



# Four Lakes *Sierran*

The Newsletter of the Four Lakes Group Sierra Club, Fall 2018

## Beyond Coal – Are We There Yet?

Sadly, not even close. Last issue, we reported that residents near the Elm Road Generating Station (ERGS) in Oak Creek (part owned by MGE) were being inundated with coal dust. So what have We Energies (the main owner of ERGS) and MGE done? As befitting coal plant owners, their responses have basically been hot air.

MGE has said that We Energies is the main owner (they are), and that it is up to them to correct the problem. But MGE has issued no statement taking any responsibility or urging We Energies to correct the problem of inflicting coal dust on the plant’s neighbors.

We Energies, after considerable pressure and outcry, held a listening session where they heard many stories of how the coal dust (which they had once denied) was impacting the residents and their health. They promised to take action, including coating the offending coal pile, putting up a wind screen, and installing an air monitor.

The results? We Energies coated the coal pile, but residents recently experienced another coating of coal dust. The wind screen and air monitor are still not installed. An air monitor you or I could install in a week or two for several thousand dollars is taking a multi-million dollar company six months to procure and install.

The Clean Coalition raised funds to purchase low-cost air monitors that demonstrated the presence coal dust, but We Energies ducked responsibility, saying that these low-cost monitors are not trustworthy. And why is MGE, who claims to be a community energy company, not showing concern for this impacted community?

### Taking Responsibility

I signed up for MGE’s Green Power Tomorrow program in 1999 to stop funding coal power. Even then, the damages coal caused were known. I paid the surcharge so my electricity use wouldn’t harm others or add to air pollution and climate change.

I’m mad! Nearly 20 years later, I still pay extra, even though wind power is rapidly becoming cheaper than coal. (Why do we still pay extra, MGE?) When I hear stories of people getting sick and nearly dying from conditions exacerbated by coal dust, a children’s

*continued on page 6*

## Chair’s column

*Dave Blouin*

As I write this column, we’re getting more rain in Madison. More rain after devastating flooding hit Dane County, counties west of here, and even Madison itself. The data shows that we’re receiving more frequent and heavier rain events as a result of climate change. It is impossible to ignore the local impacts of climate change when they manifest as local disasters. It’s also a reminder of how important the Sierra Club’s local work is to battle climate change and why we value your support for our work.

One of the ways we’ve been addressing this issue at the local level has been the multi-year effort to wean our local utilities off of coal burning for local power generation. We’re also working with local governments, such as the City of Madison and Dane County, on their Climate Change Plans to get them to commit to 100% clean energy use. Dane County will be rolling out its new plan later this year, and we’ll be working to help shape the County into a leader on energy conservation and clean energy.

*continued on page 2*

### ***In This Issue***

|                                          |   |
|------------------------------------------|---|
| <i>Beyond Coal: Are we there yet?</i>    | 1 |
| <i>Chair’s Column</i>                    | 1 |
| <i>A Network of Trouble</i>              | 2 |
| <i>Parks &amp; Trails Unite Festival</i> | 3 |
| <i>Four Lakes t-shirts</i>               | 3 |
| <i>Summer 2018 Outings</i>               | 4 |
| <i>Recycling Away from Home</i>          | 5 |
| <i>County Highway M Project</i>          | 5 |
| <i>Four Lakes contacts</i>               | 6 |
| <i>Four Lakes Elections</i>              | 7 |
| <i>Sierra Club Calendars</i>             | 8 |

## A Network of Trouble

We've talked a lot (rightfully!) about Enbridge Line 61 in Wisconsin and the risks it poses. But it doesn't exist in solitary – it's part of a large pipeline network that, in our case, extends from the tar sands oil fields in Alberta to the Gulf of Mexico, where much of the oil is refined and exported.

Oil we receive in Wisconsin comes to us via Minnesota, and therein lies the rub. Enbridge is looking to expand the flow of tar sands through Minnesota by redoing Line 3, which would then require added transport through Wisconsin. There's a name for that capacity – Line 66 – which Enbridge has both claimed they do, and do not, have plans to build.

Our friends at 350 Minnesota, as well as indigenous tribes and other environmental and justice allies, have fought hard against the expansion of Line 3, nearly succeeding in stopping its approval. A recent rally, where many allies – including national Sierra Club leaders – risked arrest to oppose the pipeline, indicates that opposition is strong and that the fight to stop it is far from over.

The fight included findings by the Minnesota Department of Commerce that Enbridge does not have adequate insurance in the event of a spill. This finding was based on the hard work done here in Dane County to unearth this issue, and in response, the Dane County Zoning and Land Regulation Board has created a requirement that Enbridge must provide added insurance. That requirement is still in the courts in Wisconsin, where the latest ruling has upheld the insurance requirement.

In addition to continuing to fight Enbridge's expansion of line 61, we're helping to organize and support landowners and, through the WiSE (Wisconsin Safe Energy) Alliance, we and our friends in 80 Feet is Enough are continuing to make headway and build support. Five counties have now passed resolutions opposing state legislation giving Enbridge the authority to utilize eminent domain to take private lands for its own use.

You can learn more about the pipeline issue at <https://www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/moving-beyond-oil-clean-transportation>. To get involved and join our network of opposition, contact Elizabeth Ward at [Elizabeth.ward@sierraclub.org](mailto:Elizabeth.ward@sierraclub.org).

*Chair's Column continued from page 1*

Thanks to all the volunteers who helped out this summer at events where we tabled or where we worked to reduce our transportation footprint. Volunteers worked at the Dane County Farmers Market, Laborfest and Orton Park Festival, and will be at the Willy Street Fair. Volunteers also staffed the bus to the Midwest Regional Energy Association Fair and the Dane County Parks and Trails Unite Festival in June. Thank you!

2018 is a major election year for state and federal elections, and joining our Political Committee is a great way for Sierra Club members to get active on political issues and races. The Sierra Club's endorsement is a significant honor sought by many candidates, but only strong environmental advocates receive our approval. Once we have endorsed a candidate, we work to help elect that candidate so she or he can make a difference in public policy. Indications from state and national special and spring elections suggest this year can be a turning point for electing responsible conservation-minded leaders. However, we need all hands on deck to ensure positive outcomes, and this is a critical year to get involved in elections. Please contact me if you're interested.

In this newsletter, you will also find informative columns on several important conservation issues we're working on, including opposing tar sands pipelines and our Beyond Coal campaign. Contact Don Ferber if you want more information or wish to volunteer. Our Outings Chair, Kathy Mulbrandon, is always looking for new ideas for great outings and people with an interest in leading them. We also have a variety of events, so please like us on Facebook and watch our web site for updates, additions, or other opportunities.

For those who wish to take a more active role in the Sierra Club, we have a local Executive Committee that helps direct local activities and policies. You'll see Executive Committee nominations in this issue (page 7), but we also have vacancies. We are all volunteers in the Four Lakes Group, and serving on our local board is an opportunity to learn more about our issues while also helping us set directions on the issues you really care about. It's a great way to contribute further to the Sierra Club.

*continued on page 3*

## Parks and Trails Unite Festival Recap

The Four Lakes Group was a sponsor, supporter, and participant in the Parks and Trails Unite Festival at Lake Farm County Park on June 2. The festival highlighted the variety of recreational opportunities within the Dane County Parks system as well as the variety of volunteer organizations that support our highly regarded parks system.

The Four Lakes Group participated in the festival in two ways. To provide more widespread access and limit auto use, we funded and hosted a shuttle service from the Alliant Energy Center to Lake Farm County Park. Each tabling group (as we were) was to provide an engaging activity for festival goers, and we chose knot tying, which proved to be a great way to engage people of all ages and abilities!

Access was definitely a Festival theme. Biking was encouraged and several rides were organized to the Festival. All-terrain wheelchairs were available to use and try. And our shuttle service enabled those who couldn't or didn't want to drive or deal with parking to attend the Festival. In helping implement Dane County Parks' 5-year plan over the next few years, the Four Lakes Group will continue to advocate for improved public transit access to the parks as well as other non-car transportation modes.

If you are interested in helping advocate for our local public lands, access or other related issues, please contact Liz Wessel, 608-238-9934 or [lizard59sc@yahoo.com](mailto:lizard59sc@yahoo.com).



*Chair's Column continued from page 2*

One of our goals is to become more diverse in many ways – geography, age, income, and race, as well as interests and skills. Please contact me at 608-233-8455 or [burroak15@gmail.com](mailto:burroak15@gmail.com) if you are interested or wish to learn more about the Sierra Club's efforts on equity, inclusion, and justice. The Sierra Club does a great job of supporting volunteer leaders by providing free training and support for many activities such as outings, political work, fundraising, treasurer, conservation, and much more. Having the backing of a nationally acclaimed organization provides many benefits such as great training and experience. It's a great opportunity to make a difference on something you care about.

As always, please contact me with any questions or concerns or to learn more. Thank you for all you do to preserve and protect the shared air, land, and water that nourish and sustain us. See you on the trails. And don't forget to vote!



Like our new Four Lakes t-shirts? One of these fine garments can be yours simply by volunteering for the Four Lakes Group. They help identify you as a supporter and advocate for the Sierra Club and Four Lakes Group, and provide more visibility for us and our efforts.

A special thanks to Liz Wessel for her ideas, brainstorming, and shepherding this to fruition. And to Budget Signs in Madison for their excellent help and work to get these printed on shirts that are 50% recycled plastic bottles.

## **Four Lakes outings, Fall - Winter 2018**

For all outings, please wear weather and activity-appropriate clothing and good footwear. For work outings, wear work clothes and gloves. Bring fluids to drink, a snack, and sunscreen, a hat, and insect repellent if needed. If carpooling, please be a little early. Please contact the leader to RSVP, if you have questions, or with concerns about weather or to cancel. Check the Four Lakes Group web site or Facebook page for updates or added events.

### ***Leader Contact Info***

Don Ferber, [d\\_ferber@sbcglobal.net](mailto:d_ferber@sbcglobal.net) or 608-217-2959  
Kathy Mulbrandon, [kmulbrandon@gmail.com](mailto:kmulbrandon@gmail.com) or 608-215-9706  
Alex Singer, [alexcsinger@gmail.com](mailto:alexcsinger@gmail.com) or 608-395-1417  
David Smith, [smithdc75@yahoo.com](mailto:smithdc75@yahoo.com) or 608-233-1210

### **Saturday, October 6, 10 am - Hike on Ice Age Trail - Lodi Segment**

Join David Smith as he leads a 6 - 7 mile, moderate difficulty, out-and-back hike on the Ice Age Trail Lodi Segment. This scenic hike will go through woods and prairies as fall colors are starting to show. Directions: take Hwy 113 north of Madison 2.5 miles past the Village of Dane. Turn left (west) on Lee Rd. for 1 mile, then right (north) on Lodi Springfield Rd. for 0.8 miles to the parking area on the left with the kiosk. Sturdy shoes with good tread or hiking boots are highly recommended. Bring water and a snack. RSVP to David Smith.

### **Tuesday, October 23, 6 pm - Evening Hike on Ice Age Trail - Verona Segment**

Enjoy a full moon fall evening hike starting at Verona Park and Ride/Military Ridge Trailhead and heading north through Badger Prairie Park. This will be an out-and-back hike of about 4 miles traversing through prairies. Families welcome! Meet at the Verona Park & Ride adjacent to the Military Ridge Trail. From Madison, take Hwy. 18/151 to Verona exit 81, and turn left at the stoplight to the parking lot on Hwy PB. Bring flashlight/headlamp. RSVP to Kathy Mulbrandon.

### **Saturday, November 24, 10 - 11:30 am, Whither the Geese?**

As cold weather rolls in, what do birds do? And how is "season creep" affecting the preparation of plants for the long sleep ahead? Join Master

Naturalist Alex Singer for an educational, family-friendly Thanksgiving weekend nature walk at Edna Taylor Conservation Park. There may be hot chocolate afterwards, depending on the weather. Co-sponsored by Madison FUN partners, Madison Parks, Madison Audubon, Friends of Edna Taylor, Sierra Club, and Aldo Leopold Nature Center. Meet at the Aldo Leopold Nature Center, 330 Femrite Drive. RSVP to Alex Singer.

### **Sunday, December 16, 6:30 pm - Annual Winter Bonfire at Picnic Point**

Join us for our annual celebratory Winter Bonfire to share good cheer and enjoy a crisp winter evening with fellow Sierrans and other outdoors lovers. Bring beverages (warm or otherwise) and a snack to share (or something to roast on the fire), and stories to share or holiday songs, and we'll have a merry old time! Picnic Point is off University Bay Drive. Free parking available. Park in the parking lot and walk approximately 1 mile to the farthest fire pit #6. Dress warmly and for conditions. RSVP to Kathy Mulbrandon.

### **Saturday, December 22, 10 - 11:30 am – How Nature Copes with Wisconsin Winters**

We'll discuss and explore some of the ways that plants and animals cope with our sometimes-mercurial winter weather. Join Master Naturalist Alex Singer for a free educational family-friendly holiday weekend nature walk at Edna Taylor Conservation Park. There may be hot chocolate afterwards, depending on the weather. Co-sponsored by Madison FUN partners, Madison Parks, Madison Audubon, Friends of Edna Taylor, Sierra Club, and Aldo Leopold Nature Center. Meet at the Aldo Leopold Nature Center, 330 Femrite Drive. RSVP to Alex Singer.

### **Saturday, January 5, 10 am - Snowshoe Hike, Prairie Moraine County Park**

Enjoy a snowshoe hike at Prairie Moraine County Park, southeast of Verona. We'll snowshoe or hike through prairies and woods where you can enjoy Dane County's most visible section of the glacial terminal moraine. Families welcome! Take Hwy 18/151 southwest of Madison to exit 79 (Cty PB). Turn left on PB and go .7 miles south to Prairie Moraine parking lot on the left. Meet by the IAT kiosk. RSVP to Kathy Mulbrandon.

## **Streambank Restoration with Dane County and Trout Unlimited**

Dates and locations are to be determined, but watch our web site for dates and locations. Or contact Don Ferber to be notified when dates are set.

## **Cruisin' for Cuisine**

Cruisin' for Cuisine is a casual dinner group that meets monthly at a locally owned Madison-area restaurant. We order off the menu and everyone gets their own check. Non-members are welcome. We're always trying out different places, so please join us. RSVP to Don Ferber at least 2 days prior to dinner for the dining time.

### **Thursday, October 25 – Dobhan, 2110 Atwood Ave**

Enjoy the fine décor and excellent Nepalese cuisine at this well-regarded east-side Madison restaurant known for its locally sourced ingredients, fresh produce and fine spices. Thursday is also Cuban night as they show off their range of cuisines. (<http://www.dobhankitchen.com>)

### **Wednesday, December 5 – Weary Traveler Freehouse, 1201 Williamson St**

Come make merry and enjoy some holiday cheer with fellow Sierrans. This eclectic east side Madison restaurant is noted for its friendly bar vibe and variety of food offerings, and a great selection of beers. (<http://www.wearytravelerfreehouse.com>)

## **Recycling Away from Home**

Yes, we're still talkin' trash. And we should be. If you saw the Isthmus article in June (<https://isthmus.com/news/news/stricter-import-rules-and-increased-contamination-stresses-city-recycling-efforts/>), you'll understand that not only are we not moving to composting, but our recycling practices leave a lot to be desired.

That's an added reason for us to be at festivals, to show the community that people do care, and that it can be done properly. Events we've been doing RAH (Recycling Away from Home) at this year include the Orton Park Festival and Laborfest. One more opportunity still awaits to RAH with us at the Willy Street Fair.

At these events, we're not only setting a great example and educating people, but we're supporting community events where the money goes back into the community to support neighborhood centers such as Wilmar and other good causes. And they're great for supporting local vendors and the local economy.

If you're concerned that we're trashing the Earth, there are many opportunities to get involved, from volunteering at an event or adding new events, to taking a leadership role in RAH, to planning outings to educate people, or getting involved in local policy efforts to decrease waste.

The big event, the Willy Street Fair, is coming up September 15 and 16. It's a fun way to get involved in RAH and support the Four Lakes Group. We'll also have a booth and be in the parade. Go to <http://signup.com/go/MvnYiKU> and sign up for the shift(s) of your choice. And you'll get one of our great new Four Lakes t-shirts (see page 3) for volunteering!

Questions? Please contact Don Ferber at [d\\_ferber@sbcglobal.net](mailto:d_ferber@sbcglobal.net).

## **County Trunk Highway M Project**

Plans to widen County Trunk Highway (CTH) M, the stretch of two-lane road between CTH Q past Governor Nelson State Park to CTH K and on to WI Hwy 113, have been introduced and a formal study and design stages have been initiated. This stretch of CTH M provides access to the State Park as well as residential areas along the north shore of Lake Mendota and serves as a north corridor between the west and east sides of the greater Madison urban area.

At the July 17<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Public Works & Transportation Committee, two people, including a representative of the Sierra Club, spoke to the Committee about concerns over this project from the perspective of bike and pedestrian safety, residential access and impacts of the outstanding natural resources in the area including Governor Nelson State Park.

*continued on page 6*

*Beyond Coal continued from page 1*

playground coated in coal dust, and companies that put profits ahead of people, yes, I'm angry.

Some utilities, including Alliant and We Energies, have said they will stop using coal by 2050. Sooner would be better, but if they transition rapidly now, there can still be significant progress.

Not MGE, our "Community Energy Company". Madison and Middleton already passed resolutions to move to 100% renewable energy. The cost of renewables is already competitive and dropping. Some coal power plants are being shut down from too costly to run. MGE's commitment continuing to promote their lackluster Energy 2030 plan.

### **Don't Get Mad, Get Active!**

Getting mad may feel good – but getting active gets results. As a Beyond Coal volunteer for over a decade, I started with our Midwest New Energy Futures group run mainly by volunteers. Our dedicated group met (often by phone) and geared up the Midwest Beyond Coal campaign, stopping coal plants and getting the utilities to realize that the Sierra Club was a force to be reckoned with.

In Madison, despite MGE's claim they listen to our community, MGE remains very reliant on coal. In the last 10 - 15 years, MGE's short-sighted investments in the ERGS and costly pollution controls on the Columbia Generating Station, tied them (and us) to coal power for decades – part of the reason why we have some of the highest utility rates in the Midwest. (So much for cheap coal!)

To support their bad bets, MGE developed a rate hike billing scheme in 2014. Residential customers now pay nearly \$500 per year in fixed fees, no matter how little energy they use. The people most impacted are those with low incomes, minorities, the elderly, students, and apartment dwellers, or those who invested in solar or energy efficiency.

If these actions don't reflect your values, join our merry group of MGE activists working to put community pressure on MGE. We are looking for people with ideas and skills, but most of all, people with passion. You can work directly with our activists, with your neighborhood or community group, or encourage the community you live in to move forward with 100% renewable energy.

Contact Don Ferber at [d\\_ferber@sbcglobal.net](mailto:d_ferber@sbcglobal.net) or Cassie Steiner at [cassandra.steiner@sierraclub.org](mailto:cassandra.steiner@sierraclub.org) to get active. If someone asks if we're getting off coal, tell them "Things are looking sunnier", or "The winds of changing are blowing stronger!"

*County Trunk M continued from page 5*

A key issue will be storm water management particularly with our region's raised awareness of flooding. The Town of Westport passed a very strong storm water runoff ordinance of zero runoff for a 100-year flood. As per the recent flooding we have experienced, better storm water management is critical to preventing flooding.

In addition, the long-term solution to resolving existing and future congestion issues in the corridor requires an area wide transportation study that includes multimodal approaches to transportation. A multimodal approach that starts to reduce the region's reliance on single driver cars is consistent with the current work of the Dane County Climate Action Council.

### **Four Lakes Group Sierra Club Contacts**

<http://www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/four-lakes>

<https://www.facebook.com/4lakesSierraClub/>

**Dave Blouin\***, Chair, Political Chair, (608) 233-8455, [burroak15@gmail.com](mailto:burroak15@gmail.com)

**Don Ferber\***, Conservation, Outreach, and RAH, (608) 222-9376, [d\\_ferber@sbcglobal.net](mailto:d_ferber@sbcglobal.net)

**Beverly Speer\***, (608) 241-8979, [bjs4LG@gmail.com](mailto:bjs4LG@gmail.com)

**Erik Pettersen\***, (608) 515-4426, [erik.pettersen14@gmail.com](mailto:erik.pettersen14@gmail.com)

**Liz Wessel\***, Treasurer, (608) 238-9934, [lizard59sc@yahoo.com](mailto:lizard59sc@yahoo.com)

**Mary Reames\***, (608) 310-32890, [mlreames@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mlreames@sbcglobal.net)

**Claire Gervais**, Healthy Lawn Team, (608) 233-8455, [cmgerva@gmail.com](mailto:cmgerva@gmail.com)

**Anne Slaughter-Perrote**, Inspiring Connections Outdoors, (608) 251-3551, [asperrote@gmail.com](mailto:asperrote@gmail.com)

**Kathy Mulbrandon**, Outings Chair, (608) 215-9706, [kmulb@charter.net](mailto:kmulb@charter.net)

\*Executive Committee members

## Four Lakes Group 2018 Executive Committee Election Ballot

Please read the candidate statements for election to the Executive Committee and select your choices by putting an "X" before the name. Select up to four candidates. If your ballot is not from a Four Lakes Sierran mailed copy, please write your name and membership number on the back. Only ballots from active members will be valid, so please cut the portion of the back page with your name and number on it. Please mail ballots to: Lacinda Athen, 4909 Sherwood, Madison, WI 53711 by December 1, 2018.

Voter 1:  Don Ferber  Erik Pettersen  Mary Reames  Liz Wessel

Write In \_\_\_\_\_

Voter 2:  Don Ferber  Erik Pettersen  Mary Reames  Liz Wessel

Write In \_\_\_\_\_

### Candidate's statements

#### Don Ferber

I'm a long time outdoors and environmental activist who wants to change Wisconsin's environmental laws and regulations to ones that protect people and the environment and that we can once again hold up as showing leadership. The Sierra Club has provided me with strong opportunities to learn, get more engaged in issues, and take a leadership role in trying to restore environmental protections and a just democracy.

I very much enjoy working with a great Beyond Coal team, and pushing to get our communities and utilities off fossil fuels and on renewable energy. I do a lot of outreach and communications and work to get more people involved in our efforts, and often act as a liaison to other environmental organizations. I plan to continue working in all these areas, and to get more people involved in the Four Lakes Group and our activities.

#### Erik Pettersen

I've been an environmentalist for most of my life and recently have gotten more into volunteering at the Sierra Club. I canvassed all over south central Wisconsin for Greenpeace in the early nineties and have worked on various political campaigns, most notably, Ralph Nader's run for the presidency in 1996. I was given (in October, 2013) the Community Shares "Backyard Heroes Award" for my volunteering contributions to the Sierra Club. I was the treasurer of Madison Community Cooperative for six months and also the treasurer of Emma Goldman Coop, too, for 3 years. I use mass transportation as much as possible and don't plan on owning a car anytime soon. I look forward to assisting the Four Lakes Group treasurer and remaining on the Executive Committee.

#### Mary Reames

Mary is relatively new to the Sierra Club, but is no stranger to Wisconsin or to environmentalism. Mary worked with the team organizing the Climate March in Madison, and has continued to work with the Beyond Coal campaign. She joined the Four Lakes Group Executive Committee in December. Mary was born and raised in Madison, and is committed to improving the area's environmental and societal sustainability and resilience. After practicing environmental law for several years elsewhere in the Midwest, Mary returned to Madison to raise her family and pursue a career in sustainability. She currently works for Leonardo Academy, a nonprofit sustainability consulting firm. When not working or volunteering, she kayaks on Madison's waterways, gardens, and makes mediocre pottery.

#### Liz Wessel

Liz owns Green Concierge Travel, a business that merges two passions fundamental to the Sierra Club – outdoor recreation and environmental activism. Liz has served one term on the Four Lakes Group Executive Committee and has served as co-treasurer. She developed the Water Sentinel project with a fellow activist at the First Unitarian Society. More recently she was appointed to the Dane Co Parks Five Year Plan Advisory Council. She worked on the Four Lakes Group participation in the Parks and Trails Unite Festival where the Group sponsored a shuttle service providing access to those that can't drive or choose not to drive. She has also served on the board of Community Shares of Wisconsin and the City of Madison's Commission on the Environment. Liz and her husband Bill became life members of the Sierra Club in 1984. They live in Madison and enjoy berry picking, fly-fishing, picnicking and hiking together.



FourLakesGroup Sierra Club  
 754 Williamson St  
 Madison, WI 53703

<http://www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/four-lakes>




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**Newsletter Mailing**


Our goal is environmentally friendly, cost effective communication with our members. Our primary modes of communication are this newsletter, the Four Lakes Enews, and our web site and Facebook pages. We mail a hard copy if we don't have your email address or you request one. Otherwise, members receive an email letting you know when the newsletter is available to download.

Please consider sending your email address to [d\\_ferber@sbcglobal.net](mailto:d_ferber@sbcglobal.net) if we don't have it to save paper and the cost of mailing. Plus we can also send you our Enews to keep you better informed.



Enjoy, explore and protect the planet

### 2019 Sierra Club Calendars



#### ORDER FORM

| ITEM                | COST    | QTY   | TOTAL |
|---------------------|---------|-------|-------|
| Wilderness Calendar | \$14.95 | _____ | _____ |
| Engagement Calendar | \$15.95 | _____ | _____ |
| Subtotal:           |         |       | _____ |
| Sales Tax:          |         |       | _____ |
| Shipping:           |         |       | _____ |
| <b>GRAND TOTAL:</b> |         |       | _____ |

Please make checks payable to "Sierra Club" and mail to the address below or your residence.

**SHIP TO:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Order your Sierra Club 2019 calendars. \$1 off per calendar for each extra calendar ordered. Contact Dave Blouin or Beverly Speer to get your calendar(s) or for questions. (Contact info on page 6.)

Don't forget, they make great holiday gifts too!