

The Newsletter of the Four Lakes Group Sierra Club, Winter 2017

Climate Leadership Begins Here at Home

Devin Martin, Organizing Representative, WI Beyond Coal Campaign Don Ferber, Volunteer, WI Beyond Coal Campaign

As we usher in 2017, it's worth remembering that the Sierra Club will be entering its 124th year. In that time, we've helped shape and enact a positive and powerful environmental agenda for all of America. Today is no different, despite the challenges we'll face under an incoming administration that is promising to undo much of the environmental progress we've made at the federal level. We also can't count on our current Wisconsin state government to lead. But we shouldn't lose hope. We will continue the work of building a brighter future for ourselves and our families by focusing on the communities where we live and work. If Washington or Wisconsin won't lead on the environment, we will.

The citizens of Madison and surrounding areas demonstrated what environmental leadership looks like when a decade ago, students, residents, health experts, and community leaders all came together to call for an end to burning dirty, climate-disrupting coal in Madison at the Charter and Blount St power plants. These victories were among the first in what would soon become the Sierra Club's largest and most successful coordinated effort in its history: the Beyond Coal campaign. While we've made major progress for people living and breathing in the Madison area, we still have lots of work ahead if we are to stop the worst effects of climate change.

Fortunately for Four Lakes Group members, we have local city and county governments who are ready to heed the call of climate leadership. Many

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city leaders here share our environmental concerns. Middleton overwhelmingly passed two referendums on climate change in November. Madison is currently considering a resolution that would create detailed plans and goals committing us to 100% renewable energy for electricity, and 100% net-carbon free operations for all sectors. With your active support, we will pass these important goals by early 2017.

Goals are laudable, but the Sierra Club won't rest until we act on them. One of the easiest ways to get to 100% clean energy is to first move beyond the dirtiest

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Chair's Column

Dave Blouin

As I write this, southern Wisconsin is getting its third big blast of snowy weather in December. Count me as thrilled to see the snow as it makes possible the fantastic opportunities to get outdoors in winter. I know some are not as happy about winter, but this season is one of the reasons I love our state. For that matter, Wisconsin is great because we get the full effects from all four seasons! But climate change could make a real winter – as this one is shaping up to be - a rarity. That's a terrible scenario to imagine (think more bugs and stresses to plants and animals) and more than enough reason to continue our work to reduce fossil fuel use.

There are a couple of events coming up to highlight. First, the Four Lakes Group is co-sponsor of a great fundraiser for opposition to Enbridge pipelines across the state. Madison Action for Mining Alternatives and 350 Madison are planning a fun night out on Saturday, February 4 at the Wil-Mar Center in Madison with music, games, a silent auction, and more – all to benefit legal defense and other efforts to stop the pipeline expansion. Please contact Thistle at thistle@riseup.net if you want more info or have an auction item.

The other event is a Four Lakes Group program on Wednesday, March 15 at the Goodman Center in Madison featuring updates on issues we're working on. It features a presentation from Clayton Daughenbaugh, Midwest Regional Organizer for the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance and Sierra Club volunteer Chair of our national Wildlands and Wilderness Team. Clayton will update us on efforts to subject Utah's public lands to increasing amounts of destructive extraction and exploitation. Watch vour email or our web site for more details on both events in early 2017.

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Winter 2017 outings

For all outings, 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. 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

Lacinda Athen, lacinda.athen@gmail.com or 608-274-7870 Don Ferber, d_ferber@sbcglobal.net or 608-217-2959 Kathy Mulbrandon, kmulbrandon@gmail.com or 608-215-9706 David Smith, smithdc75@yahoo.com or 608-233-1210

Wednesday, January 11, 6 pm – Evening Snowshoe/Hike, Prairie Moraine County Park

Enjoy a full moon winter evening snowshoe/hike and learn about glacial geology 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 on a (hopefully!) full moon night. Families welcome! Take Hwy 18/151 southwest of Madison to exit 79 (Cty PB). Turn left on PB and go .7 miles south to the Prairie Moraine parking lot on the left. Meet by the IAT kiosk. Bring a flashlight or headlamp. Contact Kathy Mulbrandon for more info.

Thursday, February 9, 6 pm – Evening Snowshoe/hike, Ice Age Trail Junction

Enjoy a full moon winter evening snowshoe/hike starting at the Ice Age Trail Junction on Hwy PD and going through Badger Prairie Park southeast of Verona. This will be an out and back hike about 3 miles traversing through prairies. Families welcome! Take Hwy PD (McKee Rd) west of Verona Rd. The parking lot is on the south side of Hwy PD, just west of the intersection with High Point Rd. Bring a flashlight or headlamp. Contact Kathy Mulbrandon for more info.

Saturday, April 1, 10 am - Spring Hike, New Glarus Woods State Park

Join David as he leads his annual 4–5 mile hike through prairies and forests at New Glarus Woods State Park. The hike is moderate with rolling hills and ravines and a great opportunity to observe and learn about spring ephemerals and succession as they start to bloom and trees bud out. To carpool meet David at 9:05am at the Verona Park & Ride, Hwy PB and Verona Rd. Otherwise, meet at New Glarus Woods State Park parking lot off State Hwy 69, 2 miles south of New Glarus. Vehicles need a State Park pass, which can be purchased at the Park. Contact David Smith for more info.

Monday, April 10, 6:30 pm - Ice Age Trail Evening Hike, Montrose Segment

Meet at Ice Age Trail/Badger State Trail in Basco (the trails combine here) off Hwy 69. We'll hike the trail towards Purcell Rd, then turn around and head back to Basco. This is an easy hike of about 6 miles total on level packed limestone trail. Take Hwy 69 south of Paoli for about 1.2 miles. Turn east on Henry Rd, and go about a 1/2 mile into Basco. Park on the street by the trail intersection. Contact Kathy Mulbrandon for more info.

Streambank Restoration outings with Dane County Parks and Trout Unlimited

Dates and locations will be set in January for the spring and posted on the Four Lakes web site. Contact Don Ferber for more info.

Cruisin' for Cuisine

Cruisin' is a casual dinner that meets monthly at locally owned Madison area restaurants. We order off the menu, everyone gets their own check, and non-members are welcome to join us. This Spring's selection includes some new Madison dining spots, so we hope you will join us! RSVP to Lacinda at 608-274-7870 or lacinda.athen@gmail.com at least 2 days prior to dinner for the meeting time.

Thursday, February 23 – Naples 15 – 15 N Butler Street

Curious to try Trip Advisor's #1 Madison restaurant? Me too! Authentic Italian cuisine and wood fired pizzas near downtown, close to bus stops and parking. Join us for a warm, cozy winter meal with friends new and old.

Tuesday, March 21 – Dobhan – 2110 Atwood Ave

This well regarded east side restaurant is known for their Nepali cuisine and the interesting flavors and dishes from that region. It's a long trip to Nepal, so why not just come to Dobhan to try the food here? The décor is very welcoming too.

Thursday, April 20 – Buraka

First a food cart (which they still have), then a restaurant on State St, they now have a new home on Willy St. just a few blocks from our Sierra Club office. But they still serve the same delicious Ethiopian food you're sure to enjoy.

Climate Leadership, continued from page 1 and most carbon-intensive of all fossil fuels: coal. Madison Gas and Electric didn't get rid of coal when they stopped using it at the Blount St plant; they are burning it in Portage and Milwaukee. Coal still makes up over 65% of their total electricity generation. We can't have a just climate for ourselves and future generations while we are dependent on coal and other fossil fuels.

Leadership starts at home, and it starts with you. By raising our voices together again, we can get MG&E to commit to eliminating coal as a source of our power. Replacing coal with clean, affordable renewable energy will improve public health, create high-paying jobs in Wisconsin, and set an example we can all be proud of. The technology to do it is here, but we still need an overwhelming demonstration of public will.

You can start by signing the Sierra Club petition to MG&E at http://bit.ly/2gUN2VE. You can also contact me at devin.martin@sierraclub.org or 608-338-0746 to learn more about how you can help get MG&E, Madison, and other communities off coal. We need a strong and united voice, one that includes our family and friends, our neighbors, and our co-workers, that will reach the ears of not only elected officials, but utility executives. With your help, we will show true climate leadership, creating a clean energy future that works for everyone.

Join our Newsletter Team

Are you interested in helping the Four Lakes Group communicate our messages and stories? Then we have a spot for you on our newsletter team. We need a variety of talents including writing, editing, graphics, and layout work. You can use skills you have or wish develop further, or perhaps you have a particular issue you want to delve into and help us report on in the newsletter.

We send out our newsletter three times a year – early in January, May and September – to nearly 4000 members in south central Wisconsin. We print hardcopies to those who get it via mail, and to have extras to hand out at events, and post the digital version online

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Look for columns on important conservation issues we're working on including opposition to tar sands pipelines and our Beyond Coal campaign. Contact Conservation Chair, Don Ferber, if you want more information, or to volunteer. Our Outings Chair, Kathy Mulbrandon has put together a great list of social and work outings for this winter. Look for those listings on page XX. We're always looking for new ideas for great outings and volunteer leaders as well.

Beverly Speer and I were reelected to the Four Lakes Group Executive Committee for 2-year terms ending on Jan. 1, 2019. Congrats and thanks to Beverly for continuing to serve the Four Lakes Group in this capacity!

Note that we are looking for strong and effective leaders interested in furthering the goals of the Sierra Club in southern Wisconsin by joining our Executive Committee. We seek members with a passion for the environment and a willingness to work with diverse members, organizations, and communities to form partnerships in areas of interest to you. Our focus is to increase our organizational capacity and reach, and the Sierra Club does a great job of supporting volunteer leaders by providing many kinds of free training.

We are committed to seeking a diverse pool of candidates that is inclusive of geography, race, urban and rural interests, gender and age, and all interested members are encouraged to apply. Contact me at 608-233-8455 or burroak15@gmail.com if you wish to learn more.

Another way to provide support is to make a special gift to the Four Lakes Group. Donations are not tax deductible, but the issues highlighted above demonstrate their importance, and we simply can't be effective without your help. To donate, go to our web site or contact Liz Wessel at lizard59sc@yahoo.com.

Let me close with some positive thoughts post-election here in the state and nationally. There's no evidence that the election results indicate any rejection of environmental protections and proconservation efforts. Rather, it seems many voters feel discouraged by the slow recession recovery and have yet to perceive positive results at a personal level.

This means we have to work harder at the local level to forge good connections and find common cause with those impacted by polluting industry, factory farming, and unsound development threatening our rivers, forests and wilderness. I really believe we're still on the right track, though our efforts will be a bit more uphill than in recent years. The alternative is to give up and that's not happening. In fact, in part due to the election results, more volunteers are stepping up to continue and grow our work than ever before. We hope you'll be one of them.

Nature is the original anti-depressant so let's dust ourselves off and get out there and experience our wonderful Wisconsin outdoors. See you on the trails!

Arriving Together: Equitable Transportation Solutions for All

Transportation has been a major issue in Wisconsin, as it is in many places, with considerable debate on how to fund it and what our priorities should be. The Sierra Club strongly believes that everyone deserves good transportation options, that transportation is an equity issue that affects people's lives and the economy, and that it's a major factor in greenhouse gas emissions and other toxic pollutants.

Of special significance at the **Arrive Together** state transportation summit was the wide diversity of people and organizations it brought together to focus on transportation issues. From community and faith organizers, to transit riders, environmental and citizen advocacy groups, and business organizations, 270 people turned out at Milwaukee Area Technical College in downtown Milwaukee on December 3 to discuss and learn about issues and solutions.

Appropriately, the summit started by listening to transit riders who made clear that for many, transit is an issue of access and equity. Many low income and minority people spoke of their dependency on public transportation, and all too often, it does not meet their needs adequately. The challenges for people who are differently abled are also often not understood well either, and they find themselves discriminated against or their needs not well understood.

A number of terrific speakers and panelists also provided strong insights into the issues of access and equity, but we were especially fortunate to have two wonderful keynote addresses by Aaron Mair, national president of the Sierra Club, and Leslie Proll from the U.S. Department of Transportation's Office of Civil Rights. Both looked back at our legacy, including that of Rosa Parks, to illustrate the historic problems we have had with transit service, and that all too often, remain. For many people, mass transit is not an alternative, it is their only choice, and we need it to better serve all people's needs.



Sierrans gather at the Summit



Sierra Club President Aaron Mair speaking at the Arriving Together Summit

In addition to Aaron Mair, the Sierra Club played a significant part in the success of this event, with extensive support from our Muir Chapter staff and interns. The Sierra Club had a strong turnout who also helped present State Representative Daniel Riemer his overdue Sierra Club award for great environmental leadership.

Many people in our communities are underserved with good transit options. Perhaps you are one of them, or you know someone who is. We encourage you to get involved, and help create better transit options for you and others in your community. Contact Elizabeth Ward at elizabeth.ward@sierraclub.org to find out how you can make a difference.



Transportation Summit listening session

To Salt, or Not to Salt

Liz Wessel, Four Lakes Group Water Sentinels

No one likes to drink salt water, or even gargle with it for a sore throat. But some residents in Madison now have drinking water where salt contamination has reached levels resulting in a salty taste. Worse, salt levels in drinking water are reaching levels not recommended for people on salt restricted diets.

The problem is salt use in our communities; we apply salt on our roads, driveways, parking lots and sidewalks to clear ice and create a safer urban environment for pedestrians and cars. And we use salt to soften water in our homes and businesses. Salt readily dissolves and ends up in our freshwater resources where it does not belong. And it corrodes our bridges, roadways and other infrastructure not to mention our cars.

The key concern is that salt does not go away or breakdown. It washes away from surfaces or the soil and accumulates in our surface and ground water resources.

Impact on freshwater

Freshwater species prefer to live in water with very low concentrations (less than 100 mg/L) of salt. Salt in our waters affects everything from the small benthic or bottom dwelling critters to fish and plants. The benthic organisms serve as indicators of water health and form the base of the food chain for larger animals. Fish eggs and larvae as well as amphibians, frogs and salamanders for example, tend to be the most sensitive to raised levels of salt. Further, scientific studies show that freshwater environments and river systems polluted by salt show a decrease in diversity and simplification of the ecosystem.

Physical damage to plants, trees shrubs

Along our roadways, you can see the direct impact of salt applications as trees and shrubs are "burned" by the spray. The spray can cause buds and twigs to die. Or the damage will show up as the browning or yellowing of needles or leaves. For example, eastern white pine is particularly sensitive to salt spray. Under the surface, salt concentrations can cause the tree's intake of water to slow and in some extreme cases reverse.

Water softener salt ends up in surface waters

Water softening uses sodium chloride or another salt to remove calcium, magnesium, and other minerals in water. These minerals can cause deposits on pipes that can ultimately interfere with its function. Softening can make the water in our showers better for soaps and shampoos and extend the life of plumbing. But this water flows to sewage treatment plants which remove very little sodium and chloride, resulting in a salty discharge into local surface waters.

We need to respond to this growing pollution threat, and the time to act is now due to:

- Drinking water that tastes salty.
- Visible corrosion of infrastructure and cars.
- Visible damage to trees and shrubs in in our community.

As we get into winter, you can play a role in protecting our water resources and your trees, shrubs and soil. Here are some ideas what you can do:

- Support the Water Utilities call for restricted use of road salt. As recently as Dec 14th, the Water Utility asked for a reduction in road salt use across Dane County which uses about 30,000 tons of salt annually. The City of Madison for example uses salt only on major roads and routes and applies sand on other streets.
- Reduce salt use of all types. Use the lowest recommended application rate and clean up spills. Apply small amounts of salt or sand and salt mix before an ice event usually results in lower overall amounts being used. Adding small amounts of sand or other grit can reduce the need for applications as well.
- Change the deicer you use. Different deicers formulations are available at local stores that reduce or eliminate the amount of sodium chloride. Magnesium Chloride is the best choice of deicer for reducing the impact on plants and the environment.
- Use sand or a substitute when temperatures dip below 16° F. Sodium chloride is effective on ice only down to 15.8° F; magnesium chloride only down to 5° F, and below that, the only alternative is calcium chloride.
- Get a modern water softener. New digital water softening systems reduce salt use. New salt-free technology may be an option, although this system is not appropriate in much of Wisconsin due to water hardness.
- Visit the Salt Wise website to learn more steps to reduce the impact of salt in https://www.wisaltwise.com/

Tar Sands Battles Continue

A major pipeline battle that's not only been a lead news story, but bringing people together in opposition, has been the effort to stop the Dakota Access Pipeline that would carry oil from the Bakken oil fields in North Dakota to Illinois via Iowa. Due to be completed by January 1, 2017, the proposed route would cross sacred Standing Rock Sioux lands, and the waters they depend on. As opposition grew, other tribes and concerned citizens came them from across the country to aid them and build an encampment to block the pipeline path.

Madison was one of the communities that provided strong support for this effort. Bolstered by concerns about Enbridge pipelines in Wisconsin, many people went to the camp in North Dakota, taking supplies with them. The Sierra Club and 350 Madison worked together, and with the wonderful support of many generous people, in November sent approximately 10,000 lbs of food to support the encampment.

Finally, on December 4, the Army Corps of Engineers denied pipeline passage through the Standing Rock Sioux lands and waters, and construction was halted. The Corps is now requiring an environmental impact process to be done looking at other alternative routes. Interestingly enough, the original route was rejected since that route would put the residents of Bismark, ND at risk, but that same concern was not initially being evidenced when it came to putting Native Americans at risk.

Whether that battle is over is uncertain with the new Trump administration, but we know we can count on strong opposition should the specter of this pipeline arise again. But these battles provide evidence that more and more people are coming to realize – that these pipelines are all risk and no reward to the areas they go through and people they impact.

The pipeline fight also continues in Wisconsin. While Enbridge obtained eminent domain to take private landowners lands, they are now publicly denying plans for a line 61 twin pipeline. However, other sources, including an official shareholder report, state their intention to build the new pipeline. In response, the WiSE (Wisconsin Safe Energy) Alliance has been meeting with landowner, informing them of their rights, and working to provide legal support.



Possible billboard design from Eighty Feet is Enough

A landowner group, 80' is Enough (named after the current pipeline corridor width), has also formed to oppose Enbridge's expansion plans, and has begun a billboard campaign to educate more people about the risks and land grabs Enbridge is subjecting people to. 350 Madison in Dane County, stating that the judge's ruling was in error, is also appealing the ruling that Enbridge does not have to provide the insurance required by the Dane County Conditional Use Permit.

Stay tuned in 2017. It will be a bumpy ride, but one we must win. Growing concerns over pipelines puts us in good company with many other places where pipeline permits are now being rejected, and others where proposed fossil fuel export ports are being stopped. It is increasingly recognized that the extraction of fossil fuels places people at risk not only in those areas, but areas where fossil fuels are transported through, and that continuing our reliance on fossil fuels places us all at risk.

There is however one place fossil fuels do belong. *Keep them in the ground!*

Newsletter team, continued from page 3 for others to download. Generally eight pages in length, preparation work occurs the month prior to mailing, but we usually have some flexibility on our dates. You can work from home or wherever you choose, and the choice of software is yours also. The final product needs to be a PDF print ready file, but it generally is easy to create.

This is just part of our communications tool set. We also have a web site and Facebook page, and send out an Enews several times a month, but this is the most in-depth communication we send out. So if you want a fun and flexible way to help contribute to our efforts, sign up! Contact Don Ferber at 608-222-9376 or d_ferber@sbcglobal.net with questions or to volunteer. Your service will be much appreciated!

Upcoming Four Lakes Programs and Events

Four Lakes Holiday Recruitment Party

When: Wednesday, January 11 - 5:30 - 8 pm Where: Argus Bar and Grill, 123 E Main St

Any rumors the holidays are over and the Four Lakes Group is done celebrating our volunteer efforts or not looking forward, are definitely premature!

We've achieved a lot with our merry band of stalwarts that we want to note, and we also want to provide an opportunity for those concerned about the state of our world to learn more about how you can participate in our activities and campaigns.

So please join us in the friendly confines of the Argus (who are great Sierra Club supporters) for some food and refreshment to make merry and plan ahead. Contact Liz Wessel at lizard59sc@yahoo.com or 608-204-2717 for more information.

WHA Garden Expo

When: February 10 - 12, 2017 Where: Alliant Energy Center

Not a fan of the cold? Want to see greenery and inhale the smell of fresh flowers? Were Muir still here, he might suggest going to the WHA Garden Expo to receive their glad tidings and revel in the warmth and wonders of nature. Each year, this delightful event features a wide range of exhibitors and presentations that will stimulate you and provide lots of ideas for the outdoor growing season. More details on the Expo are at http://www.wigardenexpo.com.

To best enjoy the Expo, join us at our Sierra Club booth to inform the throngs of outdoor enthusiasts about the opportunities the Sierra Club offers. Come languish in the greenery and earthy smells of the Expo, help support the Sierra Club by assisting with our outreach, and engage others in learning about and supporting the Sierra Club's efforts. And volunteers get free admission to the Garden Expo all weekend!

Volunteering doesn't require special knowledge, only a love for the environment and a willingness to engage people. We provide information and on site orientation as needed. In addition to offering lots of information and encouraging people to join the Sierra Club, we will be selling merchandise.

Simply sign up at http://signup.com/go/Hd9Mmj and select the shift(s) of your choice. If you have questions

or need to flex shift times, contact Don Ferber at d_ferber@sbcglobal.net or 608-222-9376. You'll receive a pass and instructions prior to the Expo.

Don't miss the Garden Expo and be green with envy. Look forward to seeing you there!

Canoecopia

When: March 10 - 12, 2017Where: Alliant Energy Center

The Sierra Club will again have a booth at this annual watersports extravaganza to inform people about our outdoor activities and discuss water issues. There will also be another booth to talk about risks to our waters from tar sands pipelines. Please join us to help promote the Sierra Club and talk about our activities.

Stay tuned, and watch for more information on our web site and in our Enews. You can also contact Don Ferber at d_ferber@sbcglobal.net or 608-222-9376 for more information.

Four Lakes Group Sierra Club Contacts

http://www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/four-lakes
Like us on Facebook

Dave Blouin*, Chair, Political Chair, (608) 233-8455, burroak15@gmail.com

Don Ferber*, Conservation, Outreach, and RAH, (608) 222-9376, d ferber@sbcglobal.net

Beverly Speer*,

bjs4LG@gmail.com

Erik Pettersen*, (608) 515-4426, erik.pettersen14@gmail.com

Liz Wessel*, Treasurer, (608) 238-9934, liza59sc@yahoo.com

Claire Gervais, Healthy Lawn Team, (608) 233-8455, cmgerva@gmail.com

Ron Haeger, Inner City Outings, (608) 444-0612, rhaeger@gmail.com

Kathy Mulbrandon, Outings Chair, (608) 215-9706 kmulb@charter.net

*Executive Committee members



Four Lakes Group Sierra Club 754 Williamson St Madison, WI 53703

http://www.sierraclub.org/wisc onsin/four-lakes Non-Profit Organization US POSTAGE PAID MADISON WI PERMIT #1002

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. 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 can also send you our Enews to keep you better informed.

Save the Dates!

Wednesday, January 11 – Holiday and recruitment party – Argus Bar and Grill (page 7)

Thursday, January 12 – Sierra Club Madison Clean Energy meeting – JMC office Contact Devin Martin at devin.martin@sierraclub.org or 608-338-0746

Thursday, January 19 – Renew Wisconsin Renewable Energy Policy Summit – Monona Terrace http://www.renewwisconsin.org/2017 Summit/index.html

February 4 – Tar Sand Fundraiser – Wilmar Neighborhood Center (page 1)

February 10 - 12 - WHA Garden Expo - Alliant Energy Center (page 7)

March 10 - 12 – Canoecopia – Alliant Energy Center (page 7)

Wednesday March 15 – Utah's public lands presentation – Goodman Community Center (page 1)

Tuesday, April 18 – Nelson Institute Earth Day Conference – Monona Terrace https://nelson.wisc.edu/events/earth-day/index.php