



# Sierra

Newsletter of the Coulee Region Group

JUNE 2021

"There is no path of escape from climate-change catastrophe that doesn't involve policies aimed at societal decarbonization." - Prof. Michael E. Mann in *The New Climate War*

## **June 5 from 1 to 5 p.m. (online) FARMS, FACTORIES and the FUTURE**

*A virtual public forum on the  
direction of agriculture*



**Register: [tiny.cc/FFF0605](https://tiny.cc/FFF0605) or call 608-326-0223**

Crawford Stewardship Project, Sustain Rural Wisconsin Network, Socially Responsible Ag Project, Coulee Region Sierra Club and many more allies invite you to a virtual public forum on the direction of agriculture.

\* Hear and ask about Crawford County's experience with a CAFO, proposed expansions, regulations, and lessons learned

\* Engage with sustainable and regenerative farmers and experts about resilient pathways forward for agriculture

\* Network and strategize with a panel of community organizers from across the Midwest

Learn more at [www.crawfordstewardship.org/join-us-for-a-farming-discussion/](http://www.crawfordstewardship.org/join-us-for-a-farming-discussion/)

## **CAFO Actions**

The Coulee Region Sierra Club has been active in working to stop Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) which pollute the air and water, use enormous amounts of water, reduce quality of life and property values, and endanger our environment. Read more about Sierra Club CAFO concerns at [tinyurl.com/WISC-CAFOS](https://tinyurl.com/WISC-CAFOS)

Current Coulee Region actions are concentrated around the Roth Feeder Pig CAFOs in Crawford County, one currently in operation and a second hoping to secure permitting. Important actions are planned in June to urge the Wisconsin DNR to require a full environmental impact statement before deciding on a permit for Roth Feeder Pig II.

**June 2:** To learn more about this issue, attend a gathering from 6 to 7 p.m. at Dancing Waters Permaculture Cooperative, 43188 Guthrie Road, Rolling Ground. (RSVP at [fjahnke@crawfordstewardship.org](mailto:fjahnke@crawfordstewardship.org) or call/text 608-632-2183)

**June 10:** Attend and speak at a virtual DNR public hearing at 10:00 a.m. Register at [tiny.cc/RothDNRHearing](https://tiny.cc/RothDNRHearing)

**ONGOING:** Use this tool: [tinyurl.com/TakeCAFOAction](https://tinyurl.com/TakeCAFOAction) to contact our elected representatives. You can get facts and talking points at [tinyurl.com/CAFO-Points](https://tinyurl.com/CAFO-Points).

## **La Crosse Regional Transit Planning Public Input**

The La Crosse Area Planning Committee (LAPC) is working with SRF Consulting to produce a Regional Transit Development plan covering services provided by the La Crosse Municipal Transit Utility, the Onalaska-Holmen-West Salem Shared Ride Taxi, and the SMRT Bus which services communities between La Crosse and Prairie du Chien, La Crosse and Viroqua, and La Crosse and Tomah. Public input is welcomed! Please find links to a survey, mapping application, and more input sessions at [lacrossecounty.org/metropolitan-planning-organization/LAPC-Home/regional-transit-development-plan/public-meetings-and-materials](http://lacrossecounty.org/metropolitan-planning-organization/LAPC-Home/regional-transit-development-plan/public-meetings-and-materials)

## Environment & Wellness

In May, Altra Federal Credit Union hosted an online Employee Wellness Week and asked the Coulee Region Sierra Club to participate by contributing a short video.

CRSC chair, Kathy Allen collected information and contributions from CRSC members to put together a great program about Personal and Environmental Wellness. The video talks about the health benefits of active transportation—walking and bicycling, growing and consuming healthy locally-grown food, purchasing or making your own environmentally safe household products and using reusable containers, doing physical activities in nature, and volunteering to care for the environment.

Thank you to those who contributed: Beth Piggush and family, Marilyn Pedretti, Alysa Remsburg and family, and Pat Wilson. Also highlighted in the video were local bike



shops, the Kane Street Community Garden, Friends of the Blufflands, and Larson's General (formerly Full Circle Supply).

Watch the nine-minute video at [tinyurl.com/CRSC-Wellness](https://tinyurl.com/CRSC-Wellness) and share it with friends and family members!



Solar on La Crosse Schools (SOLS) and the School District of La Crosse will host a Summer Solstice Solar Show and Tell on Monday, June 21 from 4 to 6 p.m. at the Hamilton Early Learning Center/SOTA I, 1111 7th Street South. The event will celebrate a new 100kW solar installation completed with donations, including money raised by SOLS, and grants.

The event will begin with public remarks by La Crosse Mayor Mitch Reynolds, and representatives of the school district, the Midwest Renewable Energy Association, and SOLS. Tours of the solar installation will begin at 4:30, 5:00, and 5:30. Ongoing events include information booths, kids activities, music, refreshments and more!

SabadashApp ([sabadashapp.com](https://sabadashapp.com)) is offering a Solar Summer raffle to help raise money for the district's next solar project. Raffle items include a 288kW EcoFlow River portable power station, a 110W portable solar panel, two hammocks, and a ReWild soccer ball by Waboba. Learn more about the event at [tinyurl.com/SOLS-ShowAndTell](https://tinyurl.com/SOLS-ShowAndTell).

## Sierra Club June Events

**June 4:** Testify at a DNR PFAS hearing, 1 p.m. ONLINE. Right now, the Wisconsin DNR is updating ground and drinking water PFAS regulations. Participate in this public hearing with assistance from the Sierra Club. Register at [tinyurl.com/WISC-PFASHearing](https://tinyurl.com/WISC-PFASHearing)

**June 5:** National Trails Day! Participate in National Trails Day and be an outdoor activist. Sign up for this event and we will send you updates and ideas to make your National Trails Day fun and rewarding as well as safe! [tinyurl.com/WISC-NatTrailsDay](https://tinyurl.com/WISC-NatTrailsDay)

**June 9:** Virtual Volunteer Night, 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. ONLINE. This evening will be all about preserving the rare habitat and wildlife of Kohler-Andrae! We'll break out into different zoom rooms and work on different tasks, all to advocate for protection of these lands. Register at [tinyurl.com/WISC-VolNite69](https://tinyurl.com/WISC-VolNite69)

## Plastic Pollution Bill

The Sierra Club urges you to tell Congress to pass the Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act of 2021. Fossil fuel corporations are ramping up plastic production, polluting air and water, making people sick, and adding to the plastic pollution crisis. The bill will require producers to manage the waste, better manage existing plastics, and limit new plastic production. Learn more and write your representatives at [tinyurl.com/NoPlasticAct](https://tinyurl.com/NoPlasticAct)

## **YOUR Ideas Needed!**

This past winter, the Coulee Region group board met (virtually) to conduct some strategic planning for our group. We agreed to adapt the Sierra Club's national goals and objectives for our group. These goals and objectives will help us decide what local and regional issues, events, and partnerships to support. The official goals and objectives of our Coulee Region group are listed below. The next step in the strategic planning process is to come up with tasks or "action items" to help us work towards our objectives - these could be short- or long-term, and one-time or annual targets.

**We would like to hear suggestions from you**, our members! What actions or tasks do YOU think would help us advance our goals? Please send your suggestions to [crsierraclub@gmail.com](mailto:crsierraclub@gmail.com)

**Goal #1: ACHIEVE AMBITIOUS AND JUST CLIMATE SOLUTIONS** - Solve the climate crisis in a way that protects the environment and also is enduring, fair, and equitable.

- Accelerate the transition to 100% clean, renewable energy in the Coulee Region.
- Support any efforts in our region that would support the following national Sierra Club goals:
  - 1) Maximize energy efficiency across all sectors, including transportation, urban design, and land use;
  - 2) Address non-energy emissions such as agriculture and methane;
  - 3) Protect and rebuild the capacity of forests and other lands to absorb excess carbon dioxide and provide more robust climate resilience through supporting biodiversity and natural system functions.

**Goal #2: EXPLORE, ENJOY AND PROTECT OUR NATION'S LANDS, WATERS, AIR AND WILDLIFE** - Steward our natural resources to safeguard them for present and future generations.

- Support efforts to protect the Coulee Region's air, water, land, and communities from pollution.
- Promote access to natural areas for all who live in the Coulee Region, including in or near their communities, as well as the opportunity to experience the natural world through Sierra Club events or in other ways.

**Goal #3: ENGAGE AND SUPPORT A BROAD, DIVERSE, INCLUSIVE, AND POWERFUL MOVEMENT** - Attract and empower a base of supporters and activists strong enough to challenge the status quo and accomplish our ambitious programmatic goals.

- Build an empowered, capable, diverse, and inclusive volunteer base throughout the Coulee Region.
- Build our group's ability to influence public perception and public officials on our core issues, and to elect and hold accountable environmentally committed leaders at all levels of government.
- Help our activists, local communities and allies succeed on the environmental issues most important to them. Engage in strategic alliances on broader issues that can help further environmental causes while remaining consistent with Sierra Club values.

**Goal #4: ENSURE OUR FINANCIAL STRENGTH AND SUSTAINABILITY** - Ensure that the Sierra Club and its entities have a combination of diverse, secure, sustainable, and flexible funding.

- Ensure that our group has the financial resources and opportunities to succeed.

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## **Monroe County Partners with Wisconsin's Green Fire**

Wisconsin's Green Fire (WGF) supports the conservation legacy of Wisconsin by promoting science-based management of Wisconsin's natural resources. The group is working with the Monroe County Climate Change Task Force to conduct a Climate Readiness and Economic Opportunity Assessment. The assessment will come from a partnership of experts and community members and will examine community climate resiliency, built and natural infrastructure, and rural economic development opportunities through conservation.

Four sub-teams will concentrate on specific areas of concern, including Climate and Hydrological Modeling, Flood Resilience and Infrastructure, Agriculture, and Forests. The goal is to inform and inspire community actions and investments.

Demonstration projects based on sub-team investigation and research will begin in the summer and a public report is planned for the fall.

In summer 2020, WGF published a report, "Strategies for Mitigating Climate Change with Natural and Working Lands," which argues, "By managing our Natural and Working Lands effectively, Wisconsin could offset an additional 16 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> each year – equal to 20% of our annual net greenhouse gas (GG) emissions."

Keep up on the Monroe County Task Force work at [www.co.monroe.wi.us/government/county-board-of-supervisors/boards-committees/climate-change-task-force](http://www.co.monroe.wi.us/government/county-board-of-supervisors/boards-committees/climate-change-task-force) and read more about WGF at [wgreenfire.org](http://wgreenfire.org).



People from across Wisconsin will join the Treaty People Gathering, June 5-8, in northern Minnesota to support the First Nations-led resistance to the Line 3 pipeline.

**Why must we stop this pipeline?** If completed, the Line 3 Pipeline will carry 700,000 barrels of dirty tar sands oil from Canada each day, violate Indigenous treaty rights, threaten waterways like the

Mississippi, and lead to a jaw-dropping 193 millions tons of carbon dioxide emissions each year. Enbridge, a Canadian-based company, continues to build Line 3 through Anishinaabe treaty land and the Mississippi headwaters.

**About the Wisconsin Solidarity Tour** On June 4th, at least three caravan legs will converge in Chippewa Falls. From there, the group will travel the last leg of the journey together to a welcoming rally in Duluth. On Saturday, June 5th, the caravan will continue to the Treaty People Gathering, joining with hundreds of people from around the world. Free camping is available or individuals can secure their own accommodations. Many people will go home on Monday evening, June 7.

**Get more information** about this event and learn how to join or support the effort to stop Line 3 at [treatypeoplegathering.com](http://treatypeoplegathering.com)

## June 5 Pollinators Program

The Mississippi Valley Conservancy will host Kaitlyn O'Connor in a free webinar to share tips on how to create a garden that supports a variety of bees and butterflies. Participants will also learn more about what pollinators need to thrive, tips on plant selection, different ways to establish a new garden, and be inspired with lots of examples of pollinator gardens with native plants. A question and answer session will be hosted after the presentation. Kaitlyn O'Connor is the Education and Outreach Specialist at Prairie Moon Nursery, a Minnesota business that provides over 700 species of North American native plants. Please register by June 3 at [www.mississippivalleyconservancy.org/events/gardening-pollinators](http://www.mississippivalleyconservancy.org/events/gardening-pollinators)

## June 14: Botany and Beer

On Monday, June 14 at 5:30 p.m., the informal group, Botany and Beer, will meet for a walk and talk at Kooyumjian-Lost Creek County Forest, Pine Rd, Hillsboro. The group notes that, "hikes usually last about 1.5 hours with a distance of about a mile. Participants bring reference books to help identify plants, birds, fungi, and insects encountered during the walk. If you wish, bring your own beverage. For more information, email [hike@botanyandbeer.com](mailto:hike@botanyandbeer.com).



## Sustainability Chats at WTC

The Sustainability Institute at Western Technical College hosts monthly online Sustainability Chats to highlight area projects, buildings, and programs. May's program was a virtual tour of WTC's LEED platinum Integrated Technology Center. On June 15 at 2 p.m., there will be a virtual tour of the Hilltopper Refuse and Recycling Center. Register (free) for the event at [tinyurl.com/SusChatHilltopper](http://tinyurl.com/SusChatHilltopper). Past programs, including Drift Bike Share, Habitat ReStore, urban agriculture, mattress recycling, food forests, food waste, and more, may be viewed at [www.sustaininstitute.com/spotlight](http://www.sustaininstitute.com/spotlight)

## Driftless Folk School

On Saturday, June 26 from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., learn about DIY Photovoltaics from Jon Passi, an educator and advocate for photovoltaics and sustainable technologies. On Sunday, June 27, a one day course on Mushrooms from A-Z: Preparing and Growing Fungi for Food and Medicine will be offered from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. These are two of several classes being offered this summer through the Driftless Folk School.

From July 18 through August 6, the Folk School is partnering with Thoreau College in Viroqua to offer The Summer Walkabout, an opportunity to learn about and explore the Driftless in a deep and unique way.

Learn more about the Driftless Folk School and its classes at [www.driftlessfolkschool.org](http://www.driftlessfolkschool.org)