



# Sierra

Newsletter of the Coulee Region Group  
**NOVEMBER 2018**

*"Whether Tesla makes 1 million electric cars or 10 million will make no difference ultimately. We have to stop putting carbon dioxide into the atmosphere now. Not in 2030 or 2045. Today." - Steve Hanley reporting on IPCC 6 Climate Change Report (Clean Technica)*

## PLEASE VOTE

through **November 2**, vote *absentee in person* at your municipal clerk's office (contact clerk for details) OR on **Tuesday, November 6**, vote at the polls.

For complete voting info, please visit [myvote.wi.gov](http://myvote.wi.gov).

John Muir Chapter endorsements\* for Coulee Region Group voters:

US Senate: **Tammy Baldwin**, 3rd US CD: **Ron Kind**, Governor: **Tony Evers**, Lt. Governor: **Mandela Barnes**, SD 17: **Kriss Marion** (D-Blanchardville); SD 31: **Jeff Smith** (D-Eau Claire)

AD 49: **Jesse Bennett** (D-Bagley), AD 50: **Art Shrader** (D-Reedsburg), AD 51: **Jeff Wright** (D-Plain), AD 68: **Wendy Sue Johnson** (D-Eau Claire), AD 70: **Carl Fay** (D-Merrilan), AD 92: **Rob Grover** (D-Galesville), AD 94: **Steve Doyle** (D-Onalaska), AD 95: **Jill Billings** (D-La Crosse), AD 96: **Paul Buhr** (D-Viroqua)

\* The Sierra Club endorses candidates who are and/or will be strong environmental and conservation leaders working to stop attacks on recycling, renewable energy, transit, clean water and air, mining protections and more.

View all John Muir Chapter Sierra Club endorsements at [tinyurl.com/jmcondorsements18](http://tinyurl.com/jmcondorsements18)

*"Polls show that voters consistently rank environmental issues among their lowest concerns in every election. ... Yet polls also show that tens of millions of Americans strongly prioritize progressive environmental policies - the real problem is that these people do not vote. Indeed, even in recent nation-wide elections, over 15 million individually identifiable environmentalists have stayed at home on Election Day." - [www.environmentalvoter.org/our-mission](http://www.environmentalvoter.org/our-mission)*

### Arrive Together: Transportation Equity and Access in Wisconsin

On October 23rd, the Sierra Club along with 1000 Friends of Wisconsin, WISDOM and WISDOM affiliates, the Council of the Blind and Visually Impaired, and the Chippewa Valley Transit Alliance released a report on transportation in Wisconsin - **Arrive Together: Transportation Access and Equity in Wisconsin**. A first of its kind report, **Arrive Together** shows how people's needs are not being met by Wisconsin's transportation system. The report examines the effectiveness of public transit access to major employers and other areas of interest in nine cities and regions across Wisconsin. It highlights stories from transit riders, opportunities for improvement within transit systems, and the serious barriers and needs for improvement at the state level.

*"As a former county board member and now as a state legislator, I have seen firsthand how important proper transit funding is to ensuring vibrant communities, a thriving economy and a high quality of life for all of our residents." - Rep. Jill Billings, Assembly District 95.*

In La Crosse, a media event at the Grand River Station Transit Center included several speakers highlighting important aspects of the study: Cassie Steiner, co-author; Obbie King of La Crosse Area Transit Advocates; Maureen Freedland, CouleeCap; and Rep. Jill Billings. Thank you to the MTU staff for their gracious and generous support for the event and to local media for covering (see links to coverage at [cr-sierra.blogspot.com](http://cr-sierra.blogspot.com)) Read the report at: [tinyurl.com/jmctransitrept](http://tinyurl.com/jmctransitrept)

## Solar Group Buy

On October 16, Elizabeth Ward from the John Muir Chapter and Chris Collins from Sunvest Solar spoke to Coulee Region residents about the Sierra Club's solar group buy program. The solar group buy allows people to get a discount on solar PV installation from a Wisconsin-based company that will make a \$500 donation to the Sierra Club for each completed project. So far, the group buy has lined up 114 kw of installations across the state, earning participants a rebate of at least \$100 per kw of solar in their system! You do not need to be a Sierra Club member to sign up for this program which includes a solar site assessment, a personalized cost/benefit information packet, and, for those who decide to move forward, complete installation of a solar system. For more information on the group buy, check out [www.sunvest.com/programs/sierraclub/](http://www.sunvest.com/programs/sierraclub/)

## Two October Clean Up Projects

On October 2, six Coulee Group members did our autumn clean up of La Crosse's River Valley Drive through the La Crosse River Marsh. It was fairly clean and we completed the task in a little over an hour, after which four of us went to Rudy's Drive-in to eat and socialize.

On October 20, Coulee Region Group members David Boen and Pat Wilson participated in the Kickapoo River clean up sponsored by the Kickapoo Valley Reserve. Pat and Dave were the only ones to paddle a canoe down the river on this cold windy day with occasional snow showers. The photo shows Pat and the heap of trash filling the canoe at the takeout. Unfortunately, there was a lot more we couldn't get, deposited by the record flooding on the Kickapoo in September.

## Groundwater Pollution Update

In October 2017, the Coulee Region Sierra Club hosted a standing room only forum on groundwater pollution in La Crosse county. A county water task force was set up at the end of 2017 and they have recently released their findings and recommendations.

As reported in the La Crosse Tribune on October 15, the team found that, "Much of the groundwater in the towns of Onalaska and Holland contains nitrate levels considered unsafe for human consumption, with the threat especially high for infants and pregnant women."

The task force recommends further study, better education of residents about the need for proper water filtration systems, better zoning and enforcement, possible re-

## Ready for 100 in La Crosse

At its October 2018 meeting, the Sustainable La Crosse Commission voted to recommend partner municipalities pursue Ready for 100 resolutions. This official first step will allow staff and elected officials to work on legislation and encourage public discussion. In the meantime, the Ready for 100 team is still looking for Sierra Club members to help educate our communities about the benefits of moving as quickly as possible to 100% renewable energy sources. Please email [crsierraclub@gmail.com](mailto:crsierraclub@gmail.com) if you'd like to be on the team.

Connect with us online! We're on Twitter: @CRSierra, on Facebook /CRSierraClub, on our blog at [crsierra.blogspot.com](http://crsierra.blogspot.com), and at our website: [www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/coulee](http://www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/coulee).



purposing of currently farmed land, and pursuing local and state legislation to further protect groundwater.

Also in October, three southwest Wisconsin counties (including Grant, a Coulee Region group county) agreed to help fund a new study of private wells to determine the amount and sources of contamination. Well water pollution is among the top issues of residents there.

Groundwater pollution and protecting the state's water resources is one of the John Muir Chapter's highest priorities and there is a state water team working to coordinate efforts around the state to help communities protect clean water resources. If you would like to be on the state Sierra Club water team, please call (608) 256-0565 or email [cassandra.steiner@sierraclub.org](mailto:cassandra.steiner@sierraclub.org). Also, see [facebook.com/WisconsinWaterSentinels/](https://facebook.com/WisconsinWaterSentinels/)

## Environmental Education Grants

Again this year, the Coulee Region Sierra Club is offering **grants of up to \$200 for environmental education projects** involving young people at the elementary and middle school level.

The application and more details are available at [tinyurl.com/crscedugrantapp](http://tinyurl.com/crscedugrantapp) OR email [crsierraclub@gmail.com](mailto:crsierraclub@gmail.com) and we can mail you an application. **The application deadline is JANUARY 5, 2019.** Please spread the word about this opportunity available to those in Crawford, Grant, Jackson, La Crosse, Monroe, Richland, Trempealeau and Vernon counties.



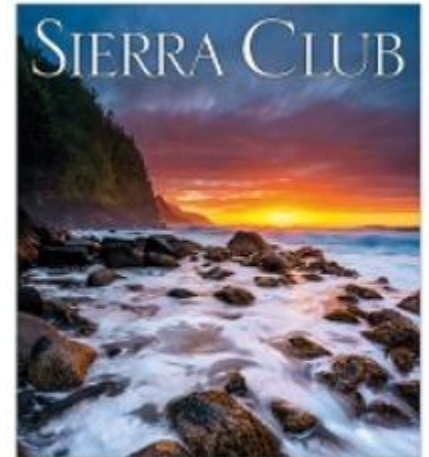
WINTER 2019

### Sierra Club 2019 Calendars!

Again this year, your purchase of **Sierra Club calendars** will benefit our club and environmental programs and protection activities. The calendars cost \$14.95 for the wall calendar and \$15.95 for the engagement book.

Get your calendar at our December gathering or order from Maureen Kinney: 608 784-9324/784-5678 or email [maureen@johnsflaherty.com](mailto:maureen@johnsflaherty.com).

**SIERRA CLUB NOTE AND HOLIDAY CARDS** are available at [store.sierraclub.org/calendars-cards-c28.aspx](http://store.sierraclub.org/calendars-cards-c28.aspx)



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Thank you Sue Knopf for editing and publishing the October issue of the Coulee Region Sierra Club newsletter!

## Coulee Region Group Board Elections

We are seeking candidates to run for the Coulee Region Group board of directors! Board members will try to attend monthly meetings - in person or by phone or computer - and work to forward the goals of our club in the community. It would be fantastic if we could add some board members from counties outside La Crosse. Each area in our group has important issues and concerns (and potential programs and outings) and we would like to make sure all important matters are included in our program and event planning.

We will put a ballot in the December newsletter. If you are interested in serving on the board, please complete the online form at [tinyurl.com/crscboardform](http://tinyurl.com/crscboardform) OR call Pat at 608 788-8831 with your name, contact info, county of residence, and a brief description of your experience and interests demonstrating why you would like to serve on the board.

## La Crosse County Nature Guide

The La Crosse County Nature Connections program ([www.natureconnections.lax.org](http://www.natureconnections.lax.org)) has developed a one-stop electronic resource for connecting with nature in La Crosse County. This **electronic Nature Guide** aims to make outdoor, nature-rich places in La Crosse County easier to discover.

The Guide's interactive map allows you to search outdoor places by location with a specific page for each trail, identifying access points, directions, parking, and trail terrain and difficulty. A unique feature of the Guide is a biodiversity rating for each area (variety of different types of life throughout a given environment) and a listing of dominant features (i.e. scenic overlook) expected in each location.





Grand River Station  
314 Jay Street


La Crosse  
MTU  
Municipal Transit Utility

**Grand River Station  
Transit Center**

**Open House**  
Wednesday November 14<sup>th</sup> 4:00pm – 8:00pm

Please join the MTU for an evening of information, tours, free bus rides, and a celebration of Public Transportation!



For more information please contact the MTU at 608-789-7350


## November 14 Open House

Please join the City of La Crosse Municipal Transit Utility (MTU) for an evening of information, tours, free bus rides, and a celebration of Public Transportation! The OPEN HOUSE will be held on **Wednesday, November 14 from 4 to 8 p.m. at the Transit Center, 314 Jay Street.** Please call 608-789-7350 with questions.


The private vehicle is a household's largest contributor to greenhouse gases. By taking existing public transportation instead of driving a car, an individual can reduce annual carbon emissions by an average of 4,800 pounds, ([tinyurl.com/apta-businfo](http://tinyurl.com/apta-businfo)). A strong public transportation system is good for the environment.

## November 7 - Resiliency

Vulnerable populations are disproportionately affected by environmental hazards. This **November 7 symposium (8 am at the Lunda Center)** will examine how these inequalities affect the entire community, what are the costs, how do land use and other policies contribute, and how to support local organizations and initiatives addressing these equity issues. Registration is \$30 per person and includes breakfast. See [tinyurl.com/resilequity](http://tinyurl.com/resilequity)



COMMUNITY RESILIENCY SYMPOSIUM  
*How do we change environmental inequities?*  
November 7, 2018 8:00-10:00AM  
Lunda Center, Western Technical College



*Join us for great food and interesting conversation!*

**COULEE REGION SIERRA CLUB WINTER GATHERING**  
**Tuesday, December 11 \* 6:00 p.m. \* N1965 Valley Rd**  
**(Home of Barb & Don Frank - phone 608 788-3914)**

**Bring some food to share. Beverages provided!**

**YOU DON'T NEED TO BE A CLUB MEMBER!**

The Franks' home is in Wedgewood Valley, just north of State Highway 33. From State Road & Losey, go east on Highway 33 for about one mile, just past Hagen Road on the right, turn immediately left (north) onto Wedgewood Drive West. Stay on Wedgewood Drive West to Valley Drive. The house is at the intersection of Wedgewood Drive West & Valley Drive.