

WISCONSIN Sierran

NEWS OF THE WISCONSIN CHAPTER OF THE SIERRA CLUB

ENERGY BURDEN IS A CLIMATE ISSUE

Last year we saw incredible engagement in the We Energies rate case. We Energies asked the Public Service Commission (PSC) to approve a rate increase of 13 percent. Though We Energies had an extensive public relations campaign to claim that this increase was the result of investments in clean energy,

we know that We Energies has been doubling down on their fossil fuels- keeping the Oak Creek coal plant online despite how expensive it is, building new gas infrastructure, and creating barriers for their customers to access clean energy.



Photo credit: Tim Karaskiewicz

Throughout the process, thousands submitted public comments or signed petitions and dozens testified in person or online. Many of the commenters talked about the impact of increased energy bills. Energy burden came up a lot in the conversation.

Energy burden is defined as the percentage of a household's income that is used to pay its energy bills. Low-income Wisconsinites spend less on energy overall, but because they have lower income and tend to have less efficient homes, they spend a higher proportion of the income on energy.

Low-income Wisconsinites spend more money per square foot to power and heat their homes, because of high fixed fees from utilities, inadequate insulation, energy inefficient appliances, or all of the above. Families who struggle to pay their energy bills may sacrifice nutrition,

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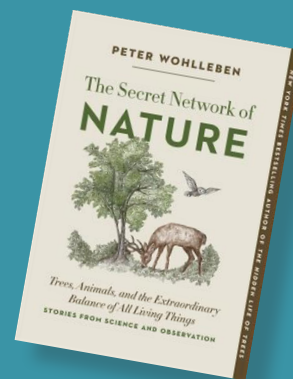
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ENVIRONMENTAL AND RACIAL JUSTICE ARE LINKED

Before I became a Sierra Club volunteer, I thought of “the environment” as a place outdoors such as a national park or a state forest. Through my volunteer work, however, this definition of what the environment is has broadened to include not only the wild and beautiful natural places we must preserve and protect but also the places where we live and work, including urban spaces.

My volunteer work has taught me that environmental degradation disproportionately impacts Communities of Color and that environmental justice and racial justice go hand in hand. For example, our Chapter’s Beyond Coal Team fights to close coal plants and stop new natural

gas plants from being built. We do this work because in order to limit climate change, we must transition Wisconsin to 100 percent clean energy. But a point that often gets buried in the discussion is that we need to close coal plants and stop new gas plants from being built because these facilities are disproportionately located in communities where People of Color and those of lower socioeconomic status experience the brunt of the negative environmental and health effects of burning fossil fuels.

The proposal to expand I-94 is another example of how environmental and racial justice are linked together. We need to stop the I-94 expansion because

we desperately need to invest in mass transit and bicycling solutions in order to limit climate change. But we also need to stop the highway expansion because it will harm the people who are living in the communities that border the highway.

As I move forward into 2023, I want to center my volunteer efforts on protecting our environment and helping Wisconsinites who have historically borne the burden of environmental degradation. I hope you will join me in this important work.

Laura Lane
Chapter Co-Chair



GETTING EVERY KID OUTDOORS IN 2023!

Every Kid Outdoors is a program that allows free access to national parks for Fourth Graders and their families to remove barriers to accessing the outdoors and to support the Fourth grade social studies curriculum. Limitations of income should not prevent children and their families from enjoying our beautiful Wisconsin State Parks, and implementing this pass in Wisconsin would allow Fourth Graders and their families free admittance.

There is growing bipartisan support for this program. 92% of citizen voters who engaged in the conservation congress supported Every Kid Outdoors implementation in Wisconsin, making it the most widely supported proposal in the 2021 Wisconsin Conservation Congress. Both Senate and Assembly committees passed an Every Kid Outdoors bill last session with bipartisan support. Unfortunately, the session ended before the bill made it to the floor for a full legislative vote.

Other states that have implemented this pass have seen negligible funding impacts to their parks, and have seen ripple effects from the program’s benefits, including new park users. Now is the ideal time to bring Every Kid Outdoors to Wisconsin state parks. We hope to see the program become policy this upcoming legislative session!

THE WISCONSIN SIERRAN

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Wisconsin Sierran Committee

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Please submit articles by mail or email to:
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Please include the author’s first and last names, and day and evening phone numbers at the top. Acceptance of submission contingent upon availability of space and must meet Sierra Club guidelines.

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Deadline:

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Change of Address:

You can update your contact information online at myaccount.sierraclub.org.

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medicine, and other necessities in order to avoid shutoff. The effects of this on the national scale are staggering - more than 25 million US households skip meals or medications to pay energy costs and nearly 13 million US households leave their households at unhealthy temperatures to save on bills.

There are many things that you can do as an individual to reduce your energy burden - you can install a smart thermostat, wash your clothes in cold water, install efficient LED light bulbs, and install better wall insulation. You're probably aware of all of those choices because those are the solutions that energy companies market to their consumers. But many individuals can't implement the most effective solutions. Renters can't install permanent insulation in their homes, and may not even have control over the thermostat temperature. Low-income homeowners often don't have the cash on hand to invest in weatherization or energy efficient appliances that decrease their bills in the long run.

On the other hand, utility companies don't talk much about the many tools they have to reduce energy burden. They can reduce their high fixed fee-that constant price on your bill that you have to pay even if you use no electricity all month long. They can fund massive energy efficiency upgrades that families can't afford on their own. They can shut down expensive fossil fuel plants and replace them with cheaper renewable energy. They can even choose to pay their executives and shareholders less money and use those savings to reduce rates.

If you could choose between an electricity company that used affordable solar energy and kept rates low by capping vice president salaries or one that kept a coal plant open by your children's school and paid its CEO five million dollars per year, that would likely be an easy choice. But you don't have that choice in Wisconsin because our utilities operate as monopolies in their service area. They have minimal incentive to make choices in your best interest. For that reason, Wisconsin's PSC regulates our utilities with the mandate of ensuring safe, reliable, affordable and environmentally responsible utility services (i.e. keeping the monopoly in check).

Wisconsin's PSC is comprised of 3 commissioners who are appointed by the governor for six-year terms. Any time a utility company wants to make a big change in their operations, like asking for a rate increase or building a new power plant, they need PSC approval of that change (also known as a case or docket) in order to move forward. That makes PSC cases one of the most important organizing opportunities for energy advocates.

However, even if PSC cases are where important decisions are made, that doesn't mean that it is easy to advocate for and achieve outcomes that are in the public's best interest. PSC cases always have opportunity for public commentary, but

there is a spectrum of how much credence commissioners lend to public opinion when formulating their final decisions. Some Commissions essentially rubber-stamp utility requests without giving any impression that public comments are valued in decision making. On the other end of the spectrum, some Commissions actively engage with the public during cases and create accessible opportunities for public participation.

In recent years, the Wisconsin PSC has been moving closer to the accessible/engaging end of that spectrum. Their website received a long-overdue usability upgrade this year and the newest commissioner, Tyler Huebner, regularly attends public hearings. The Commission held two in-person public hearing sessions in a low-income neighborhood in the We Energies service territory in the recent We Energies rate case and both Commissioner Huebner and Commission Chairperson Rebecca Valq attended in person and stayed for the entire 6-hours of testimony.

Unfortunately, the powerful testimony wasn't enough to create the broad change in regulation that we were hoping to see. The PSC approved We Energies' request for a rate increase of 10.9% for electric and 9% for gas for its customers. They also rejected a proposal to force We Energies to fund a weatherization and bill-support program for low-income customers. The commissioners had a concern that it was an unprecedented move and it would be too much too soon. The decision was disappointing.

The good news was that the Commissioners scrutinized We Energies' proposal and made numerous changes with a level of scrutiny that we have not seen before. This includes their decision to reduce We Energies guarantee return-on-investment from the 10.2 percent they requested to 9.8 percent. These are baby steps that point in the right direction. However, thousands of We Energies' customers will suffer while these 'incremental steps' are taken.

Fortunately, the Sierra Club has had other exciting wins, like one for energy efficiency programs for low-income customers during the Focus on Energy case this spring. Governor Evers' re-election in the midterms presents an opportunity for him to appoint another Commissioner, and we will push for that to be someone who takes their regulatory role seriously and who keeps ratepayers' interests front-of-mind. It's an exciting (and important!) time to be an energy advocate in Wisconsin.

We look forward to many more years of collaboration with partner organizations and will continue to push the PSC to make better decisions, especially for those bearing the brunt of utilities' poor economic choices like investing in costly fossil fuels.

Victoria Gillet
Beyond Coal Team Member

NOW IS THE TIME TO GET INVOLVED

As we enter 2023 and another year of volunteering together, we continue to take advantage of the blend of in-person and virtual volunteering. As the Chapter's volunteer coordinator, I've been so inspired by our local groups and teams getting back out into nature, holding meetings together, hosting in person press conferences, participating in tabling, testifying at in-person hearings, continuing important online organizing and more!

NOW IS THE TIME FOR YOU TO JOIN US!

Whether you're looking to join a team, meet new people or advocate for an issue you're passionate about, there is a place for you at the Wisconsin Chapter. We have volunteer opportunities designed for different levels of time commitment, whether it's a couple hours a week, a couple hours a month, or helping out occasionally!

As I like to say when I meet with new volunteers, our volunteering program is like a 'choose-your-own-adventure' story, and there's the ability to mix and match different opportunities to build your perfect volunteer experience. It's one of my favorite parts of my job to meet with folks who want to explore how to get involved, to reassure every single individual that there is a way for them to contribute and make a difference, and that they, that YOU are enough and your experience is valuable and important.

I hear from a lot of people that they feel they don't have enough experience, that they're not issue experts, that they haven't volunteered before. My response is always: The experience you have and what you bring is enough - in fact it's more than enough. Showing up, taking that first step, is one of the most important things you can do. We all start somewhere, and that goes for staff as well! We all have our own journeys, our own life experiences, our own paths, and we want to create an environment where everyone can contribute. It's going to take all of us to protect our planet, protect access to clean water, preserve our wild spaces and species, and to move to a 100 percent clean energy future.

So whether it's attending a volunteer night once a month, helping to type up hand signed petitions throughout the year, or being a leader on one of our volunteer conservation issue teams, we think there's a



volunteering home for you at the Wisconsin Chapter - I hope you'll join us!

Here are three great ways to get started:

- Email me (the Chapter's Volunteer Coordinator) at katie.hogan@sierraclub.org to set up a time to talk 1:1 about all our opportunities and find the right fit!
- Attend an upcoming Virtual Volunteer Night - monthly on the second Wednesday evening.
- Attend our 2023 Virtual Volunteer Fair! See the details on our events calendar at sierraclub.org/wisconsin.

I hope you'll join us this year - I'm looking forward to working with you!

Katie Hogan
Volunteer Coordinator

Support the Wisconsin Chapter

When you make a donation to the Wisconsin Chapter you allow us to continue our work to protect wilderness and wildlife, to improve the quality of life in our cities and to promote the enjoyment of nature.

Please be as generous as you are able. Your contributions, above and beyond membership dues, are an important part of the Chapter's budget.

Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____ email _____
Credit Card _____ Exp. _____

Make payable to: Sierra Club-Wisconsin Chapter
Mail to: 754 Williamson St., Madison, WI 53703

Contributions, gifts, and dues to the Sierra Club-Wisconsin Chapter are not tax deductible. They support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts here in Wisconsin. If you wish to make your gift tax deductible by only supporting our charitable work, please make your check payable to Sierra Club Foundation with Wisconsin Chapter in the memo.

- \$50
- \$100
- \$250
- \$500
- other

SHUT DOWN LINE 5

The call to shut down Line 5 and uphold Tribal sovereignty and stop the threat to Lake Superior, the Bad River Watershed, and our climate grew and strengthened through the end of the year. Here are some of the highlights from the fall.

COMMENT ANALYSIS SHOWS STRONG OPPOSITION TO LINE 5, CONCERNS FOR GREAT LAKES, CLIMATE

Dozens of Sierra Club and 350 Wisconsin volunteers, led by Tar Sands Team member Greg Mikkelson, went through all 32,000 comments that were submitted in response to the Line 5 review put out by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for Enbridge's proposed Line 5 expansion was released in December and the DNR accepted comments through April 15. Unsurprisingly, the analysis shows that a majority of the **unprecedented 32,000 comments** oppose Line 5.

This analysis makes clear what we have known all along- Enbridge's proposed expansion of the Line 5 pipeline is too dangerous for our climate, water, and Lake Superior. We cannot afford it.

You can read the full report at sierraclub.org/wisconsin.

Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa v Enbridge Goes to Trial

The Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa (Bad River) went to trial in October following a federal judge ruling Enbridge trespassed on tribal lands and profited at the tribe's expense. Enbridge claims their proposed expansion of the pipeline around the Bad River Reservation satisfies the Bad River Band's request to remove the pipeline, but the Band has made it clear they want the pipeline out of their watershed, which the expansion still cuts through. Bad River has even documented their stance against Line 5. The trial included arguments about Enbridge's next steps for the pipeline and restitution for Bad River. The Judge would release his decision within months of the trial. The final decision could determine if fossil fuel companies can undermine tribal treaty rights. Alternatively, it has the potential to shut down the Line 5 segment on Bad River's land for good.

International Showing at COP 15 to call for the Shut Down of Line 5

COP 15, the Council of the Parties on Biodiversity, took place in Montreal, Quebec, Canada from Dec. 7 to Dec. 19. This was an international meeting about biodiversity, taking place right in the midst of the Great Lakes on the St. Lawrence Seaway. We wanted to make sure that all of the people there knew about one of the greatest threats to

the Great Lakes and the biodiversity that thrives on them: Enbridge's Line 5 pipeline.

Sierra Club and 350 Wisconsin Tar Sands Team members carpoled to Montreal and joined Canadian activists by leading an international Line 5 contingent in the March for Biodiversity and Human rights Rally hosted by Greenpeace Quebec and a teach-in where they met other water protectors and pipeline activists.

Towards the end of the conference, there was an official panel about the threat Line 5 has to biodiversity. Speakers included:

- Sierra Club Illinois' Tessine Murji
- Aurora Conley of the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe
- Carley Dove-McFalls and Michelle Woodhouse with Environmental Defence in Canada
- Beth Wallace with the National Wildlife Federation
- Well-known ecologist and biologist Don Waller
- Leadership from the Anishinabek Nation of Ontario

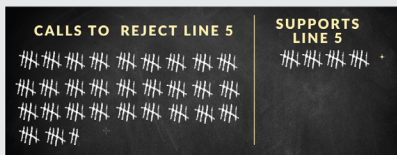
Our work continues to get permanent protection of the Great Lakes from Line 5!

Elizabeth Ward
Chapter Director

Calls to Reject Line 5 Permits

The DNR invited the public to submit comments regarding possible environmental impacts, so that their final Environmental Impact Statement would truly reflect the costs of installing an oil pipeline through the water-rich area just south of Lake Superior. When the final EIS is done, they will decide whether to grant or deny Enbridge the necessary permits.

In addition to submitting comments related to the DEIS, the majority of comments called on the DNR (and sometimes Army Corps) to deny permits for the Line 5 extension.



In addition to the written comment period, the DNR hosted a 10-hour hearing that included testimony from over 150 people.

88%

(147 of the 167) of the comments called on DNR to reject the permits.

"The Line 5 proposed pipeline is far too dangerous to humans, the Great Lakes, and the waterways and wetlands in the Great Lakes area. I urge you to, at the very least, reject the current version." - Holly

"We need to divest ourselves from fossil fuels to slow the increase of the world's temperature. Plus, pipelines have a track record of having leaks, so the risk of line 5 causing irreversible damage to our sources of fresh water is too high for the line to be approved. Please reject line 5." - Chris

"Please DENY line 5. We DO NOT need fossil fuel, tar sands, etc. We DO NEED clean fresh water. Preventing contamination is always better for us, our environment, and financially than remediation. Consider Wisconsin's economy: tourism, agriculture, making beer. You cannot make good beer without clean water. All the water intensive industries are worth more than letting Canada ruin our water." - Natalie

"A detour to Line 5 threatens to break treaty rights and this happens all too often. It also threatens our waterway and that's bad for everyone. Reject the proposal to detour the line." - Mary



TRANSPORTATION UPDATE

SUBMIT COMMENTS ON PROPOSED I-94 EXPANSION!

In November, Governor Evers' Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WISDOT) pushed forward the harmful I-94 expansion project, which Sierra Club and our partners have been fighting for over a decade. In WISDOT's draft supplemental environmental impact statement (DSEIS), the preferred alternative is an 8-lane expansion with a large interchange. This is a disaster for climate change, accessibility and racial justice.

This project has faced more than a decade of opposition, with thousands of people weighing in and calling for a more sustainable and equitable solution: repairing the road in the current footprint and with 6 lanes and funding transit, walking and biking.

Concerns with the I-94 project and the project's DSEIS are numerous:

- The DSEIS's analysis of carbon emissions, climate change impacts, and air pollution are not adequate.
- The proposal does not address critical concerns about socioeconomic or racial justice. It also does not include any long term transit funding.
- The "alternatives" in the DSEIS miss the mark. WISDOT's alternative 6-lane project is nearly as expensive and will add nearly as much impermeable surface as their 8-lane alternative. Additionally, the interchange remains extremely large and costly. The community deserves better! We deserve a real alternative that addresses the cost, water runoff and accessibility concerns - not "alternatives" in name only.

The alternative that Sierra Club and our partners have advocated for, Fix at Six, needs your support. The critical moment for public input is now, and your comment for environmental justice can make the difference on this project. The public hearings on this project took place the week this article was published, but written comments are still being accepted.

You can add your comments to Sierra Club's petition at addup.sierraclub.org/campaigns/accessibleequitabletransportation or you can email comments to Joshua.LeVeque@dot.wi.gov by January 17.

AWARDS AND APPRECIATION WEEK

CELEBRATING OUR SIERRA CLUB WISCONSIN COMMUNITY

On December 1st, Sierra Club Wisconsin honored our award recipients at our annual awards ceremony and kicked off our Volunteer Appreciation Week, celebrating all of our volunteers for their dedication and for being a part of our community. This year's award winners are:

AMY MUELLER – NEW ACTIVIST AWARD

A member of the Wildlife Team and the Equity Committee, Amy is an outstanding environmental advocate—she cares deeply about our nation's wildlife and

natural places and works tirelessly to protect them through institutional change, public education, and coordination with state and national partners.


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CHAPTER ELECTION RESULTS ARE IN!

Elections for the Sierra Club Wisconsin Chapter Executive Committee ended on November 11 and the votes submitted electronically and by paper ballot have been counted. Congratulations to the following elected Executive Committee members:

- **LAURA LANE, WAUNAKEE, DANE COUNTY**
Laura has been re-elected after serving a 3-year term on the Executive Committee, including one year as chair and one year as co-chair of the committee.
- **GAIL SYVERUD, ASHLAND, BAYFIELD COUNTY**
Gail has been elected after serving 2 years on the Executive Committee by appointment to fill a vacancy.
- **AMY MUELLER, DOUSMAN, WAUKESHA COUNTY**
Amy joins the Executive Committee as a new member.
- In addition to the elected members, **TIM KARASKIEWICZ** was appointed to an open Executive Committee seat.

Thank you to all who voted in our Executive Committee election.



VOLUNTEER NEEDED

Lend your skills and experience by volunteering as the

CHAPTER TREASURER

- Transaction entry & coding
- Account reconciliation
- Budget tracking & reporting
- Work with staff & the Finance Committee to ensure the financial stability of the chapter
- Provide guidance and support to local group Treasurers

Onboarding will be provided by the current Treasurer of nine years.
To express your interest
visit https://www.sierraclub.org/WI_Chapter_Treasurer
and complete the form linked there.

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN BEING AN OUTINGS LEADER?

We've created the training plan for our 2023 Outings Leaders. If you'd like to lead a hike, walk, work trip, or other outings, mark your calendar for a training! The training will be broken down into two sections, 1 week apart. This training will be offered twice. The first will be February 16 and February 23. The second will be March 16 and March 23. Arrangements for First Aid Training will be made following the trainings. Contact Liz Wessel at lizard59sc@yahoo.com for more information.

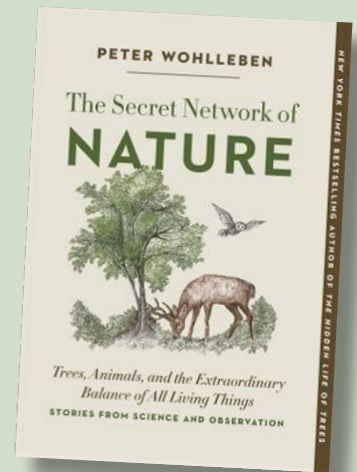
GREEN REVIEW

The Secret Network of Nature

Trees, Animals, and the Extraordinary Balance of All Living Things (Stories From Science and Observation)

by Peter Wohlleben, Greystone Books, 2022 (paperback), 272 pages (including index)

German forester Peter Wohlleben's third installment of his trilogy is available in paperback. The Secret Network of Nature follows the acclaimed *The Hidden Lives of Trees* and *The Inner Lives of Animals*. John Muir explained decades ago that "When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe." Wohlleben illustrates this point with specific stories of connection.



The stories help us perceive and understand insights about interconnections that are not fully understood by anyone. The networks seem more intricate than our perceptions and science. Salmon live most of their lives in salt water and the nitrogen in their bodies is identifiable as an element in sea creatures rather than of a freshwater fish. This specific nitrogen is but one way to track the benefits of bears fishing for salmon. When the salmon get skinny and the bears get full, fish are left to die on the banks of the rivers. Their carcasses contribute to the biota in an almost unbelievable network of influence. One factoid: The nitrogen specific to salmon can even be found within the trees near salmon runs. More: Trees can influence the rotation of the earth. Ants disperse and plant thousands of seed species. Trees need more phosphorus compounds than their roots can reach, so they use fungi filaments to transport the needed elements from more distant soil. Bears and wolves influence the actual banks and flow of rivers.

Nature's network is far more profound and sensitive to disturbance than most people who can muck up an ecosystem (all of us) understand. Wohlleben's short essays help us understand and make what could be complicated highly accessible and entertaining. One lesson seems clear: leave natural spaces natural whenever possible. He does sometimes point an accusatory finger at humans, which always seems deserved. He often offers visions of a hopeful future. A skeptical reader might not agree with all the author's conclusions, yet the text honestly separates facts, observations and opinions. Chapter notes give references, and the index makes it easy to find and reference the information and stories which will surely seep back into connections readers find in their ecosystems and lives. Every reader is sure to find wonder, concern, and new ways to consider their position and impact in our fragile world of wonder.

Amy Lou Jenkins' books include *Every Natural Fact* and *Corners: Voices on Change*. If you have a book for possible review, contact her through JackWalkerPress.com.

2022 YEAR IN REVIEW

JANUARY

- In response to the **public pushback**, Manitowoc Power canceled plans to build a small gas plant.
- The **Sierra Club Book Club kicked off in January** with a discussion of Emergent Strategies. Throughout the year, the Book Club met every two months to discuss a different book.

FEBRUARY

- Over **150 people testified at the hearing on the Line 5 pipeline**. The hearing lasted over 10 hours and 88% of the testifiers opposed the pipeline.
- **Wolves are put back on the Endangered Species List**.
- The Biden Administration announces plans to scrutinize (through an **environmental assessment**) plans to subsidize Dairyland Power's NTEC gas plant proposal.

MARCH

- Sierra Club members and partners **submit over 250 resolutions** for the Wisconsin Conservation Congress Spring Hearing.
- Wisconsin **adopts first rules regulating PFAS**.

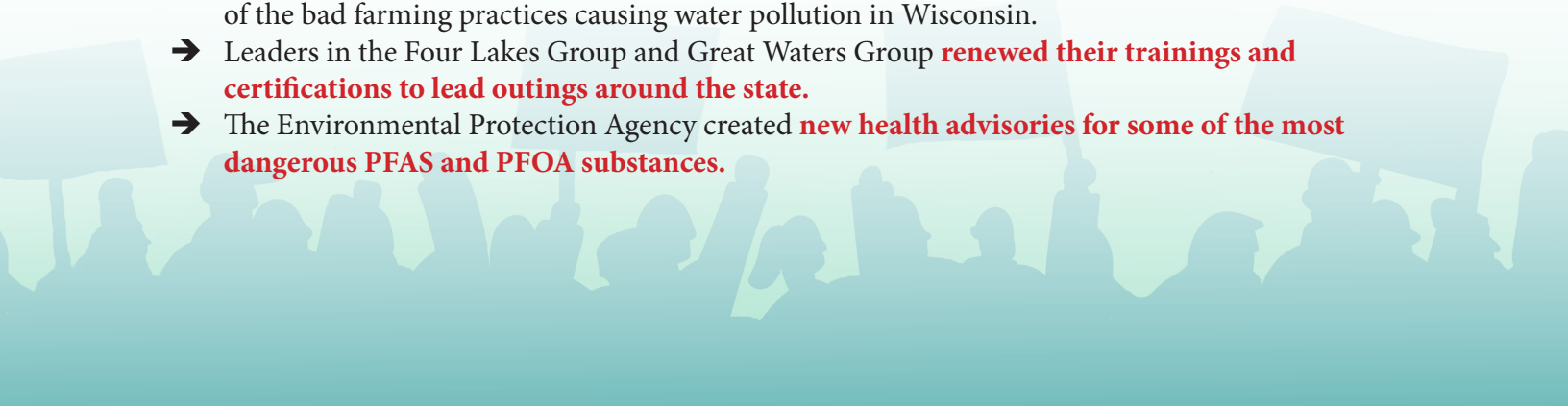
APRIL

- The Public Service Commission approved the **creation of a pilot program** that would target neighborhoods in Milwaukee suffering from high energy burden for a weatherization and efficiency program.
- As the Line 5 comment period closed, **over 32,000 people submitted comments about the Line 5 pipeline**.
- Aquila **failed to get permits to build the Back 40 mine**, putting the project on hold.

MAY

- Sierra Club members celebrate at our **annual Locally Grown, Nationally Known house party** - Our annual house party was another success, featuring Cain's Blueberry and Apple Orchard, and excellent, locally grown recipes. Together, we raised over \$12,000!
- Coalition Renews Call for Fix At Six Solution for I-94 in Milwaukee with a week of activities including launch **Fix at Six yard signs, a press conference, a walk of one of the impacted neighborhoods**, and more.

JUNE

- **Hundreds of water protectors** joined together as part of Communities United by Water to celebrate the area's water and call for the shutdown of Line 5.
 - The Water Team hosted **a screening of The Biggest Little Farm** highlighting solutions to some of the bad farming practices causing water pollution in Wisconsin.
 - Leaders in the Four Lakes Group and Great Waters Group **renewed their trainings and certifications to lead outings around the state**.
 - The Environmental Protection Agency created **new health advisories for some of the most dangerous PFAS and PFOA substances**.
- 

JULY

- Sierra Club and other members of the Clean Power Coalition called on We Energies to create a **plan to move off of fossil fuels and invest in clean energy.**
- Community members in the Ashland area worked together to release the **Line 5 Self-Guided Tour to give people an opportunity to explore the special and unique places threatened** by Enbridge's Line 5 reroute proposal.

AUGUST

- EPA weighs in on NTEC and pointed out the climate pollution of the proposal, the **disproportionate impacts to Native people**, and called on Dairyland to submit plans that are aligned with President Biden's commitments on climate change.
- The **Inflation Reduction Act was signed into law, securing bold action on climate change** and funding for clean energy programs.

SEPTEMBER

- Sierra Club Wisconsin releases our 2021-22 Legislative Scorecard- **43 state lawmakers scored a perfect 100%** on the scorecard and have been named "2022 Environmental Champion" for their demonstrated commitment to preserving Wisconsin's environment.
- Three Chapter volunteers, **Liz Wessel, Zane Franke, and Andrea Collins won National Sierra Club Awards** and were honored at a virtual celebration.

OCTOBER

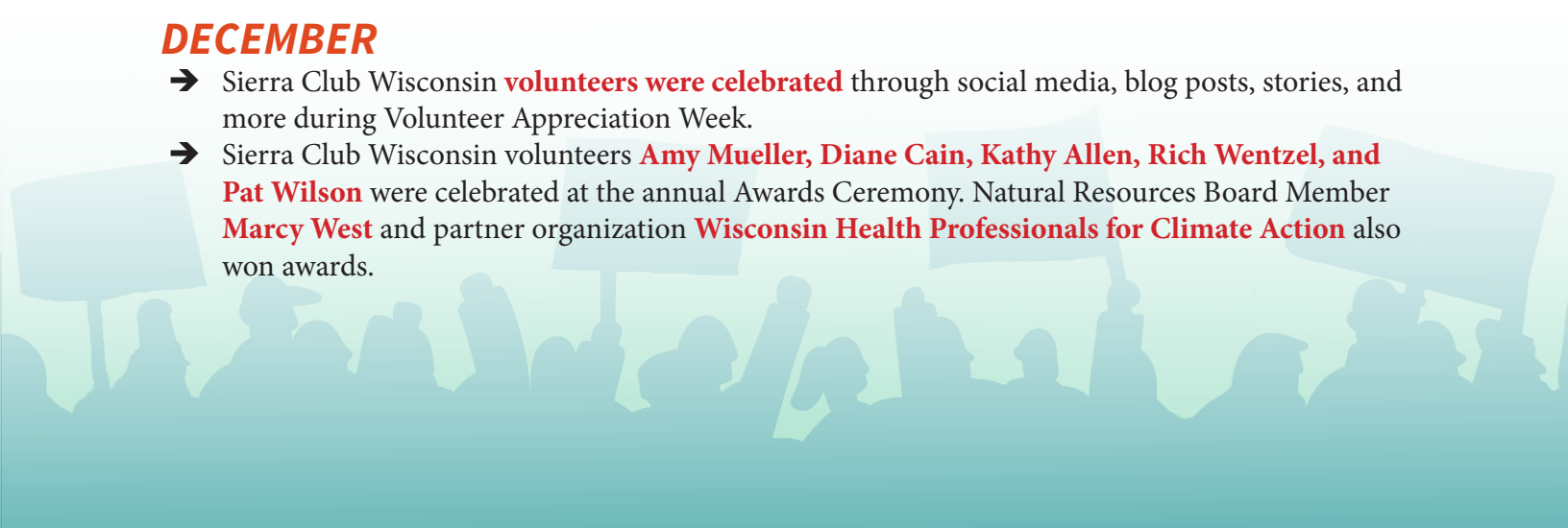
- Dozens of **volunteers go through all 32,000 Line 5 comments** and highlight top concerns: climate change, Lake Superior and other water impacts, respect of treaty rights, and more.
- **Hundreds attend Wolf Awareness Week activities** including a presentation on the importance of wolves to the Ojibwe creation story, a discussion on the biology and ecological significance of wolves, and a live-stream of wolves at the Seacrest Wolf Preserve.

NOVEMBER

- Dozens testify and thousands submit comments in opposition to We Energies' proposed rate increase. People called for lower rates and **action on energy burden disparities.**
- Wisconsin re-elected Governor Evers and had **the highest voter turnout in the country** in the fall 2022 elections.

DECEMBER

- Sierra Club Wisconsin **volunteers were celebrated** through social media, blog posts, stories, and more during Volunteer Appreciation Week.
- Sierra Club Wisconsin volunteers **Amy Mueller, Diane Cain, Kathy Allen, Rich Wentzel, and Pat Wilson** were celebrated at the annual Awards Ceremony. Natural Resources Board Member **Marcy West** and partner organization **Wisconsin Health Professionals for Climate Action** also won awards.



WILDLIFE UPDATE

During the egregious wolf hunt that occurred two years ago, the public called for a pause and for Wisconsin to approach wolf management based in sound science, public input, and Tribal consultation. Fast forward to today, and thankfully, federal protections have been restored and wolves are protected.

We know (and the radical hunter groups are hoping) that this protection is unlikely to last forever. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is preparing for the time when they will be responsible for ‘managing’ Wisconsin’s wolves. This management is governed by the plan known as the Wolf Management Plan.

“I learned so much more about wolves that I hadn’t known before!”

The DNR released Wisconsin’s draft Wolf Management Plan in November. The current, shoddy plan (that is over twenty years old) was used to advocate for the laws and decisions that led to the egregious wolf hunt we saw last February.

THE NEW DRAFT PLAN DOES WHAT WE WERE CALLING FOR. It centers science, public input, and Tribal engagement- the core tenets of the best way to protect, conserve, and sustain natural resources.

This plan is organized into four sections.

- Section one - scientific overview of the species including biology, ecology, and population dynamics of wolves.
- Section two - focused entirely on the human element, attempting to provide insights into the human dimensions of wolf management.
- Section three - historical context and summarizes current state management of wolves in Wisconsin.
- Section four - wolf management plan goal statement with an associated suite of objectives, strategies, and products to guide wolf management in the years ahead.

Specifically, the plan recommends a management framework based upon the principles of **adaptive wildlife management**. Public Comments are open on this plan now. Please support DNR’s draft plan. We have created a list of talking points to make it easy for you! Go to sierraclub.org/wisconsin to learn how you can support the plan.

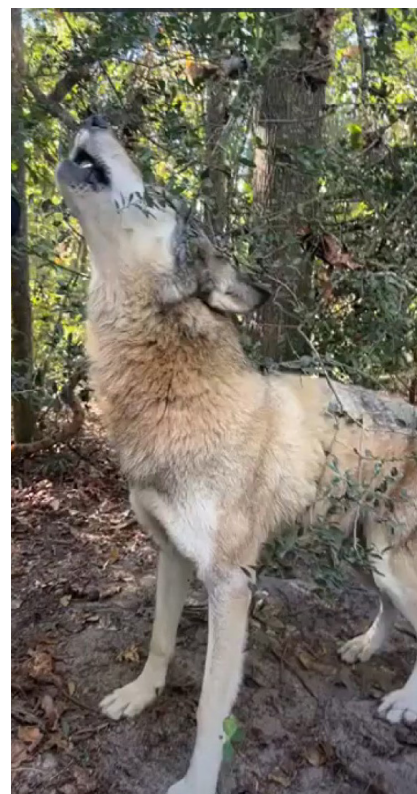
SUCCESSFUL 2022 WOLF AWARENESS WEEK

We had an exciting 2022 Wolf Awareness Week. Thank you to everyone who helped support and participated in our virtual activities! Our goal was to both educate and shine a positive light on wolves in Wisconsin and beyond.

Here is a quick recap that includes all our Wolf Awareness Week content (many of the recordings and materials are still available on our website at sierraclub.org/wisconsin):

- **MA’IINGAN MONDAY:** special presentation from Peter David for Ma’iingan Monday as he discussed the Ojibwe’s relationship with Ma’iingan (the wolf) from its origins in the Creation Story, to its application to contemporary wolf stewardship.
- **TEST YOURSELF TUESDAY:** our Wolf Quiz to test your knowledge!
- **WOLF TALK WEDNESDAY:** watch Adrian Wydeven (Certified Wildlife Biologist) discuss wolf ecology, biology and management.
- **THERAPEUTIC THURSDAY:** wolf coloring sheet is available to download, print and even share on social media to show off your inner-artist. (A special thanks to Katherine Homes for the wolf image!)
- **FRIDAY FLICKS:** Looking to curl up and relax? Check out our list of wolf related movies and documentaries for Friday Flicks or any night.
- **STREAMING SATURDAY:** watch our up close and special experience with Seacrest Wolf Preserve! You will be treated to a chorus of wolf howls as we got to know two ambassador wolves!

We had almost 3 times as many participants this year and are looking forward to keeping up the momentum for the 2023 Wolf Awareness Week, and we received great feedback from participants! One comment nicely exemplified the entire purpose of Wolf Awareness Week stating, “I learned so much more about wolves that I hadn’t known before!”



Continued from page 6

DIANE CAIN – WILDFLOWER AWARD

As a member of the Wildlife team, Diane has been a long-standing commitment to advocacy for ethical wildlife practices in the state. She shares a great wealth of information, is connected to other community groups, and made a big impact last year when she sat on the Department of Natural Resources' Wolf Management Committee. Her family's orchard was also featured in the Chapter's Locally Grown, Nationally Known event last year.

KATHY ALLEN – MERIT AWARD

Kathy has been the Chair of the Coulee Region Group of Sierra Club for several years, and has done an enormous amount of work in the region. She helped found the annual Climate Action Festival in La Crosse, was instrumental in pushing both the City and County of La Crosse to pass Ready for 100 resolutions, and is always looking for ways to partner with other groups.

RICH WENTZEL – LD ROCKWELL AWARD

Rich has been a contributor to the Political Committee over the years. His longevity with the Committee, and the care and expertise he has demonstrated helps the Chapter read through hundreds of endorsement applications and make difficult decisions about who to endorse in each election.

WISCONSIN HEALTH PROFESSIONALS FOR CLIMATE ACTION – GOOD CITIZEN AWARD

Also known as WHCPA, they have been an incredible partner in so many categories of work, from shutting down coal plants to advocating for fair energy rates, and through it all they uplift health impact disparities in marginalized communities and advocate for equitable solutions.

MARCY WEST – TORCHBEARER AWARD

As a member of the Natural Resources Board of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Marcy continually stands up for science and truly listens to Wisconsin residents on crucial issues, most notably, PFAS standards and wolf management.

PAT WILSON – JJ & PAT WERNER AWARD

Pat has been a longtime Sierra Club leader in the Chapter, in our outings programs, in the Coulee Region Group, and on the Water Team. He has also participated in the Transportation and Clean Energy Teams. Throughout his decades of dedication, Pat has served as Coulee Region Group chair three separate times, for a total of ten years, and is currently the Group's representative on the Chapter's Executive Committee.

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

Your generous contributions-above and beyond your membership dues-provided crucial support for our local grassroots campaigns to protect Wisconsin's water, land, and wildlife.

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Create a legacy that protects and restores the natural world for future generations by naming Sierra Club's Wisconsin Chapter in your will or trust. Or, name Sierra Club Foundation as the beneficiary of your retirement plan for the benefit of your local chapter and leave less highly taxed assets to your loved ones.



To learn more about the advantages of making a planned gift and to become a member of the Rachel Carson Society, please contact us.



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These donations were made from November 1, 2021 through October 31, 2022. Thanks also go out to our many contributors who prefer to remain anonymous. We try to acknowledge every donor; if your name is not listed, please know that we greatly appreciate your support.



SIERRA CLUB

WISCONSIN CHAPTER

754 Williamson Street

Madison, WI 53703

Our newsletter is printed on recycled paper

Volume 61 / Number 1 JANUARY - MARCH 2023

CALENDAR

JANUARY 11

Team Kick-Offs

6:00 p.m.

Contact Cassie Steiner, cassandra.steiner@sierraclub.org

JANUARY 17

I-94 Public Comments Due

addup.sierraclub.org/campaigns/accessibleequitabletransportation

FEBRUARY 8

Virtual Volunteer Fair

evening

sierraclub.org/wisconsin

FEBRUARY 15

Virtual Volunteer Night

6:30 p.m.

sierraclub.org/wisconsin

FEBRUARY 16 AND 23

Outings Leader Training

sierraclub.org/wisconsin

FEBRUARY 21

Spring Primary Election

myvote.wi.gov

FEBRUARY 28

Wolf Management Plan comments due

sierraclub.org/wisconsin

MARCH 8

Virtual Volunteer Night

6:30 p.m.

sierraclub.org/wisconsin

MARCH 16 AND 23

Outings Leader Training

sierraclub.org/wisconsin

MARCH 18

First Aid Training for Outings Leader

lizard59sc@yahoo.com

APRIL 4

Spring Election

myvote.wi.gov

APRIL 12

Virtual Volunteer Night

6:30 p.m.

sierraclub.org/wisconsin



OUR MEMBERS IN ACTION

In November, Coulee Region Group members and Sierra Club staff gathered in front of the Dairyland Power headquarters in La Crosse to demand they transition off of fossil fuels, cancel the proposed NTEC gas plant, and move to clean energy. The Environmental Protection Agency recently estimated that considering the social cost of carbon, NTEC would cost over \$2 billion. At the same time, the Inflation Reduction Act provides support for rural coops like Dairyland to make this switch. All arrows point to cleaner energy!

