

Four Lakes Group Sierra Club newsletter, Spring 2019

Support Your Wisconsin State Parks on May 11th!

Liz Wessel

A new state budget is in the works which means there is an opportunity to improve our state parks now!

- ✓ In 2015, Wisconsin state parks were stripped of funding from general purpose revenue, which decreased accessibility and raised entrance fees
- ✓ A strong park system can provide widespread public health and economic benefits and showcases our beautiful lakes, rivers, forests and prairies which offer exceptional outdoor experiences

Come celebrate **Wisconsin Loves Parks Day on May 11th, 2019**, at one of your favorite Wisconsin state parks. And let your voice be heard! State park funding needs to be restored so the parks can be properly maintained, and are clean, safe and accessible.

Join in the fun at Wisconsin Loves Parks Day!

On May 11th, hosted events will be held at six state parks and feature a wide variety of family-friendly outdoors activities. From trail cleanups to hikes to picnics, there will be something for every outdoorsy Wisconsinite to enjoy! Please sign up via the event links at https://www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin so we know how many people to plan for and can send any additional activity-specific information!

Hosted events will be held at the following state parks:

- Governor Dodge
- Havenwoods State Forest
- High Cliff
- Kohler-Andrae
- Wyalusing
- Mauthe Lake

Governor Dodge State Park: The Four Lakes group will be hosting a family friendly event at Governor Dodge State Park starting at 10 AM. The event will be hosted at the Cox Hollow Beach - West Shelter. Timeline for events is as follows:

- 10 AM Welcome at Shelter
- 10:15 AM Family Friendly Treasure Hunt
- 10:15 AM Hike departs
- 10:15 AM Service project group heads to Gateway Prairie
- 12:30 PM bring your own picnic at the Cox Hollow Beach West Shelter
- 1:30 PM Service project group heads to Gateway Prairie
- 3:00 PM Event officially ends

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Chair's Column

Liz Wessel

First, I would like to thank Dave Blouin for serving as Chair of the Four Lakes Group. And to all the Four Lakes Group Executive Committee members who help behind the scenes. Thank you! Volunteers make it happen both out in the community but also in the day to day operations of the Sierra Club. Our Executive Committee generally meets monthly to discuss environmental events and the Club's involvement in our nine county region. One regular issue on the agenda of the Executive Committee is climate change, including clean energy resolutions and projects.

The Four Lakes Group and its members are in the thick of the local engagement and action on the climate crisis. Individual members have helped to put forward and support the passage of sustainability and clean energy resolutions in their communities – many in response to the Trump Administration's withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement.

The Sierra Club's **Ready for 100** campaign is underway to pass 100% Clean Energy Resolutions and invest in local clean energy and efficiency solutions. This national movement embraces a vision of healthier communities powered with 100% renewable energy. This campaign gets mayors, CEOs, religious leaders, principals, civic and community leaders, parents and students to commit to solutions that help achieve 100% clean and just energy across the United States by 2050.

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Hike: Join fellow hikers on a 4.5-mile hike of approximately 2 hours on Lost Canyon and Stephens Falls Trails. The trail is rated moderate with several steep grades. You will journey through mostly wooded areas and into scenic Lost Canyon fed by Stephen's Falls, a highlight of the park, you can view from below and above. Due to potential wet conditions, wear sturdy footwear that you don't mind getting wet or dirty. Also, bring along drinking water. Refreshments will be available after the hike.

Service project: This will involve cutting smaller woody invasive plants at Gateway prairie. Tools will be provided, but bring work gloves and fluids to drink.

For more information about the Governor Dodge event, contact Liz Wessel at lizard59sc@yahoo.com or 608.238-9934. For the Wisconsin Loves Parks campaign or to volunteer at any of the events, contact Kathryn Hogan, kathryn.hogan@sierraclub.org or 608.256.0565.

Learn more about the parks at www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/wisconsins-state-parks.

Four Lakes Group Sierra Club Contacts

http://www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/four-lakes https://www.facebook.com/4lakesSierraClub/

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*Executive Committee members

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Check out the cities where active campaigns exist at https://www.sierraclub.org/ready-for-100. In our area, Madison, Middleton, Monona and Fitchburg have passed resolutions. We have also been engaged in developing a Climate Action Plan for Dane County which will lay out steps to achieve emission reductions and mitigation goals. We need more communities in the Four Lakes Group region to get on board! Let's encourage our local communities to go down the path from resolution to planning to implementation, and take real steps towards energy efficiency, conservation, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and implementing clean energy alternatives. These next few years are critical!

The Sierra Club is dedicated to reducing carbon emissions and moving to 100% renewable energy as quickly as possible. This requires changes in our energy use, from electricity to heating to transportation and more. We need to rapidly increase energy efficiency across the board and move to renewable energy. The Club advocates for both distributed energy generation (mainly rooftop solar, on site turbines and geothermal etc.) as well as larger renewable energy projects including solar and wind in our region. All of these will be necessary to meet our very ambitious, but critical, climate goals.

One of our current challenges is regarding the many large-scale renewables proposals, and to consider potential negative impacts. In the Four Lakes Group region, we are excited about the proposed clean energy wind and solar projects. Using guidance from national, and the expertise of staff and volunteers, we hope to support as many projects as possible as we simultaneously encourage efficiency and distributed energy in our communities.

Are you Ready for 100? If you would like to start a resolution in your community, share ideas, or get involved in expanding energy efficiency and clean energy projects and programs, contact Don Ferber at d_ferber@sbcglobal.net. We need all hands-on deck to meet the goals our local communities are showing leadership on, and we all need for a livable planet.

Along these lines, don't forget the MREA Energy Fair, June 21 - 23 in Custer, WI. Don Ferber will present a Sunday workshop on Community Energy Activism, and our Chapter a fabulous art story – The Story of Tar Sands. Once again, the Four Lakes Group is sponsoring a bus from Madison (details on page 7). Enjoy the ride and conversation with fellow enthusiasts on your way to and from the Fair!

With gratitude for what you do.

Clean Energy, Wherefore Art Thou?

Climate change is a huge problem, but are we responding quickly enough? The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change clearly spelled out the dire straits we are in and how rapidly we need to respond. The federal government's own Climate Impact Assessment report likewise details the threats in our country. Let's look at what is occurring closer to home.

Utilities – Where they're not at

Where are Wisconsin's utilities? Still heavily invested in coal and other fossil fuels. They're making progress on renewable energy, but when we really need 100% clean electricity ASAP, is 30% by 2030 enough? If your plane leaves at 10 am, will getting to the airport at 11 work? Will Mother Nature hold off on climate change because we lack the will to move to clean energy fast enough? As Washington state is realizing, we have to change the utility business model and reward utilities for taking the right actions on efficiency on distributed energy, rather than paying them more and more to continue with their business-as-usual plan.

Local Government - Where it's at

The Dane County Climate Action Council will shortly release a report on proposals to take effective action at the County level. Dane County has also put in significant solar arrays, with plans for even more major installations, and is taking other steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Dane County sees this as a model that other counties can emulate.

Throughout Wisconsin, a number of local governments have passed 100% renewable energy resolutions, including Madison, Middleton, and Monona. But people in other communities are expressing similar interests, including Lodi, Baraboo, and Verona. With the lack of progress at the federal and state level, local action is the way to go. What about your community? Please contact us if there is interest in your community. (Contact Don Ferber, d_ferber@sbcglobal.net, who has a local energy workshop at the MREA Energy Fair on June 23.)

Beyond Coal Activism - Where you Come in

Both the Columbia and Elm Road Generating Stations had water quality permits up for renewal recently. Activists from the Sierra Club testified that the utilities should not be given a pass on polluting our waters or exceeding permitted levels of mercury (as was asked

for at Elm Road on Lake Michigan). Coal ash dumps continue to pose hazards to groundwater and to Lake Michigan and the Wisconsin River. Rather than continuing to invest funds to mitigate damage from coal, perhaps it's time to turn to renewable energy.

We're also continuing to organize in our communities to push back on MGE and We Energies for their reliance on coal. To learn more about how you can get involved with our MGE campaign, contact Cassie Steiner at cassandra.steiner@sierraclub.org for more information.

MGE 100% Clean Energy Shareholder Resolution

Guess what won't be presented at the annual MGE shareholder meeting on May 14? A resolution the MGE Shareholders for Clean Energy had submitted asking MGE to prepare a report on how they could get to 100% renewable energy by 2050. Rather than giving their shareholders a voice, MGE asked the Securities and Exchange Commission to exclude the resolution from the annual meeting, and the Trump-dominated SEC decided that asking for such a report was micromanaging the company! This ruling is despite the fact that MGE has no plan to get off coal and how to get to 100% renewables. The requested report would have allowed MGE to propose a number of solutions, or potentially show if 100% renewable energy by 2050 is not feasible, but instead they chose to quash it.

Renewables are Here and Now

MGE's reticence to do a renewable energy study and plan for the future is all the more surprising since recent studies are now showing that, in many cases and areas, installing new wind and solar is *cheaper* than operating an existing coal power plant. Unfortunately, the burden of paying for MGE's over-investment in coal falls to ratepayers, not shareholders.

Although they are unwilling to do the requested study, MGE is building a new 66-megawatt wind farm in Iowa and is purchasing 100 MW of solar – 50 MW at the Badger Hollow solar farm in Iowa County, and 50 MW at the Two Creeks solar farm in Sheboygan County. The Public Service Commission altogether approved 450 MW of new solar, which is four times the total of what our state currently has. While significant steps, much more is still needed, including shutting down coal plants. We're asking MGE and Alliant Energy to shut down the Columbia facility in Portage by 2030.

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Clean Energy continued from page 3

Office of Sustainability and Clean Energy

Governor Tony Evers' budget includes a request for an Office of Sustainability and Clean Energy. Rather than potentially provide a \$4 billion subsidy to a foreign corporation with questionable practices and results, investing just 0.1% of that amount to fund clean energy research could provide a major economic stimulus for Wisconsin. Going to 100% renewable energy could more than double the number of clean energy jobs to over 160,000, bring in an added \$570 million in tax revenue annually, and not send over \$14 billion out of the state every year for fossil fuels. Contact your state legislators and tell them this makes too much sense not to do. (See Budget, page 6.)

Youth Climate Movement and Strike

The people who have most at stake from climate change are the youth. On March 15, about 2,000 youth from around the state participated in a climate strike, marching from East High School in Madison to the State Capitol, where they were joined by such dignitaries as U.S. Rep Mark Pocan and state Rep. Chris Taylor. This was followed by the youth appearing at the Madison City Council meeting on March 19, and urging the Council to pass a resolution supporting a national Green New Deal.

This is just the beginning for these impassioned youth, who are planning another climate strike and other actions to demonstrate their concerns, and who have been pushing for solar on schools in the Madison Metropolitan School District.

We'll be continuing to support them, and we hope you will encourage and support youth in your area as well. How can we not – when it's their future.

Our Future

There's no doubt we have to move farther, faster. Please consider getting involved in your community. Let your utility and your municipality know you want them off coal and to take strong clean energy measures, including increase your energy efficiency, helping get solar on your house, business, church, or school, or investing in other clean energy measures. Get involved with our current efforts, or contact us to find out how we can help you.

Stop Wasting Away!

Waste not, want not. No wonder we want so much – we waste so much! Way too much!

It's no wonder people worry about or feel so strongly about waste. We seem to be an over-consumptive, throw-away society. A minor problem though there is no away. However, it is a problem we can do something about. Likely you recycle (and perhaps compost) at home, and elsewhere as well. But reducing waste at home isn't enough, we need collective action, and to act everywhere.

Not only is there no away, there is no Planet B. One thrown away cup or bottle won't destroy the planet, but add them all up – and it's not so pretty. If you feel frustrated with our disposable society, consider joining our RAH – Recycling Away from Home – team. We work with several east side Madison neighborhood music festivals to reduce waste and make sure recyclables go to the recycling center, not to the landfill. It's a fun and easy way to make a difference!

Joining our RAH team is an opportunity to connect with and educate festival goers, not only about waste, but about many other environmental concerns and issues. But there are also opportunities to work with festivals and vendors to choose materials that are more environmentally friendly or perhaps work with Madison or other cities to take additional policy steps.

Can you help our RAH team? In addition to volunteers at the Festivals, we need people to help coordinate volunteers and be day captains, and to take a stake in making sure things run smoothly. If you're troubled by waste and dedicated to reducing it, this is an opportunity where you choose your own involvement and time frame, but you can also take on a long-standing problem and make a difference. Plus, at the festivals, you get free refreshments and pizza!

We have opportunities to be at four east side Madison festivals this year – Waterfront Fest, June 8-9; AtwoodFest, July 27-28; Orton Park, August 22-25; and the Willy St Fair, September 14-15.

Contact Don Ferber at d_ferber@sbcglobal.net to find out more. Don't miss out and let us waste away!

Four Lakes outings – Spring/Summer 2019

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, and a snack or food, and sunscreen, a hat, and insect repellant if needed. If carpooling, please be a little early. Our outings are generally free and kid and family friendly, but please contact the leader to RSVP, if you have questions, weather concerns, 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 or 608-217-2959 Kathy Mulbrandon, kmulbrandon@gmail.com or 608-215-9706

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

(Outings led by Master Naturalist Alex Singer are in conjunction with Madison FUN Friends of Urban Nature and other partners.

https://www.cityofmadison.com/parks/events/bird-nature.cfm.)

Saturday, May 11, 10 am – Governor Dodge State Park – Wisconsin Loves Parks

The Four Lakes group is hosting a family friendly event at Governor Dodge State Park at the Cox Hollow Beach - West Shelter. Timeline is as follows:

- 10 AM Welcome at Shelter
- 10:15 AM Family Friendly Treasure Hunt
- 10:15 AM Hike departs
- 10:15 AM Service project group heads to Gateway Prairie
- 12:30 PM bring your own picnic at the Cox Hollow Beach West Shelter
- 1:30 PM Service project group heads to Gateway Prairie
- 3:00 PM Event officially ends

Lost Canyon Trail Hike - 10:15 AM

Join fellow hikers on a 4.5-mile hike on Lost Canyon and Stephens Falls Trails. The trail is rated moderate as it has several steep grades. The trail is mostly wooded areas and will journey into scenic Lost Canyon which is fed by Stephen's Falls. You'll have views of Stephens Falls, a highlight of the park, from above and below. The hike should take approximately 2 hours. Due to potential for wet conditions, wear sturdy footwear that you don't mind getting wet or dirty. Also, bring along drinking water. There will be refreshments after the hike.



Governor Dodge State Park is about an hour west of Madison off Hwy 23 north of Dodgeville. Meet at Cox Hollow Lake Shelter West (by the sandy beach). RSVP to Kathy Mulbrandon.

Restoration outing – 10:15 AM, 1:30 PM

Interested in an activity to benefit the park? Join us to remove invasive plants from the prairie at Governor Dodge. Tools provided, but bring work gloves.

Sunday, May 11, 1:30 pm Bird and Nature Outing – Owen Conservation Park

"Now Is the Month of Maying." Yes, even educated fleas do it -- but what's the impetus? A discussion of some of the visible, auditory, and olfactory signs of love among plants and animals led by Master Naturalist Alex Singer. Owen Conservation Park is at 6021 Old Sauk Rd, Madison. RSVP to Alex Singer.

Cruisin' and Listenin'

Cruisin' for Cuisine is a casual dinner group. In summer, we meet at a locally owned Madison area restaurant, and enjoy some music. We order off the menu and everyone gets their own check. Nonmembers are welcome to join us. Please join us.

Tuesday, July 9, Sala Thai, 36 S Fair Oaks, Olbrich Gardens, 3330 Atwood Ave

Sala Thai is a lesser known family restaurant that serves some of the best Thai food in Madison. http://salathai.webstarts.com. (Cash only.) It's a great way to prepare for some evening music at Olbrich Gardens out on the lawn. We'll enjoy the down-home bluegrass music of Down From the Hills. Dinner at 5:30 pm, music starts at 7. Bring a chair or blanket for the music. RSVP to Don Ferber.

Wisconsin State Budget

The State Budget provides a critical point of input for people to make their wishes known about how our tax dollars will be spent. With a new governor who is more environmentally friendly, this year we see a lot more in the budget to like and support.

The John Muir Chapter had a strong volunteer presence at the Joint Finance Committee's four budget hearings. If you were one of those people who turned out, thank you. And while the hearings are over, there will still be debates over what to fund and how much, and you can still make your views known to your state legislators and other elected officials, whether an in person visit or letters to the editor.

What were some key items we were asking for?

- ✓ Renewal of the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund for another 10 years. This has been instrumental in protecting many valuable lands.
- ✓ Better DNR staffing to oversee water quality permits for CAFOs and to charge CAFOs higher fees to cover the costs of the permit. CAFOs have been a major source of highly polluted water in many areas of the state.
- ✓ Better funding and support for replacing lead water pipes in municipal systems. This has been the source of major health problems, especially in children that has lifetime affects.
- ✓ Funding for a state Office of Sustainability and Clean Energy to help fund research and direct resources to clean energy development and adoption. With the threat of climate change, we badly need to adopt more clean energy now. In addition, we spend over \$14 billion for out-of-state fossil fuels we could keep in Wisconsin.
- ✓ Our state parks deserve proper funding. After what was taken away in the previous administration, our parks are in bad shape and poorly maintained and staffed. Wisconsin is known for its great natural resources that our tourism industry depends on.
- ✓ Better funding for transit systems and for our failing transportation infrastructure. This is both an equity and a climate change issue.

We can do better to protect our environment and our future, and with your support, we will.

Four Lakes Group Regional Meetings: Your Input is Needed

Would you like to get together with other Sierrans and learn about or discuss environmental issues relevant to your area, and become more connected with the Sierra Club and the Four Lakes Group? Great! We'd love to connect with you too!

The Four Lakes Group would like to hold an educational/social meeting each quarter, at different locations around our region. To refresh your memory, the Four Lakes Group covers Columbia, Dane, Dodge, Green, Iowa, Jefferson, LaFayette, Rock, and Sauk Counties. Each year, we plan to hold one meeting in Madison, and the other three in a different Four Lakes Group county. We also plan to focus on issues of relevance to each area to respond to your interests.

We're looking for Sierrans in the surrounding counties who can assist with organizing the meetings, and can help with venues and identifying relevant issues and speakers. If you have ideas or suggestions and would be willing to lend a hand, please contact Mary Reames at mlreames@sbcglobal.net. Thanks!

Communications Volunteers Needed

Have a way with words, grasp of graphics, languish in layouts, or are sophisticated with social media? Come join our team. Communications, education and outreach are key facets of the work we do, and where you can make a great contribution. Much of this can be done on your own time or at home, and you can choose to be involved in one-time or ongoing projects. Here are some opportunities. (Also, see page 8.)

Writer: Write newsletter articles or blog posts, create and develop flyers, or compose compelling invites.

Graphics: Develop graphics for newsletters, flyers or other media, design displays, and other art work.

Layouts: Layout newsletters, flyers or other informational literature and displays.

Social media: Do postings on our Facebook account, or develop an added presence for us on other media.

Take the Bus to the MREA Energy Fair

It's time to "Arrive Together" – at the best energy fair in the country. You can do just that by taking our Four Lakes sponsored FREE bus to the Energy Fair on Saturday, June 22. In one day, you can get whisked up and back in a luxury motor coach while enjoying the countryside or conversing with fellow passengers – and keeping your carbon footprint low.

As the 30th anniversary of the Midwest Renewable Energy Association's Energy Fair, it will be an even more special event – with much to celebrate. As solar is becoming a mature industry with rapid solar growth in Wisconsin, wind farm projects gaining some traction, and electric vehicles becoming more mainstream, learn how the energy future we once dreamed of is rapidly becoming a reality.

Featuring a plethora of workshops and exhibits, as well as a great clean transportation show, this is as much a sustainability fair as an energy fair, with a wide variety of information about low impact living. This year's fair features Naomi Oreskes of "Merchants of Doubt" fame, and Curt Meine, one of Wisconsin's noted environmental historiographer, who wrote Aldo Leopold's biography. And when you need a break from all the learning, there's plenty of great food, beer and music.

Our bus leaves from Middleton and makes several stops in Madison to make getting on (and off) convenient. Information on the bus schedule and stops and link to sign up is at https://www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/four-lakes/outings. We'll also have a Sierra Club booth at the Energy Fair if you wish to volunteer and get into the Fair for free. Contact Don Ferber at d_ferber@sbcglobal.net for more information about the bus or volunteering.





Tar Sands Tour

Tar sands pipelines can wreak havoc on our waterways and our communities. In some cases, they already have. The 2010 Kalamazoo tar sands spill taught us that tar sands oil can't be cleaned up like traditional oil (which is already toxic enough). The St. Croix, the Namekagon, the Wisconsin, and the Rock Rivers, and others crossed by pipelines are at all at risk from being contaminated in ways that can't be cleaned up and made safe for decades. Tar sands oil is so carbon-intensive that former NASA scientist James Hansen said development of tar sands oil would mean "game-over for the climate". Recent approval processes for the Dakota Access Pipeline and the Line 3 Pipeline in Minnesota have shown how pipelines jeopardize treaty-protected resources and sacred sites, and discriminate against tribal governments in permitting and subsequent impacts.

We're bringing these potential impacts together through visual storytelling. Ten artists from across Wisconsin have come together to tell the story of tar sands in our state. The art exhibit is comprised of ten, 2 ft. x 4 ft. mixed media panels from these visual artists. Each artist researched and reflected on one aspect of the often-unrecognized tar sands oil pipeline Line 61 which pumps over 1.2 million barrels of tar sands oil through the state each day. The result is a diverse, powerful, and nuanced look at the oil pipeline story which affects each and every Wisconsinite.

There will be a number of showings of this terrific art tour in this area, including May 1 in Baraboo, May 2 in Madison, and May 3 in Whitewater. If you miss these, there may be more opportunities in the future to see it. More information can be found at https://www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/blog/2019/04/ta r-sands-storytelling-tour, or on our Four Lakes Facebook page.



Four Lakes Group 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.netif 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.

Monthly Party Volunteer Nights

There is A LOT happening in the next few months including actions calling on MGE to go coal-free, Wisconsin Loves Parks events, fighting for clean water, advocating for a Green New Deal ad solar on schools, and more! Join us at one of our Volunteer Nights to help make all these events a success. We have PLENTY to do, so no matter what you like to do, we need your help!

Like to make phone calls? We can give you a list to call. Prefer to text or email? We've got needs for that also. LOVE graphic design or social media? We need help with those. Want to write thank you's? Do you enjoy printing posters? Do you want to be part of a campaign? Whatever you like to do, we could use your help!

If you've been thinking about getting more involved, this would be a great place to learn about a number of different campaigns and see what you'd like to do. If you just have 2 hours to give to make a difference and can't do more than that, then this is a great place for you too!

No party is complete without pizza and vegan snacks, so we'll have those too! Our next event is on May 8 at our Chapter office at 754 Williamson at 6:30 pm. You can also follow us on our Four Lakes Sierra Club Facebook page to stay up to date on future events.