



News of the
Southeast Gateway Group
of the Sierra Club

APR-JUN 2023
VOLUME 41, No. 2

SOUTHEAST SIERRAN

DEBUNKING ELECTRIFICATION MYTHS

By *Gloria Randall-Hewitt*

For years while we've been recycling, replacing our light bulbs with more energy efficient ones, carrying our canvas tote bags to grocery stores and wearing an extra sweater, it has been supremely frustrating not to be able to do more to make a difference in the battle against climate change. Now, at long last, there are numerous technologies, enough scientific research to help us make the right decisions, and even financial help so we can put our money where our hearts are.

The great news is that the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) includes a whole list of various incentives, including for everyday people, to help move the United States away from fossil fuels and into a sustainable future. The bad news is that some of the requirements and decisions to be made can be confusing and time consuming to sort through. Fortunately, there are resources that can help us understand the benefits of the items included in the incentive and how to know if we qualify and how to go about the process of applying.



There's also the difficulty of knowing how something that sounds so great could possibly be that great. After all, haven't we been hearing for years to turn out the lights to save on electricity and haven't there been electric grid overload problems in California in the last couple years? And now we're being encouraged to shift to electric everything?

A recent article from [RewiringAmerica.org](https://www.rewiringamerica.org) tries to clarify some of the confusion with electrification by debunking "4 Electrification Myths" including:

Myth #1: Heat pumps don't work in cold climates. The IRA includes incentives for heat pumps and they do indeed work in cold climates and are widely used, including cold climate European countries and Maine here in the US.

Myth #2: Electrification will break the grid. Yes, there have been problems in the past but as demand grows, the grid will evolve and include new technologies that will improve efficiency. Most electric companies (72% in the US <https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=40913>) are investor owned, for-profit organizations and won't invest in new technologies unless they see a benefit in doing so. Increased demand will provide that incentive

Myth #3: Gas is more reliable than electrical power in an outage. Even gas appliances require electricity to work (think pilot lights and blower fans). The answer is innovation in new technologies.

Myth #4: Electrification is too expensive. Electric appliances are less expensive to run in the long run, heat pumps are 3 times more efficient than gas furnaces and with the IRA, most Americans will be able to get some help with the purchase price.

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GET INVOLVED START HERE!

April Program - Presented by Laura Buska

Stormwater 101: Protecting Freshwater with Native Plants

Virtual Webinar: Thursday, April 6, from 6:30 – 7:30 pm

Freshwater resources are vital to life, yet only 3% of the world's available water is fresh! Join Laura Buska, Respect Our Waters Program Manager, to revisit the water cycle, refresh on common water pollutants, and learn how you can best safeguard rare and precious freshwater resources. See how these practices are being implemented in real-world restoration sites across southeastern Wisconsin and learn how you can use similar practices to improve water quality through your home landscaping. Then hear from Ben French, VP of Native Plant Propagation and Product Development at Johnson's Nursery, who will go into more depth about native landscaping including how to find success with his "easiest to grow" native plant recommendations! As a BONUS, two lucky attendees will win \$50 in native plants through Johnson's Nursery!!



One of TWO
\$50 Gift Cards
for Native Plants!

**STORMWATER 101: Protecting
Freshwater with Native Plants**
Virtual and Free Webinar
April 6th / 6:30 - 7:30 pm

JOHNSON'S NURSERY INC. RESPECT OUR WATERS SIERRA CLUB WISCONSIN CHAPTER

Register at <https://tinyurl.com/stormwater101-2023>

— or —

Join on Zoom with Meeting ID # 811 3934 4494 and Password: 672256

This event is a collaboration between the Sierra Club Southeast Gateway Group, Johnson's Nursery, and Root-Pike WIN's Respect Our Waters Program. Please email laura@rootpikewin.org with questions.



May Program - Presented by Alex Weyenberg

Grow Where Your Are: Sustainable Foods in an Urban Setting

Join Virtually: Thursday, May 11 at 6PM

Hunger and malnutrition are problems that plague almost every city in America. Expanding food deserts, rising costs of produce, and disruptions to supply chains have made the problem even more difficult to navigate. In order to combat hunger we will need to create communities that are more food resilient and generate more nutritious produce at the local level. Join in on a discussion about the problems with our current food system, some of the solutions that are being explored, and learn how you can be a positive force in the fight against hunger by farming in your own community. This event will be held virtually, with the zoom link posted on the SEGG website.



**EXTRA!
EXTRA!**

Respect Our Waters Website Relaunch for World Water Day, March 22

Does pet waste really biodegrade into fertilizer?
Why would natural leaves and grass clippings be bad for water quality?
What's the deal with native plants and how are they more resilient?
What's the big deal with winter salt, anyway?
Learn the answers to these questions and more at:



WWW.RESPECTOURWATERS.ORG

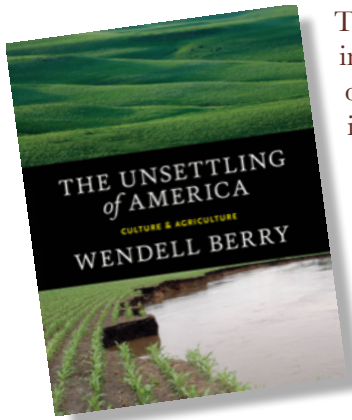
In celebration of World Water Day, two local nonprofits, Root-Pike WIN and Sweet Water, are relaunching their Respect Our Waters website. The new site is chock-FULL of easy-to-access information for all things water quality. Visit the updated site today to learn how you can help protect local freshwater resources.

Join the Sierra Club Wisconsin Book Club!

Our Book Club meets virtually every other month to discuss a book related to climate change, nature, environmental justice, or equity in the outdoors.

Our next discussion will be held on Tuesday, May 2, from 7-8 PM.

We will be discussing, *The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture*,
by Wendell Berry



This book is Berry's personal, dramatic inquiry into the way in which we use the land that sustains us. For the roots of our attitudes toward farming, Berry goes back to the industrial revolution, which promised freedom from physical toil, and to the "conquistador" mentality that ruled the settlement of North America, treating land, resources, and ultimately people as infinitely expendable. Out of this history comes a disturbing, and officially sanctioned, vision of the farm of the future -- where the supreme value is maximum production, where the environment is to be controlled by technology, and where a man has no place.

Find our event page by searching "Sierra Club Wisconsin Book Club" on Facebook, or on the Sierra Club Wisconsin website. Sign up to receive the Google Meet Invite or phone number to call in. Hope to see you at our next discussion!



JOIN US!



Hike the Ice Age Trail ~ Eagle Segment

Sunday, May 21 at 1PM

Join SEGG Outings Chair, Al Sommer, on a hike of the Eagle Segment of the Ice Age Trail. The hike, approximately 5 miles, will take us on trail only (no road walking) through areas of extensive prairie restoration, century-old oak savannas, and past Brady's Rocks, a portion of the Niagara Escarpment that extends through Door County, under Lake Michigan and the state of Michigan, re-emerging at Niagara Falls. There will be renovated prairie with long dormant plant species specific to prairie plants that have been suppressed by invasive species.

After the hike we will have the option of driving to Paradise Springs where we can view a 5,000 gallon per minute spring with an old resort and rehash the day over a drink and a granola bar.

Meet at 1:00 at the parking lot on State Rte 67 approximately .25 miles south of Road X and 2.5 miles north of Eagle. We can do a car transfer for anyone not interested in making it a 10-mile hike. Participants will be asked to sign a Sierra Club waiver.

If interested, please contact Allan Sommer (262-716-6955 or sommerallan4@gmail.com) so he can expect you, or to inform you of a cancellation due to bad weather.



SEGG Night at the Biergarten

Thursday, June 15 at 6:00pm

Petrifying Springs Park Biergarten — Pavilion #1
5555 7th St., Kenosha, WI 53144

Come meet fellow SEGG club members and share your environmental adventure stories.
Look for the Sierra Club Banner.

Drinks & Merriment—Hooray!



Prost!



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DEBUNKING ELECTRIFICATION MYTHS *By Gloria Randall-Hewitt*

We'll go into more details in future newsletters on how to know what you may qualify for in the way of incentives. Note that some items have tiered incentive amounts depending on your income level. In the meantime, you can read more at [whitehouse.gov/cleanenergy/](https://www.whitehouse.gov/cleanenergy/) where a summary of incentives is given with the following graphic:



1. Rooftop Solar: up to 30% of installation costs
2. Insulation and air sealing and home energy audits
3. Clothes dryer: rebates cover up to 100% of purchase and installation of a new electric heat pump dryer
4. Electric stove or oven: rebates up to 100% of the cost of electric stoves, ovens
5. Weatherized windows & doors: upgrades to exterior windows and doors
6. Heat pump: provides both heating and cooling with IRA tax credit and rebates up to 100% of the costs
7. Electric vehicles: tax credits for new and used electric vehicles
8. Breaker boxes: tax credits and rebates for upgrades to handle the load from new electric appliances
9. Heat pump water heater: IRA includes tax credits and rebates up to 100% of the cost of a heat pump water heater which can be 2 to 3 times more efficient than convention water heaters

New Group Forms to Help Electrify Racine

Just six months after the passage of the Inflation Reduction Act, there's much excitement and some confusion about the opportunities offered in the historic legislation. The IRA, the most significant climate action ever taken by the US Government, has many incentives that will accelerate the transition from fossil fuels to clean energy. Many of these incentives are focused on American homes where 42% of the energy in the United States is consumed.



Electrify Racine has two goals. The first is to help consumers navigate the many incentives for home electrification which includes photovoltaic installations and battery storage, heat pumps, induction ovens, electric cars, and EV charging stations. Incentives are also available to weatherize homes, to rewire households and to install new electrical panels.

The second goal is to educate people on why such changes will not only save money, but will lead to healthier, cleaner, more comfortable homes while reducing the homes carbon footprint.

Have a question about IRA incentives or need help sorting through the options?

Questions about necessary steps to electrify your home?



Send your questions to:
electrifyracine@gmail.com



Why Choose an Electric Vehicle for Your Next car? *By Joe Dubanowicz*

Since the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) includes incentives for the purchase of electric vehicles, we can conclude that there are many who believe that moving to electric vehicles is an important part of our clean energy future. For those who may be thinking about purchasing an electric vehicle, we've listed below some key points to consider.

Environmental Impacts: Many people are concerned with the amount of gasoline emissions and carbon dioxide in the air caused by Internal Combustion Engines (ICE) vehicles. These emissions contribute mightily to greenhouse gas accumulations in the upper atmosphere which will reflect the earth's heat back down to the earth's surface and exacerbate climate change effects. When it is time to trade in your ICE vehicle, whether it is gas-efficient or not, you can consider investing in an electric vehicle (EV). EVs run entirely on electricity and when provided by solar power they do not contribute any greenhouse gasses to our atmosphere.

Batteries: The batteries in all-electric EVs are predominantly lithium-ion (identical to the batteries in your smartphones). Often objections are raised about electric vehicles due to environmental concerns around the mining for lithium, carbon, cobalt, manganese and nickel required for batteries. These mining issues are being addressed by the international engineering community for the battery industry overall – including for electric vehicles.

Engineering of EVs: Contrary to some skeptics, EV batteries have a long life and are 90% recyclable. This is why all new electric cars on sale today come with long warranties, guaranteeing around 70% original capacity even after seven or eight years of use and between 100,000 miles and 150,000 miles. A near future enhancement will make it possible for your EV to operate electrical machinery at a remote site or even power your home during power outages.

Engineering Plus: Electric vehicles require very low maintenance (no oil changes, no muffler, and no radiator) and can be charged at home at your convenience. They include lots of high-tech features including regenerative braking, great acceleration and high torque. An increasing array of charging station locations, apps and websites (e.g.: plugshare.com, chargehub.com, afdc.energy.gov) are removing the uncertainty of being able to charge “on the road”.

Engineering Minus: Cabin HVAC for most older EVs are radiant heating and traditional air conditioning. Most new models have progressed to highly efficient electric heat pumps for heating and cooling. Although battery efficiency is diminished during cold winter temperatures (20 degrees F) by 10-12%, it is highly efficient at warm and hot outside temperatures. Using the car's AC could have some efficiency impact.

Prices and Tax Incentives: The leading 2023 EV models have an MSRP as low as \$25,600 for a Chevy BOLT EV and \$28,040 for a Nissan LEAF. For many other USA-made, union-made new EVs, there is a Federal Tax Credit of up to \$7,500. If you buy a qualified previously owned EV (at least two years old) from a licensed dealer for \$25,000 or less, you may be eligible for a clean vehicle Federal Tax Credit for as much as \$4,000. However, used EVs are not in great supply, but inventories will increase quickly.

Charging At Home: Level 1 charging (120 volts) uses a normal household electric plug, like your hair dryer. Using level 1 charging, we can typically expect 3-5 miles of driving range per hour of charging. At home Level 2 charging (240 volts), the charging rate increases to 10-20 miles of driving range per hour of charging. Charging at home costs can be minimized by using Time-Of-Use discounts overnight – or by installing solar panels on your house.

On the Road: NEVI (National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure), a DOE/DOT program, will be providing Level 3 DCFC (Fast Charge) charging stations (480 volts) (full charge in 20-30 minutes) at locations less than 50 miles apart within the next 2-4 years.

At places of work: We Energies is in the process of supplying the electrical infrastructure for as many as 1,000 Level 2 charging stations for the private sector (employers for their employees) in their service territory.

Final words: If you're thinking about an electric vehicle and are also trying to decide which electric vehicle to buy, consider calling ahead to ask your favorite local dealership if they have EVs for sale or lease and arrange for a test ride. An even better first step may be to attend a local EV car show at driveelectricweek.org or driveelectricearthday.org.

You will be thrilled!



Join the e-news fun!

Due to some technical problems this past year, we need to revamp our email list. If you would like to be added to the list to receive notices about club events and outings in between receiving the regular newsletter, please sign up directly on the SEGG website or email Laura Schulz at schulztwin2@gmail.com.

The Adopt-a-Highway program in the US began in 1985 and Wisconsin got onboard in 1990. It is administered by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation with coordination assistance from Racine County.

History of Southeast Gateway Group Participation in the Adopt-a-Highway Program



SEGG joined the program in the first year as Group #32. There are now about 2,300 volunteer organizations state-wide participating. Since neither the State nor County has the personnel to clean up along local highways, these volunteer groups have been vital in "Keeping America Beautiful."

Since we began picking up trash and recycling along a section of Hwy 38 in Racine County, we have removed about 1,080 bags of trash and several hundred bags of recyclables, and we have put in about 1,700 hours of volunteer labor.

We have received letters from County workers that mow along the highway expressing their appreciation for not having to grind up the trash with their machines. If we don't pick it up, it may eventually find its way into our waterways. Volunteer groups have also been helpful in identifying nesting sites or locations of endangered plant species that become protected "no mow" areas.

Now we need your help! Many of our long-time volunteers have retired from this work. We need a new batch of SEGG members and friends to help us keep this important program going strong. Besides, it's not a bad way to spend a Saturday morning!

PLEASE JOIN US!!!

2023 Saturday Clean Up Dates: May 6, July 29 & October 7

We meet at Blessed Hope Church, 4949 Hwy 38 (corner of Hwy 38 and 4 Mile Rd) at 9:00 AM on three Saturdays each year. Safety vests and bags are provided.

To sign up or for more information, contact Jeff Sytsma at: Jeff12759@aol.com, 262 637-6845 or 262 497-4761



Spread the Word — We're Giving Out Grants!



As part of the national Sierra Club, the Southeast Gateway Group has been organized to promote the national Sierra Club's goals at our local level.

The purposes of the Sierra Club are to explore, enjoy, and protect the wild places of the earth; to practice and promote the responsible use of the earth's ecosystems and resources; to educate and enlist humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment; and to use all lawful means to carry out these objectives.

In keeping with these goals, the SEGG Excom will evaluate potential donations to other local organizations and efforts to ensure consistency with the overall Sierra Club's purpose.

In addition, SEGG will review any requests for gifts or donations against current priorities within that purpose, and monitor recent gifts in an effort to reach all areas of our community and promote the Sierra Club's mission to as wide an audience as possible.

Applications are available on our website. Local organizations and environmental efforts may request up to \$500. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis.

Grant Awarded to the Eco-Justice Center!

The Eco-Justice Center's Farm Corps donates over 30% of the produce they grow to a local food pantry. Eco-Justice aims to donate and distribute even more produce to the community, growing this percentage at a steady rate.



Recently, the work has become more and more difficult as equipment is older and less efficient or unusable.

The money received from this grant will be used to purchase new equipment just in time for the upcoming growing season. With newer, more efficient equipment, the Eco-J can grow more food to serve more people and help alleviate food insecurity within our community.

SEGG is proud to support this effort by funding Eco-Justice's grant application!

Save a Tree & See in Color!

Email natom@wi.rr.com to request a full-color, digital newsletter emailed instead of receiving a paper copy.



**Your donation helps us continue to
"Explore, Enjoy and Protect" SE Wisconsin.**

Checks can be made out to *Sierra Club SEGG* to be used towards any purpose, or to *Sierra Club Foundation* to be used strictly for educational programs and activities. Mail donations to:
Jeff Sytsma, 3508 Washington Ave, Racine, WI 53405



SEGG encourages you to **WRITE** to your legislators on the issues you care about.
Find your representative at legis.wisconsin.gov

Senator Stephen L. Nass
Senate District 11 (R - Whitewater)
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2022 Southeast Gateway Group Leadership

Executive Committee

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Alex Weyenberg (*Conservation Chair*) alex.weyenberg@gmail.com
Allan Sommer (*Outings Chair*).....sommerallan4@gmail.com
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The newsletter of the Southeast Gateway Group is published quarterly by Group members. Please send articles, event submissions, photographs, corrections and/or comments to: Nicole Reid - nreid23@wi.rr.com

Deadline for Jul-Sept Issue: Jun. 15, 2023

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