



Sierra

Newsletter of the Coulee Region Group

SEPTEMBER 2021

"As much as you or I might want to solve this crisis alone, we cannot do it without leadership from our elective representatives." - Dr. Michael E. Mann (time.com/6088531/ipcc-climate-report-hockey-stick-curve/)

September 26, 1 to 5 p.m.

Ask Me About My EV

A National Drive Electric Week event

Copeland Park, La Crosse

RSVP: tinyurl.com/DriveEVLax

fossil fuels before they destroy our planet." Electric vehicles are available and affordable now. *What are we waiting for?*

National Drive Electric Week will sponsor hundreds of events around the country to give people the chance to see electric vehicles and talk with their owners and dealers about them. Learn how to choose an EV, get the truth about charging and "range anxiety," learn about utility incentives, and more. The event is free and open to the public, rain or shine. If you are the owner of a plug-in electric vehicle (bicycle to car), please consider bringing and showing your vehicle. To register as a participant, attendee, or volunteer, please visit the event site: tinyurl.com/DriveEVLax. National Drive Electric Week is presented by Plug-In America, Sierra Club, and the Electric Auto Association.

In their latest report on the climate crisis, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change warned that we have a relatively short window of opportunity to make major changes in our fossil fuel-based systems. UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, who calls the report Code Red for Humanity, says, "This report must sound a death knell for coal and

**Plug In
America**

WE DRIVE ELECTRIC. YOU CAN TOO.



September 28, 6:30 p.m. ONLINE

Film and discussion:

FAMILY

by the Global Indigenous Council

RSVP: tinyurl.com/WISC-FamilyFilm

Join with fellow Sierra Club members from around the state in viewing the film, **FAMILY**, by the Global Indigenous Council, that highlights the deep connection Indigenous Nations share with wolves, and the major threats currently facing imperiled populations in the lower 48 states. Following the film, a panel will discuss updates on work to protect Wisconsin wolves. The world is facing a mass extinction and biodiversity crisis. Wolves need us now.

FAMILY is an appeal to reverse the Trump administration's removal of the wolf from the Endangered Species list. Retaining the de-listing contradicts President Biden's January 2021 "Memorandum on Tribal Consultation and Strengthening Nation-to-Nation Relationship."

This is the first in the Wisconsin Sierra Club's Environmental Justice series that will examine issues of accessibility, health, and environmental injustice. For more information on the series visit the event site at tinyurl.com/WISC-EnvJusticeSeries



Environmental Education Grants and Awards

For spring 2022, CRSC will offer 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 December 10, 2021. For more information, visit sierraclub.org/wisconsin/coulee/Education or tinyurl.com/CRSC-Students

The Coulee Region Sierra Club also 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. New for 2021-2022, CRSC will recognize the achievements of and **award \$150 to a high school senior** who demonstrates leadership, action, and environmental stewardship, and who understands the importance of civic engagement in protecting our environment.

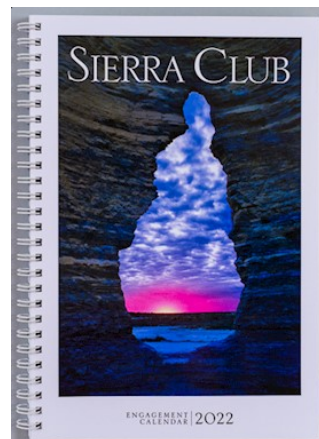


Eligible students are those graduating from high school in 2022 who reside in the CRSC region: Crawford, Grant, Jackson, La Crosse, Monroe, Richland, Trempealeau, and Vernon counties. The application includes essays and submission of a portfolio. The deadline for applications is March 15, 2022 with the award to be given by the end of April, 2022. For more information, visit sierraclub.org/wisconsin/coulee/Education or tinyurl.com/CRSC-Students

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.

Sierra Club Calendars

Sales of Sierra Club calendars help support our environmental education grants. Wall and engagement calendars for 2022 are available. Call Maureen Kinney, 608-784-5678, or email CRSierraClub@gmail.com. Engagement calendars are \$16 and wall calendars cost \$15. Find other Sierra Club merchandise, including apparel, gifts, things for kids, cards, and outdoor items at store.sierraclub.org/storefront.aspx



September Events

Now through November: Regional community read of the book *Waking Up White* - book chats and related programs. www.laxwakingupwhite.com/waking-up-white-regional-read.html

Saturday, September 11: Karst Exploration, Eagle Cave, Blue River (near Boscobel) from 1 to 4:30 p.m. www.crawfordstewardship.org

Saturday, September 18: Jackson County Pace & Pedal, Wazee Lake Recreation Area, Jackson County. www.jacksoninaction.org/pace-and-pedal

Saturday, September 18: Botany & Beer - Hogback Prairie hike in Gays Mills at 10 a.m. Get more details at the calendar, www.crawfordstewardship.org, or email hike@botanyandbeer.com,

Tuesday, September 21: Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants by Robin Wall Kimmerer book discussion. 6 p.m. online. RSVP www.fspa.org/event/braiding-sweetgrass-book-discussion-zoom

Saturday, September 25: Evening Sky Prairie Walk, 7 p.m., Tunnelville Cliffs State Natural Area, Vernon County. mississippivalleyconservancy.org/events/evening-sky-prairie-walk

Jobs, Justice, Climate!

On Thursday, August 26, members of the Coulee Region Sierra Club, Citizen Action of Wisconsin, and Wisconsin Conservation Voters gathered at Western Technical College to urge U.S. Representative Ron Kind and other elected leaders to ACT NOW on Climate.

Kids and adults made a banner and wrote personal messages for Rep. Kind before the 1 p.m. press event which featured local citizens who spoke in support of strong climate action.

Speakers included La Crosse Mayor Mitch Reynolds who noted that the city needs strong policy and financial support from the federal government in order to maintain its ongoing commitments and address increasingly expensive and extensive problems caused by climate change. He also noted that La Crosse is moving forward on its own and highlighted the upgrades to the city's wastewater treatment plant which, once completed, will completely power itself and eventually provide power to help charge La Crosse's coming electric buses.

Casey Meehan, Director of Sustainability and Resilience at Western Technical College noted, "I'm proud of what Western's done, but like everyone else we need to be doing more. We need to be doing a lot more, and to do more our communities need more support from our elected officials in order to mitigate and adapt to the crisis that we're up against here. And we need that support now."

Abby Siakpere, a University of Wisconsin-La Crosse student said, "Some of the world's leading climate change scientists have now confirmed that humans are making irreversible changes to our planet, and extreme weather will only become more severe. They have made it clear that the time is now, when we must act urgently to avoid the worst possible consequences."

Following the press event, participants carried their banner and messages to the King Street office of Representative Kind.

View news reports about the event at www.news8000.com/activists-hold-art-gathering-for-climate-action/ and wxow.com/2021/08/26/wisconsin-conservation-voters-have-a-message-for-rep-ron-kind/



Internships Available

The Wisconsin Sierra Club is recruiting for the fall 2021 project aide and internship program. These volunteer positions are entirely remote and can be filled by anyone in the state. Anyone may apply; college students may be able to earn course credit. Explore a non-profit environmental career or get more hands-on experience with grassroots organizing and activism, including working with Sierra Club teams, digital communication, administration, finance, and legislative and electoral initiatives. PA's work four to nine hours per week. Scheduling and hours are flexible. Learn more at tinyurl.com/WISC-PAs

Hurricane Ida Relief

Louisiana coastal communities were already on the front lines of the oil-and-gas-industry fueled coastal land loss and petrochemical pollution crisis. The national Sierra Club recommends sending donations to the following organizations United Houma Nation (unitedhoumanation.org), Gulf Coast Center for Law and Policy (www.gccplp.org), Foundation for Louisiana (www.foundationforlouisiana.org), Deep South Center for Environmental Justice (www.dscej.org/) and Louisiana Environmental Action Network (leanweb.org/)

A Livable Future Rests on a Climate-Focused Reconciliation Bill

On August 16, *Sierra Magazine* published an article by James Steinbauer about the need for a climate-focused reconciliation bill. Here are important excerpts; you are encouraged to read the entire article at www.sierraclub.org/sierra/livable-future-rests-congress-passing-climate-focused-reconciliation-bill

Last week, just one day after a major United Nations scientific report concluded that human activity has locked the planet in an intensifying climate crisis for at least the next 30 years, the US Senate passed a bipartisan infrastructure bill aimed, in part, at combating climate change. The bill is more than just a day late and many, many dollars short.

[M]any of the ambitious ideas that Biden proposed to cut the greenhouse gas emissions driving climate change were whittled down to ensure the bill got enough votes from Republicans. Biden wanted \$100 billion to modernize the nation's electricity grid. He got \$73 billion. He wanted \$15 billion to construct a network of 500,000 electric vehicle charging stations. He got \$7.5 billion. He wanted \$378 billion to upgrade buildings to be more sustainable. He got a little over \$5 billion. Two of the most meaningful policies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions—a clean energy standard that would require power companies to replace fossil fuels with renewable sources such as solar, wind, and hydropower, and clean energy tax credits—were left out entirely.

“Limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees is within reach, but it requires really transformational change. The bipartisan bill is not transformational,” Jillian Neuberger, the legislative engagement associate for the World Resources Institute, told *Sierra*. “It will make some of the improvements to the grid that are necessary for the green energy transition, but the most important thing is that we actually get green energy on that grid. We need a climate bill that incentivizes renewables.”

Democrats hope to pass both provisions—and more—in a second \$3.5 trillion infrastructure bill. Last Wednesday morning, Senate Democrats took the first step down that path, voting to approve a budget blueprint that allows them to shield the larger bill from a Republican filibuster under the Senate's complicated budget reconciliation process.

In its current formulation, the second, more robust legislative package would create a new Clean Electricity Payment Program that would incentivize power companies to increase their renewable sources of energy. (This is essentially a clean energy standard designed to meet the strict rules that govern budget reconciliation.) It would impose fees on methane and carbon polluters, provide new consumer rebates to help electrify and weatherize homes, and electrify the federal vehicle fleet and buildings. It would also create a New Deal-style Civilian Climate Corps that would put Americans to work building climate-resilient infrastructure, reducing carbon emissions through renewable energy and conservation projects, and helping communities recover from climate disasters.

If the reconciliation bill is passed, Democrats say it would put the United States on track to meet Biden's commitment to halve greenhouse gas emissions and create an 80 percent clean energy grid by 2030.

“We have a really small window here, both legislatively and in the context of global warming, to do something,” Marcela Mulholland, the political director for Data for Progress, told *Sierra*. “We're one #MeToo scandal or car accident from losing our majority. It's critical that we make the most of this time while we have it.”

The budget resolution is only the outline of a bill—not a bill itself. And it still faces significant hurdles to make it out of the Senate. Hours after providing a key vote to approve the budget blueprint, Senator Joe Manchin of West Virginia, a moderate Democrat, issued a statement declaring that he has “serious concerns” about the impact of the budget's price tag on “our children and grandchildren.”

Climate-action advocates say that the cost of inaction is even higher.

“We need to think about the impact that not passing a climate bill will have for future generations—and, let's not kid ourselves, this current generation,” Neuberger said. “We'll be leaving a lot of opportunities on the table. The opportunity to create good jobs. The opportunity to clean our air. The opportunity to make a lot of things more affordable. The loss of not taking those opportunities will be felt for a very long time.”

