmReg)**

On **Thursday, December 3**, please join the Wisconsin Sierra Club for a screening of the short documentary film, **Sold Down the River**, which investigates the connection between factory farms, big agribusiness, and water contamination. The screening will be followed by a panel discussion and Q&A.



Directed by Karen Erbach Lawlor, the film is about third world water conditions in Wisconsin caused by Big Ag, highlighting Kewaunee County's drinking water crisis and the continued environmental exploitation of rural communities, including failure of elected officials to protect our shared natural resources.

Visit [tiny.cc/1203FilmReg](https://tiny.cc/1203FilmReg) and you'll be sent a link to the program. To read more about the film and view a trailer, visit [tiny.cc/wiwaterfilm](https://tiny.cc/wiwaterfilm).

## **During November & December:**

### **Public Trust**

**a film about the fight for America's public lands**

**[www.patagonia.com/films/public-trust/](http://www.patagonia.com/films/public-trust/)**

Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness in Minnesota, and stopping the de facto sale of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge—one of the last wild places in America. This film, from producers Robert Redford and Yvon Chouinard, reminds us that, *“all US public lands are the ancestral lands of Indigenous people and tribal nations, who managed them sustainably for thousands of years. Today, many of these lands are at risk from unwise development and extraction, but local people are leading the movement to protect them. It's up to us to hold our government responsible—here are the agencies that we need to work with to make this happen.”* Watch the film free at the link [www.patagonia.com/films/public-trust](http://www.patagonia.com/films/public-trust).

## **NOW HIRING**

### **Sierra Club Western Wisconsin Campaign Coordinator**

The Sierra Club's John Muir (Wisconsin) Chapter is looking for the right person to be the Western Wisconsin Campaign Coordinator. This person will work with Chapter staff, partners, and volunteers to accomplish Beyond Coal and clean energy campaign goals, improve our communications and outreach, and enhance our Equity, Inclusion and Justice (EIJ) efforts. Activities include campaign implementation; communication; promoting equity, inclusion & justice; community outreach and volunteer support. This position is located in La Crosse. Please help us find the right person for this position. Having a Sierra Club staff member in La Crosse will increase our effectiveness in promoting clean energy in the Coulee Region. For more information, go to [tiny.cc/laxscjob](http://tiny.cc/laxscjob)

## **Water Futures**

In November, we received an article from the Iowa Capital Dispatch ([iowacapitaldispatch.com/2020/11/06/pattison-delays-appeal-hearing-after-chicago-mercantile-exchange-eyes-water-trading](http://iowacapitaldispatch.com/2020/11/06/pattison-delays-appeal-hearing-after-chicago-mercantile-exchange-eyes-water-trading)) reporting on a plan by the Pattison Sand Company to begin exporting water from Iowa to western states. The article notes that, “CME Group, which runs the Chicago [Mercantile] exchange, on Sept. 17 announced a proposed water futures exchange aimed at California's \$1.1 billion water industry.”

*Water Commodities 2020 - The Guide to Trading the Most Important Commodity on Earth* ([commodity.com/soft-agricultural/water/](http://commodity.com/soft-agricultural/water/)) details the how and why of trading in water commodities, noting that, “Climate change has the potential to be the biggest catalyst for a rise in physical water prices.”

The Sierra Club's 2003 policy on water commodification and corporate privatization of municipal water and sewer services states why we must protect this public resource

Our public lands and waters are under threat. As the extinction crisis looms and climate change continues to be one of the greatest threats that our planet has ever faced, America's 640 million acres of public lands support biodiversity and carbon sequestration. It's essential that we fight for their protection by preventing the slashing of the Bears Ears National Monument in Utah, fighting the potential permanent destruction of the

from private markets: ***Water is basic to all life and we seek to ensure sustainability of water resources and natural ecosystems, to protect water quality, to promote environmental justice and democratic decision-making, and to prevent domination of water resources and municipal water/sewer services by transnational corporations and other powerful private interests.***

Will midwestern states' water resources be used to make up for western states' wasteful and unsustainability water policies and practices that have drawn down water tables for overdevelopment, promoted water-intensive industrial agriculture, and polluted local water resources?

Read more about the Sierra Club's water commodification policy at [www.sierraclub.org/policy/water-commodification-and-corporate-privatization-municipal-water-sewer-services](http://www.sierraclub.org/policy/water-commodification-and-corporate-privatization-municipal-water-sewer-services)

## Coulee Region Sierra Club 2021 Board Ballot

Please vote for up to three people to serve on the Coulee Region Sierra Club Board in 2021. Only members of the Coulee Region Sierra Club are eligible to vote. You may write in up to three other names if you wish. Please mail your ballot to Maureen Kinney, 620 23rd Street South, La Crosse, WI 54601. Your ballot must be post-marked by December 20. If you have questions, contact [crsierraclub@gmail.com](mailto:crsierraclub@gmail.com) or call 608-315-2693.

\_\_\_\_\_ Nancy Hartje

\_\_\_\_\_ Dorothy Lenard

\_\_\_\_\_ Avery Van Gaard

\_\_\_\_\_ write in

\_\_\_\_\_ write in

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### Candidate Dorothy Lenard

Dorothy Lenard is an Administrator for the School of Natural Sciences, Engineering and Math at Viterbo University. She has a degree from Michigan Technological University in Forest Hydrology and a Master's in Servant Leadership from Viterbo. She and her husband Rich grew up in a small bay town on Lake Michigan surrounded mostly by State land. Yes, she loves and misses the lake effect snowfalls and outdoor saunas in the winter. Having lived in all regions of the United States, they eventually chose the Driftless area to settle down in and raise their three children. She has been active in numerous community activities and boards. Her passion is studying the environment, especially water protection. While on the La Crosse City Council, she worked with others to pass in 2009 the City of La Crosse and County of La Crosse Strategic Plan for Sustainability. In the summer, her family has a huge community garden in their yard where their specialties are garlic and perennials. Preparing and sharing sustainable food with family and friends is her favorite hobby.

### Dec. 2 - Ice Age Trail Program

On December 2 at 2:00 p.m. the Ice Age Trail Alliance will host an online presentation by Kevin Quinn who has hiked the entire 1,100 mile trail. This past October marked the 40th anniversary of the US Congress naming the Ice Age Trail as one of our nation's National Scenic Trails with the goal of establishing a National Park in Wisconsin running the route of the last glaciation. In this program, Kevin will describe his experience and lay out the characteristics and challenges that make the Ice Age Trail unique. More information and the access link are at [doorcountylibrary.org/ice\\_age\\_trail](http://doorcountylibrary.org/ice_age_trail)

### Dec. 4 - Backyard Nature

On December 4 at 5 p.m., nature-lovers Katie and Ernie will share experiences from their 1.5 acre backyard nature sanctuary on Mt. Whoville in California during an online program hosted by the San Diego Chapter of the Sierra Club. Game and nest cameras have documented visits from hummingbirds, roadrunners, snakes, coyotes, possums, quail, butterflies, and bugs. Presenter, Ernie Cowan is a noted photographer, lecturer, instructor, birder, journalist, and author. Watch the program at [www.facebook.com/sierraclubsd/](https://www.facebook.com/sierraclubsd/) No registration is necessary.

### Dec. 19 - Enjoying Dark Skies

On December 19 at 10:00 a.m., the Mississippi Valley Conservancy will host an online program about Preserving and Enjoying Dark Skies. *"Join us for an online presentation about the value of dark skies and what to look for in winter solstice and December skies."* The 30-minute presentation will be led by Lynda Schweikert, an amateur astronomer from Iowa County who was recently named Dark Sky Ambassador with the International Astronomical Union. and John Heasley, an astronomy educator with Driftless Stargazing LLC who volunteers with NASA/JPL as a Solar System Ambassador and with International Astronomical Union as a Dark Sky Ambassador.

REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED FOR THIS FREE EVENT.

[www.mississippivalleyconservancy.org/events/preserving-and-enjoying-dark-skies](http://www.mississippivalleyconservancy.org/events/preserving-and-enjoying-dark-skies)

## Dec. 12 - Crawford Stewardship

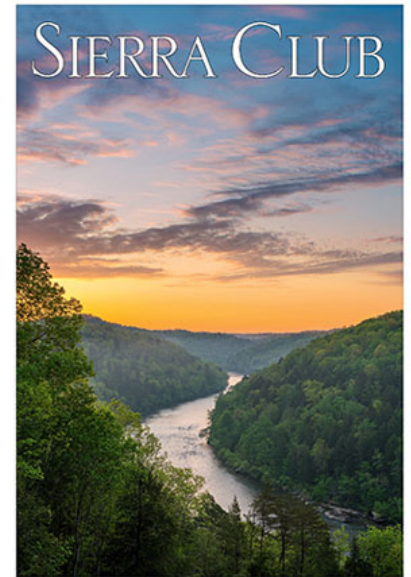
On Saturday, December 12 from 2:00 to 3:30 p.m., the Crawford Stewardship Project will host its Annual “Love the Land” celebration and fundraiser ONLINE. “Relax in the comfort and safety of your home and join us for a fun filled fundraising event featuring a variety of songs from local musicians, exciting auction items from our fabulous local artisans and businesses, and updates and actions from CSP staff on our various campaigns! This year CSP is partnering with the 40 Acres And a Mule project, to help support African American owned farms and foodways in the Driftless.

For more details visit [tiny.cc/cspltl20](http://tiny.cc/cspltl20) or call 608-632-4213.

## Calendars

We still have a few calendars left! Please order from Maureen: 608-784-9324 or [maureen@johnsflaherty.com](mailto:maureen@johnsflaherty.com).

Get more details about calendars and other Sierra Club items at [store.sierraclub.org/calendars--cards-c28.aspx](http://store.sierraclub.org/calendars--cards-c28.aspx)



## Dec. 4 - Energy We Can't Afford

Join community activists and Sierra Club's Minnesota and Wisconsin teams for an update and call to action to stop Dairyland Power's proposed fracked gas plant, the Nemadji Trail Energy Center (NTEC). Learn about the status of the proposed plant in both states, the harms of fracking and fossil gas, and why it's a top concern for climate justice advocates. Dive into what actions we can take to put a stop to gas infrastructure.

Friday, December 4 from noon to 1:00 p.m. ONLINE. Learn more at [tiny.cc/stopntec](http://tiny.cc/stopntec)



*"I think theres nothing as exhilarating as protecting that which you find precious."  
- Vandana Shiva*