



Sierra

Newsletter of the Coulee Region Group

MARCH 2015

MARCH MEETING

**Tuesday,
March 31**

7pm at the
**HoChunk
Three Rivers House
at 8th & Main**

ALL ARE WELCOME!

Movie: Frontline: Alaska Gold

Presented by: Jeff Skrade, former biologist for the Alaska Dept. of Fish & Wildlife for 20+ years

Frontline: Alaska Gold tracks the conflict over the Pebble project, including Alaskans who believe it will decimate the traditional economy, based on fishing, and those who contend it will improve living conditions, by providing jobs.

"It's difficult to put an economic value on a resource that can be mined forever," says

David Montgomery. He's describing the sockeye salmon run in Alaska's Bristol Bay, an annual run that has provided sustenance and an economy for generations of native fishermen. His phrasing might also apply to the project now threatening that ecosystem, the Pebble Mine. As it is planned by the companies Anglo-American and Northern Dynasty, the open-pit mine will produce an estimated half a trillion dollars' worth of copper and gold. The cost for these rewards is currently under debate.

After the film, Jeff will share his thoughts and take questions afterwards. Per Jeff, "Currently there is a proposal to allow a huge open pit copper mine to operate in the northern portion of Bristol Bay, at the headwaters of two of the most important salmon spawning rivers. In my opinion, to allow this mine to proceed would put at great risk one of our planet's last few fully functioning ecosystems. ... Historically to date, there has never been a single large scale mine in existence that has not resulted in significant damage to the environment. Copper is one of the most toxic elements in nature to fish stocks and if this project is allowed to proceed, it is almost certain to destroy a huge protein resource with a very low carbon footprint, that we as a species will need as the world population continues to increase. I have been actively campaigning against Pebble Copper since it was initially proposed and will continue to do so."



The City of La Crosse Transportation Vision

The City of La Crosse just completed an intensive four-day series of public meetings to develop a long-range Streets and Highways Transportation Vision for the City of La Crosse. Consultant Ian Lockwood, a transportation engineer with Toole Design Group, moderated the process. The proposed vision that resulted was exciting and very much in harmony with the Sierra Club's vision for future transportation. Here's the vision as of the end of the Thursday night meeting:

... to be a beautiful, livable, vibrant, historic, city between the rivers, bluffs and marsh that is the economic, educational, medical, social, cultural and transportation hub for the region.

In order to protect and enhance our regional economy, quality of life, natural environment, aesthetics, and human connections—with an emphasis on improving safety for everyone—the City envisions changing policies, practices, and physical design to our streets

and highways, as well as the allied parking infrastructure within our city limits, and within the region to the extent that it affects our city. A key component of the City's vision is to reduce our overwhelming and unsustainable dependency on the single occupant vehicle as the primary mode of transportation and prioritize cycling, walking, public and private transit, telecommuting, land use changes, parking changes, and other supportive measures.

continued...



Coulee Region Sierra Club

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Some proposed tactics were: to use roundabouts to make intersections more efficient and reduce fuel wasted while idling; slower speed limits to increase transportation safety; increase green space and reduce conversion of buildings and green space to surface parking lots, to keep downtown interesting and downtown business successful.

These measures support compact, livable neighborhoods which shorten trips, reducing vehicle miles traveled and thereby reducing CO₂ emissions and global warming. The study supports the Complete Streets concept, which Gov. Walker has proposed defunding in his latest budget.

View the entire presentation at <http://wi-lacrosseplanning.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/View/192>.

This study is intended to feed into the Wisconsin DOT study that's starting up on transportation in the Coulee Region. Please support the goals of this transportation vision at upcoming DOT public hearings.

WisDOT Coulee Region Transportation Study

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation has begun a new study

of how to solve transportation issues between I-90 and downtown La Crosse. This study, called the Coulee Region Transportation Study, has an aggressive schedule and will be looking for public input fairly soon. The first Public Involvement Meetings will be held:

Wednesday, March 11, 5 p.m. - 7 p.m.,
La Crosse Central High School, or

Thursday, March 12, 5 p.m. - 7 p.m.,
Eagle Bluff Elementary School

Coulee Region Sierra Club members are encouraged to participate in these public meetings, to advocate that the result minimizes greenhouse gas and other pollutant emissions while efficiently and safely moving people and freight to desired destinations. Transportation systems should promote healthy communities and protect environmental systems, by valuing transit, bicycle, and pedestrian modes in addition to motor vehicles and by encouraging dense, mixed-use infill development to shorten trips to jobs, markets, and recreation.

Support the Complete Streets concept, which creates a network of protected bike-ways & walkways, while calming traffic, to encourage walking and cycling as safe and attractive alternatives to driving.

Meet Our New Publicity Chair

Hello, my name is Jenelyn Carlson and I am the new Publicity Chair for the Coulee Region Group. I am a junior at UW La Crosse studying Sociology and Environmental Studies. I am excited to be a part of this group and am looking forward to meeting you all.

The project I am currently working on involves interviewing community members about solar and/or energy efficiency projects. These testimonials will be featured on the Coulee Region Group's website along with pictures of their projects and information on how to start your own way towards a more sustainable lifestyle. So stay tuned!



Also, if you or someone you know has a project we should know about please feel free to email me at carlson.jene@uwlax.edu.

Thank you and I hope to have the opportunity of working with you!