



Four Lakes *Sierran*

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

The Elm Road Dust Up

Imagine waking up, going outside, and discovering that your freshly washed white car is now overlain with dingy gray coal dust. The grill you used to barbeque last night's chicken dinner – and the patio table where you ate it – is now caked in that same filthy material. Then you take your children to the nearby playground and discover the slides and swings are coated with the same toxic coal dust.

Many folks who live north of the Elm Road Generating Station in the Oak Creek area didn't have to imagine it. It happened to them on March 5th. The Elm Road coal plant, owned primarily by We Energies, supplies power to that area and beyond. It's also partially owned by WPPI Energy (Sun Prairie) and Madison Gas & Electric Company. But while Elm Road serves hundreds of thousands of customers, it's their neighbors in Oak Creek who suffer the impacts of coal dust.

The fact that coal dust is dirty and a nuisance is the least of their worries. The more serious problem is what can occur over time. Our bodies are ill-suited to being coated with or inhaling coal dust laden with mercury, arsenic, cadmium and other toxins. Some impacts such as asthma may reveal themselves fairly quickly, but others such as heart disease, cancer, and a weakened immune system may not become evident for years. But we do know that too many residents who live near coal-fired power plants suffer dangerous health impacts at some point in their lives.

Taking Responsibility

Perhaps we shouldn't be shocked that a We Energies utility executive said the amount of coal dust found was not really an issue. Corporate denial of the consequences of their actions seems all too commonplace. Of course, it's likely neither he or other We Energies execs live in the neighborhood, and their kids almost certainly don't play in coal-dusted playgrounds. MGE and WPPE won't take responsibility either. MGE, as a minority owner of Elm Road, deflected responsibility, saying it was We Energies problem to resolve.

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Chair's Column

Dave Blouin

Four Lakes Group members and supporters have had a busy Earth Day and spring! A big thank you to everyone helping organize and participate in the Rally for a Coal Free Community on May 12 to get our local utility Beyond Coal. Thanks also to all who help at our Saturday Dane County Farmers Market table. It's a fun and easy way to engage the public on our work, and to enjoy fresh produce, meats, cheese, flowers, bakery items, and much more.

Looking ahead, we have great spring and summer opportunities to become more involved. The Four Lakes Group is a sponsor of the Dane County Parks & Trails Unite Festival (see page 5) on June 2 at Lake Farm and McDaniel Parks on Lake Waubesa. Most event proceeds will build Dane County Parks volunteer capacity, and the Friends groups that support individual county parks. Some proceeds will benefit local non-profit partners and support United Madison's efforts to promote a unified, thriving community for everyone.

The Four Lakes Group is sponsoring a free, accessible shuttle from the Alliant Energy Center to the Festival to provide better access for all and reduce car

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Press coverage garnered by area residents along with the Sierra Club and the Clean Coalition in southeast Wisconsin got the utilities to an Oak Creek listening session on April 4. Residents loudly voiced their outrage that coal dust was indeed a significant issue, and lambasted We Energies for their lack of candor about the problem. We Energies finally issued an apology, but other than offers to wash cars, took no financial or other responsibility for this issue and its costly and hazardous health impacts.

Our Energy, Our Problem

It's great Madisonians no longer have to worry about coal being burned here. But many recall the 2005 revolt against MGE's Blount St coal plant that resulted in MGE converting the plant to natural gas to reduce impacts on residents.

But switching on a light in Madison still means that others live with coal's impacts. Even if you are on Green Power Tomorrow, MGE's wind power plan, you don't get to choose the source of the electrons that come to your home. We all still use MGE's coal – and pay for it on our bills.

So how can our community tolerate MGE's continued reliance on coal for nearly 2/3 of our electricity? Madison has pledged to move to 100% renewable energy, and other communities are looking to make similar commitments.

But that's for city operations; what about the 96% of the energy used by the rest of the community? We won't get to 100% city-wide clean energy without our utility getting off fossil fuels. And that won't happen without you.

Going Coal Free

We've planned several great opportunities to get active and support the residents near Oak Creek right to breathe clean air. The first is our "Rally for a Coal Free Community: Kids, Climate and Health" on May 12 from 2 - 4 pm. (See page 3.)

You can also attend a sustainability committee meeting in your community and encourage them to move farther, faster. Madison's next meeting is May 21 at 4:30 pm at the City County Building, 201 Martin Luther King Jr Blvd. (It's usually in room 357.) Middleton's committee meeting is also scheduled for May 21 at 6:30 pm at 6825 Hubbard Ave. You can also find out if and when your community has meetings on sustainability and energy, or talk to your city officials about what you and they can do.

There are plenty of other ways to help. To join our band of dedicated activists, contact Devin Martin at devin.martin@sierraclub.org. Help our communities run on 100% clean energy, and make all our barbeque dinners and children's playgrounds coal-dust free.



**Hey MGE:
We won't let this slide.**

www.sc.org/WIbeyondcoal



Chair's Column continued

traffic and parking on site, and we need volunteers to assist with our transit efforts. (See pages 5 & 6.)

We're pleased to once again sponsor a bus to the MREA Energy Fair in Custer, WI, on Saturday, June 16. The three-day Energy Fair focuses on sustainable living, renewable energy and conservation, and is packed with hands-on workshops, exhibits, demos, music, and much more. If you haven't, consider going to see the creative and innovative ideas and people behind movements to help save the planet. See page 8 for more info and watch your email and our website, Facebook, and twitter feeds.

I don't need to remind you that 2018 is a major election year. Members interested in Sierra Club political activism are invited to join our Political Committee. Only strong environmental advocates receive the Sierra Club's endorsement. We work to help elect these candidates so they can make a difference in public policy. The special and spring elections suggest this year will be a turning point for electing responsible conservation-minded leaders, but your help is needed to ensure positive outcomes. Please contact me if you're interested.

You will find informative columns in this newsletter on several important conservation issues we're working on, including opposing tar sands pipelines and our Beyond Coal campaign.

Contact Don if you want more info or wish to volunteer. While we offer fewer summer outings, Outings Chair, Kathy Mulbrandon, welcomes new ideas for outings or people interested in leading them. But we do have a variety of events, so please like us on Facebook and watch our web site for updates or additions and other opportunities.

For those who wish to take a more instrumental role in the Sierra Club, our Executive Committee helps direct local activities and policies consistent with state and national Sierra Club policies. We are all volunteers in the Four Lakes Group and it's an opportunity to understand and direct more of what the Four Lakes Group does and what issues we're dealing with here, to be of service to our members, and to make a significant contribution.

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 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 volunteers by providing many free trainings to help you learn more and become more engaged.

As always, I'm available to discuss any questions or concerns. 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!

Rally for a Coal-Free Community!

Saturday, May 12, 2 - 4 pm

Madison area Sierra Club supporters:

We no longer burn coal in Madison, but Madison Gas and Electric (MGE) is still 63% coal-powered. Their coal addiction is harming Wisconsin families, especially neighbors of the Oak Creek and Portage coal plants where MGE gets a significant portion of our electric power.

Join us May 12, the weekend before MGE's annual shareholders' meeting, for a family-friendly rally to stand up for kids, climate, and health! We'll start with a teach-in with residents of Oak Creek sharing personal stories about the health impacts of living next to a coal plant, and then have a rally and a short march to MGE's headquarters to demand that MGE and our community lead the way on clean energy.

- Teach-In: 2:00 - 2:45 pm in the Youth Room, Wil-Mar Neighborhood Center, 953 Jenifer St, Madison
- Rally: 3:00 - 4:00 pm starting at McPike (Central) Park, 202 S Ingersoll St, Madison

For more information, contact Devin Martin at devin.martin@sierraclub.org.

Four Lakes outings, Summer 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

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Jeff Schimpff, schimgj@gmail.com or 608-233-2962

Alex Singer, alexcsinger@gmail.com or 608-395-1417

Tuesday, May 15, 6 pm – Garlic Mustard removal - Hoyt Park, 3902 Regent St

Join us for a pleasant evening in Madison's Hoyt Park. We'll pull invasive plants such as garlic mustard and dame's rocket. We will also reflect on the history of this little gem of a city park and learn about the ongoing restoration activities. Bring thin leather or other protective yet supple work gloves. Long pants recommended. Co-sponsored by the Friends of Hoyt Park. A picnic dinner overlooking a wide swath of Madison's urban forest is also an option. From the east, take Regent Street into the park and park in the main parking lot. RSVP to Don Ferber or Jeff Schimpff.

Tuesday, May 22, 6:30 pm – Ice Age Trail Hike, Valley View Segment

Join us for a 3-mile interpretive hike to learn about prairie and woodland vegetation at the Valley View preserve. We'll hike several trail loops and learn about the natural features and restoration efforts from interpretive signs. Take Mineral Point Road ~2.3 miles west of the Beltline, turn left on Pioneer, and then right on Valley View, which curves left and becomes Mound View Road. Go .5 miles to the kiosk on

the right and park along the side street by the kiosk. RSVP to Kathy Mulbrandon.



Saturday, May 26, 10 - 11:30 am – Bird and Nature Outing, “Love is in the air” – Edna Taylor Conservation Park

Join us for an easy family friendly walk from the Aldo Leopold Nature Center into beautiful Edna Taylor Conservation Park and learn about Aldo Leopold and the management of nature at this Conservancy. Co-sponsored by Madison Friends of Urban Nature, Madison Audubon, and Aldo Leopold Nature Center. 330 Femrite Drive, park in the first lot on right, meet in the ALNC lobby area. RSVP to Alex Singer.

Tuesday, June 19, 6:30 pm – Ice Age Trail Hike, Verona Segment

We'll hike the Ice Age Trail, Verona segment, traversing mostly beautiful restored prairie areas. This is a family-friendly out-and-back 4 – 5-mile long casual hike with some rolling hills. Meet at the Ice Age Trail Junction parking lot, just west of the stoplight at Hwy PD (McKee Rd) and High Point Road. It's about 1 mile east of Hwy M. RSVP to Kathy Mulbrandon.

Saturday, June 23, 10 am – Devil's Lake State Park Rim Hike

Take the scenic rim hike on Devil's Lake east and west bluffs. Learn about the powerful forces of plate tectonics, volcanism, and massive glaciers that shaped Devil's Lake over the last 2 billion years. Hiking varies from easy to moderately challenging with some rocky, steep, and potentially slippery trails and about 600' of elevation change, so wear sturdy footwear. Plan on 3 hours, which includes a short stop midway

for a lunch break. Please bring lunch/snack or money for the concession stand. Meet at 10 am at the South Shore parking lot by the concession stand. Devil's Lake is ~3 miles south of Baraboo off Hwy 113. Take the S. Lake Road entrance off Hwy 113. A state park sticker or day pass is required for cars. Dogs allowed on leash. RSVP to Kathy Mulbrandon.



Cruisin' and Listenin'

Cruisin' for Cuisine is a casual dinner group that meets monthly at locally owned Madison-area restaurants. We order off the menu and everyone pays individually. Non-members are welcome. We're always trying out different places, so please join us. RSVP to the leader at least 2 days prior for the dining time. Bring a chair or blanket for outdoor music events.

July 10, Sala Thai, 36 S Fair Oaks; Olbrich Gardens, 3330 Atwood Ave

Sala Thai (<http://salathai.webstarts.com>) is a family restaurant that serves some of the best Thai in Madison. It's a great way to warm up for some music at Olbrich Gardens. Enjoy the fine folk rock/Americana music of Listening Party, <https://www.listeningpartymusic.com>. Dinner at 5:30, music starts at 7. RSVP to Don Ferber.

July 24 – Green Owl Cafe, 1970 Atwood Ave.; Olbrich Gardens, 3330 Atwood Ave

Green Owl Café (greenowlcafe.com) is noted for their fine vegetarian and vegan food, but you'll enjoy it even if you normally eat meat. They have terrific vegan deserts as well. Afterwards, mellow out with Josh Harty, whose music is

described as Americana/Alt country. <http://www.joshharty.com>. Dinner at 5:30, music starts at 7. RSVP to Don Ferber.

Recycling Away from Home (RAH)

We recycle at home, but how about elsewhere? Sometimes, not so much, as evidenced at many festivals. That's where the Four Lakes Group and our RAH team come to the rescue!

This year, we plan to be at Atwoodfest (July 28 - 29), the Orton Park Festival (August 24 - 26), and the Willy Street Fair (September 15 - 16). Your help with RAH, coordinating our efforts, and tabling, would be much appreciated.

Contact Don Ferber to help reduce waste.

Parks and Trails Unite Festival

Saturday, June 2 – 10 AM to 7 PM

Lake Farm Park & McDaniel Parks

Ride your bike or take our Four Lakes Group sponsored shuttle from the Alliant Center parking lot to this family-oriented day-long celebration of nature, recreation and trails. The celebration and events will be held at both Lake Farm County Park and McDaniel Park in McFarland which are linked by the Lower Yahara River Trail. That day, there will also be a pontoon boat ride between the two parks.

Activities for all ages are being planned, so if you don't want to just sit and enjoy the live music, the festival has you covered. Check out the 4H animals, ask a Master Gardener, or try your hand at archery or mini disc golf. Other activities include paddle boarding, kayaking, bike riding and maintenance, or learn about clean water or how to tie a fly. It's a Wisconsin festival which means a variety of food and beverages, and two stages with great music.

And of course, hikes! It's not only National Trails Day, but the 50th anniversary of the National Trails System! More info is at <http://danecountyparks.com/unite-festival>.

And see page 6 for how to help as a Four Lakes Group volunteer at this event.

Our County Parks: Own Them

Liz Wessel

The updated 2018 - 2023 five-year plan for Dane County parks is done. So now what? First, a big thank you to all the Four Lakes Group members and supporters that commented on and supported the County Parks Plan. With the new plan in place, next is knowing how you can help bring life and energy to the plan.

Several areas of the plan ripe for ongoing Four Lakes Group involvement include:

1) Climate change

Climate change will impact our local parks, but it's also an opportunity for our park lands to play an important role in mitigating climate impacts and lowering our local contribution to climate change. As Sierrans, we can help ensure that the City and County climate change and sustainability councils and committees take into account the importance of our park lands and the positive role that they can play to store carbon, as well as prepare for the ecological impacts of climate change in this region.

2) Transportation - access, equity and climate change

The plan recognizes the importance of equity and inclusion concerns. Transportation is one issue that intersects with climate change. The Four Lakes Group voiced concern and interest in changes to make the parks more accessible not just for those with disabilities, but for all individuals who are unable to or choose not to drive. A quick analysis during the creation of the plan revealed that very few County Parks can easily be reached by bus. To make a difference, we need to work with Madison Metro, transportation advocates and others to make better parks access a priority.

I am excited the Four Lakes Group has stepped up and is sponsoring shuttle buses to the upcoming **June 2 Parks and Trails Unite Festival** that celebrates the parks and the new Lower Yahara River Trail, a mile-long boardwalk across Lake Waubesa connecting Lake Farm County Park and McDaniels Park in McFarland. (See page 5.) In addition to promoting access to the Festival by bike, the

shuttle service will provide car-free access to the Festival. One bus will be wheelchair friendly bus for those differently abled. On-site parking is limited, so we invite all who prefer to leave their car at home or at the Alliant Energy Center to jump on the free shuttle!

3) Equity and Inclusion - making sure our parks meet the outdoor needs of all of our residents

The Four Lakes Group strongly supported adding a goal to ensure the parks system serves all residents and visitors. To follow through on this, work is needed to listen to and partner with a variety of populations within our community that may not be using the parks and conservation lands available, but might like to. The Four Lakes Group can be a part of the process so that five years from now, park leadership will include new voices and ideas and that all residents have a place they can recreate within the parks system.

Please get in touch with Liz Wessel, 608.238.9934 or lizard59sc@yahoo.com if you would like to get more involved with our local parks and our communities.

Parks & Trails Unite Festival - Volunteers needed!

Show your dedication to supporting the Four Lakes Group by volunteering to staff our bus shuttle station in the Alliant Energy Center parking lot or to staff our Sierra Club table at Lake Farm County Park. Sign up is at <https://sierra.secure.force.com/events/details?formcampaignid=7010Z000002ArLvQAK> to help out. (The link is on the Four Lakes web site too.) Let us know your preferred times and we'll contact you about a shift.

This is a great way to show your support for the outdoors and environment and support our work to make transit accessible for all. Thank you for helping make this a great Festival and being a part of the Sierra Club!

Questions? Contact Liz Wessel, 608.238.9934 or lizard59sc@yahoo.com.

A Plug for Tar Sands Pipelines

No, not that kind of plug. The Sierra Club's efforts are aimed at plugging up the expansion of dangerous tar sands pipelines in Wisconsin.

The latest chapter in this ongoing saga is Enbridge's attempt to replace tar sands pipeline 3 in Minnesota with a new, higher-capacity one – and in a different corridor, leaving the old one in place. While the strong opposition of the tribes and environmentalists was not enough for a Minnesota judge to convince a judge to say no, she did state that Enbridge should rebuild in the same corridor (which means they would have to take up the old pipeline), and that they need environmental impact liability insurance (EIL).

If you've followed the tar sands pipeline battle in Dane County, the EIL insurance requirement may sound familiar. That's because the Dane County Zoning and Land Regulation (ZLR) Committee and the County Board voted to require it of Enbridge before they put in a new pump station in Dane County. While our business-friendly state legislature was able to restrict the County from enforcing that requirement, it can still be enforced by neighboring landowners. Enbridge fought back, and while they won the initial court decision, a more promising appeal is still pending.

Enbridge is frustrated Minnesota is placing added burdens and costs on them. They'd rather let the old pipeline rot in the ground and not be forced to buy insurance to protect the public and landowners. A Minnesota Public Utility Commission permitting decision on the pipeline is expected in June.

If Enbridge gets its permit and expands line 3, their next step will be to build line 66 along the current Wisconsin line 61 corridor. Enbridge has denied this, despite the fact that the expanded line 3 tar sands oil will have to go somewhere, that our state legislature gave them eminent domain to take land for the pipeline, and that Enbridge has contacted landowners and been surveying properties.

Our efforts to halt these pipelines continue as part of the WiSE (Wisconsin Safe Energy) Alliance in partnership with the tribes and the *80' is Enough* organization to build opposition in counties along the corridor and organize landowners to protect their land and rights.

Tar sands pipelines put residents along operational pipelines at risk. They put lands and rivers in peril from toxic contamination. They enable valuable boreal forests in Canada that act as carbon sinks to be decimated. They often violate sacred lands and Native American treaty rights. And they put all living beings on the planet at risk from climate change.

Tar sands pipelines last for 40 – 50 years or longer, and carry toxic, climate changing sludge. Join us to help plug tar sands pipelines protect landowners, and keep Wisconsin safe.

Four Lakes Group Sierra Club Contacts

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

Like us on Facebook

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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. We mail a hard copy if we don't have your email 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 if we don't have it to save paper and the cost of mailing. Plus we'll also send you our Enews to keep you better informed.

Free Bus to the Midwest Renewable Energy Association Energy Fair

We're serious about climate change and keeping our (and your) carbon footprint low, so once again, the Four Lakes Group of the Sierra Club is sponsoring a bus to the Midwest Renewable Energy Association's Energy Fair on **Saturday, June 16**. We know many of you like to attend workshops and demos, browse exhibits, and learn about clean energy and other sustainability measures, but hate that you or a few people burn 200 + miles of gas just to drive up and back.

Instead, why not be transported there in a luxury motor coach (complete with WiFi) with about 50 of your earth-conscious peers? Relax, make new friends, surf the web, and enjoy a few snacks and refreshments on us. The bus leaves Willy St Coop West at 7 am, makes several stops on the way through Madison (and Portage if requested), and gets to the Fair at about 9:45 am. The return trip departs at 7:15 pm, and reverses the stops, arriving back at Willy West by 10 pm.

The annual Energy Fair runs from June 15 – 17, so if you can't go on the 16th, consider carpooling on another day. Either way, it's a jam packed three days of fun, learning and making connections. More info about the Energy Fair and their many activities is at <https://www.theenergyfair.org>.

For more details and to reserve your seat on the bus, go to <http://signup.com/go/sFSpKkU> and sign up. Come get energized at the Fair!