



# WISCONSIN Sierran

NEWS OF THE WISCONSIN CHAPTER OF THE SIERRA CLUB

## WATER PROTECTORS

### SPEAKING UP FOR THE GREAT LAKES AT COP15 ON BIODIVERSITY

In December, Montreal, Canada, was host to COP15, or the 15th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity. Global leaders met to create a new 10-year plan to reverse the accelerating loss of life on Earth. Sierra Club chapters in the Great Lakes region and our partners joined mobilization efforts on the ground and participated in a panel to call attention to the threat that Enbridge’s fossil fuel pipelines pose to biodiversity, climate, and human health.

Enbridge’s Line 5 pipeline carries tar sands oil from Superior, Wisconsin to Sarnia, Ontario, and crosses hundreds of waterways and wetlands as well as the Great Lakes at the Straits of Mackinac. It is part of Enbridge’s mainline pipeline system, and impacts the entire region.

The question is when, not if, a spill will occur, as we saw recently with the devastating Keystone spill in Kansas. Should Line 5 spill, it would be catastrophic for the Great Lakes, which hold 84% of North America’s surface freshwater, provide drinking water for millions of people and support billion-dollar economies.

Montreal, where COP15 was held, is on the St. Lawrence Seaway, a part of the Great Lakes Network. The potential impacts of a Line 5 spill are a major threat to Indigenous Tribes and First Nations on both sides of the U.S. and Canada border. In the US, 11 Ojibwe tribes retain hunting, fishing and gathering rights in multiple ceded treaty territories which Line 5 runs through. COP15 was an incredible opportunity to uplift calls for Canadian and U.S. decision makers to support Tribes and anti-pipeline activists, and to build stronger relationships.

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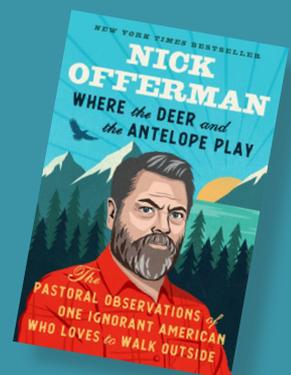
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## NEW NATIONAL LEADERSHIP SAME STRONG GRASSROOTS ACTIVISM

We are happy to report that as of February, 2023, the Sierra Club has a new Executive Director -- Ben Jealous. Ben is an experienced civil rights leader, community organizer, coalition builder and social justice activist. He is a former NAACP president and CEO, former president of People for the American Way, is a leader on climate justice, and was a candidate for Governor of Maryland. In addition, he has a new book, *Never Forget Our People Were Always Free: A Parable of American Healing*. We welcome him as a unifying force in the Sierra Club.

The Wisconsin Chapter was honored to welcome Ben on the first stop of his national listening tour. Titled *Powerful Together*, he wants to hear from grassroots activists and local organizers, and met with staff and volunteers on January 22 and 23 in Milwaukee and Madison. Thanks to Wisconsin Chapter Director Elizabeth Ward, who set up a communication process that was both productive and informative.

Ramón Cruz, Sierra Club Board President, joined Ben on the tour. Ramón has over 20 years of experience working on sustainability, environmental policy, urban planning, energy and climate change. He has worked in Puerto Rico's public sector, has experience with the destructive Hurricane Irma, and represented the Sierra Club at the 2022 UN Climate Conference

(COP 27) in Egypt. Ramón also oversaw the Sierra Club's 2030 Strategic Framework that calls for commitments to sustainability, ecosystem protection and democracy, and specifically focuses on the climate crisis and achieving 100% clean energy for all.

Ben acknowledged the tremendous work volunteers are doing to address climate change. He emphasized that the Sierra Club is on fire, and specifically mentioned Sierra Club volunteers' advocacy for the Inflation Reduction Act. This federal legislation, while not perfect, is a major step forward in combatting climate change and accelerating the transition to clean energy. It includes funding for non-profits and governmental entities as well as homeowners and businesses. There are also funds earmarked for communities of color to support a more equitable transition to clean energy.

This falls right in line with our work at the Wisconsin Chapter. Last year, we helped obtain over 32,000 comments voicing opposition to a reroute of the toxic tar sands Line 5 pipeline, which is impacting the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa. These comments



were submitted to the Wisconsin DNR. We also fought against a proposed gas plant in Superior, and have delayed and stopped other fossil gas projects in Wisconsin through our opposition.

In Milwaukee, we worked with partners to fight We Energies' atrocious rate hikes that add to the energy burden many residents of color suffer from, and worked to amplify the need for more affordable clean energy. We also continue to oppose the expansion of I-94 in Milwaukee that is further impacting low income residents, and are advocating for better transit solutions that will serve many more people more equitably instead.

This year, we will continue with these and other efforts to protect our environment, advocate for environmental justice for all, and get people out to explore and enjoy nature. We thank those who have supported our efforts, and welcome anyone who is interested to join our fine cadre of current volunteers. Together, we will continue to make a difference.

**Gail Syverud  
Don Ferber  
Co-chairs, Sierra Club - Wisconsin Chapter**

## THE WISCONSIN SIERRAN

754 Williamson St., Madison, WI 53703  
A Publication of the Wisconsin Chapter of the Sierra Club

### **Wisconsin Sierran Committee**

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### **Contributor Guidelines**

Please submit articles by mail or email to:  
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[wisconsin.chapter@sierraclub.org](mailto:wisconsin.chapter@sierraclub.org)

*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.*

### **Advertising Coordinator:**

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### **Advertising Rates:**

Current advertising rates may be found on the Wisconsin Chapter website: [sierraclub.org/wisconsin](http://sierraclub.org/wisconsin)

### **Deadline:**

The deadline for submission of articles to the October issue is midnight on July 15, 2023.

### **Change of Address:**

You can update your contact information online at [myaccount.sierraclub.org](http://myaccount.sierraclub.org).

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**Activists from the Great Lakes region joined the March for Biodiversity and Human rights**, hosted by over 67 organizations and saw an attendance of 3,500 people. In addition to uplifting issues related to Line 5 and the respect for Indigenous sovereignty, attending the march and connecting with local activists afterwards was a great way to build connections and lay the groundwork for future collaboration.



At the Canadian Pavilion of COP15, a panel featuring leaders from across the region also spoke on the threat Enbridge poses to the Great Lakes' water and communities. It included the following activists, and you can watch the recording online!

- **AURORA CONLEY**, community and staff member of the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
- **TRAVIS BOISSONEAU**, Lake Huron Regional Deputy Grand Council Chief for the Anishinaabek Nation
- **MICHELLE WOODHOUSE**, Environmental Defence Canada Water Program Manager
- **DON WALLER**, Great Lakes Biologist and Retired Professor from the University of Wisconsin Madison
- **CARLEY DOVE-MCFALLS**, a recent graduate and climate justice activist in the Tio:ti'a'ke - Mooniyang - Montreal community
- **TESSINE MURJI**, Sierra Club Illinois Chapter organizer

With a packed room and live streams, the panelists reached a wide audience from all over the world, including Canadian politicians, activists from across the region, and online viewers.

In addition to building connections, uplifting the need to protect water and the Great Lakes, and raising major concerns about Line 5, COP15-related activities in Montreal provided an opportunity for us all to reflect on how connected our work is. The work to shut down Line 5 continues to build and grow, and we're always welcoming new people who want to participate! Interested in learning more about our volunteer team working on this? Email [jadine.sonoda@sierraclub.org](mailto:jadine.sonoda@sierraclub.org).

To watch the recording of the COP15 panel, visit this link: [facebook.com/SierraClubWI/videos/5708571189197898](https://facebook.com/SierraClubWI/videos/5708571189197898)

## Support Your Passion for a Just and Sustainable World

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.



Julia Curtis • (800) 932-4270 • [giftplanning@sierraclub.org](mailto:giftplanning@sierraclub.org) • [myplan.sierraclub.org](http://myplan.sierraclub.org)

# FIX AT SIX TO STOP THE I-94 EXPANSION

For anyone familiar with the freeways of Milwaukee, the stretch of I-94 leading in and out of the Stadium Interchange near American Family Park might have you gripping your steering wheel a bit tighter than you would like. This section of highway is in need of repair and modernization.

Unfortunately, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's (WISDOT) proposed "solution" will do little to remedy the safety risks and commuter traffic congestion, and will only accelerate the number of vehicles using the corridor. This will not only increase greenhouse gas emissions and other air and water pollution; it will further drive social, economic, and racial disparities in our communities.

WISDOT's proposal would also cost taxpayers a whopping \$1.2 billion in total, funds that could improve our communities in much more meaningful ways than investing in another 40+ acres of concrete. Unfortunately, WISDOT and Governor Evers have failed thus far to heed the call from community members, Milwaukee city officials and environmental groups (such as the Sierra Club Wisconsin Chapter, Milwaukee Riverkeeper, MICA and other members of the Coalition for More Responsible Transportation (CMRT)) to reassess this project.

We refuse to be silent on this issue, and continue to speak up and push back. In 2022, Sierra Club Wisconsin and many of its over 20,000 members spoke out in opposition to this project, and instead positioned support behind a more equitable solution called Fix at Six.

The Fix at Six solution takes a sustainable and future-focused approach to redefining what a modern Milwaukee can be. The proposal establishes four key elements of improvement intended to repair the existing roadway and invest in alternative transportation options to reduce our reliance on private vehicles as the sole means of transit in the area. The four elements of the proposal are listed above.

Through our activism, Sierra Club Wisconsin obtained hundreds of signatures with personal comments from community members in opposition to WISDOT's proposed expansion and in support of the Fix at Six alternative. Additionally, two public hearings took place in December 2022 and were well-attended, with the majority of testifiers supporting Fix at Six. As reported in Urban Milwaukee,

"Donna Brown-Martin, Director of the Milwaukee County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) told Urban Milwaukee that she worked on major freeway projects like the Marquette Interchange during her time at WisDOT and said 'this is the largest turnout I've seen for providing comment.'



## Fix at Six includes the following:

- **Repair the road's pavement and bridges as needed**, keeping the current six lanes.
- **Add a new bus rapid transit (BRT) line** along National and Greenfield avenues.
- **Promote thriving, walkable/bikeable neighborhoods** by building bicycle infrastructure near the corridor as listed in the 2010 Milwaukee Bicycle Master Plan. This includes bridges crossing the Valley and turning Wisconsin Highway 175 (Stadium Freeway) into a bicycle and pedestrian-friendly boulevard.
- **Explore future opportunities to maximize sustainable and equitable alternatives**, including North-South BRT routes, commuter rail and better housing and zoning practices including Transit-Oriented Development

We remain optimistic that Governor Evers and WISDOT will respond to the widespread criticism of their proposal and go back to the drawing board to create an equitable and just six-lane alternative. Or better yet, they'll move forward with the Fix at Six proposal. It is high time that we learn from the devastating history of interstate projects in Milwaukee that destroy communities, increase vehicle emissions and deteriorate public and ecosystem health so a few commuters can save a few minutes off of their drive into and out of the city.

Our communities deserve better. Through investments in roadway repairs, public transit system expansion and bikeable and walkable alternatives, Milwaukee will have a brighter future. We hope WisDOT makes the right choice for Milwaukee, our communities and our future, and we will keep fighting until they do. Find out more about the Fix at Six proposal here: [FixAtSix.org](https://FixAtSix.org).

Monica Bence  
Transportation Team member

# GREETINGS FROM THE WISCONSIN OUTINGS PROGRAM!

Spring is in the air – literally – as I saw migrating cranes and plenty of geese while traveling the first weekend of March. If you enjoy being outdoors and would like to be in the company of others, please consider joining one of Sierra Club’s outings this year.

**WISCONSIN CHAPTER:** For 2023, we offered training for outings leaders and are now getting ready to offer more outings across the state. Experienced leaders are being joined by a class of new leaders (Over 15 people signed up for the training!) who want to share an outdoor experience with you. We will be finishing training and the basic first aid class in March so we hope to get these leaders scheduled to lead an outing by the end of June!

The best place to look for Wisconsin or local outings is the Chapter and Group calendars on their websites. The Wisconsin Chapter website calendar will have the most complete listing: [sierraclub.org/wisconsin](https://sierraclub.org/wisconsin)

Have an idea for a Wisconsin outing? We are always interested in hearing your ideas for places that you would like to go on an outing. Feel free to use this suggestion

form and let us know where you would like to go: <https://tinyurl.com/outingsidea>

**NATIONAL OUTINGS PROGRAM:** The National Outings program offers a broad array of outings from service trips to international treks or tours. The list of possibilities continues to change as new outings are added. Some outings can be reserved up to a year in advance. You can get on an email list if you want first notice of outings as they come online. Or just check the website on a regular basis: [content.sierraclub.org/outings](https://content.sierraclub.org/outings)

Things to note: When you sign up for an outing, you will be signing a liability waiver. This enables the Sierra Club to support and encourage volunteer leaders. And for trips further afield, please do not make non-refundable travel arrangements until notified to do so by the trip leader.

**QUESTIONS?** Contact Liz Wessel at [lizard59sc@yahoo.com](mailto:lizard59sc@yahoo.com) or 608-238-9934.

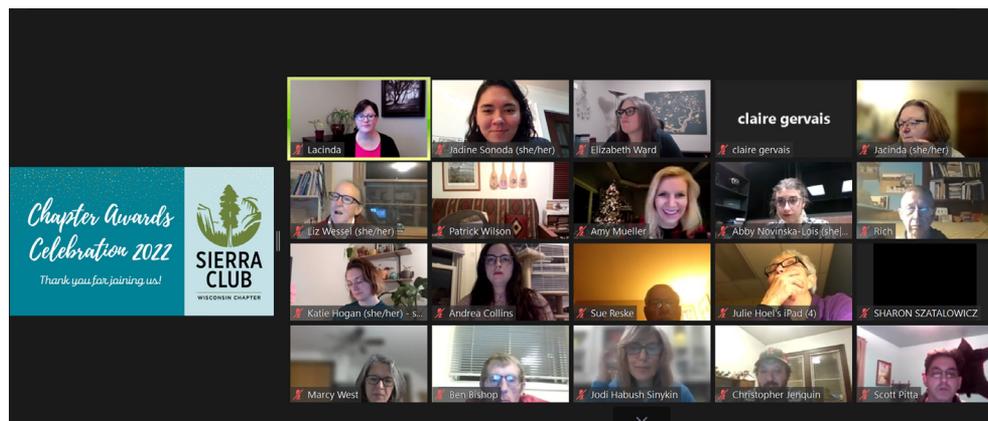
**Liz Wessel**  
Outings Council Member

## CELEBRATING VOLUNTEERS: SUBMIT NOMINATIONS FOR CHAPTER AWARDS!

Each year, the Sierra Club Wisconsin Chapter recognizes outstanding volunteers for their contributions to our organization, our communities and our planet. We know there is amazing work being done across our state, and today we are asking you to help us identify these incredible people.

We want to hear your stories about the work you’ve witnessed in the past year by Sierra Club volunteers as well as community leaders and other organizations. Fill out the easy online form to nominate them today at [sierraclub.org/wisconsin/awards](https://sierraclub.org/wisconsin/awards), and help us celebrate the amazing work being done across the state!

The final deadline for nominations is August 1st and winners will be acknowledged at our annual Chapter Awards Celebration in the fall. Contact Awards Chair Lacinda Athen with questions: [lacinda.athen@gmail.com](mailto:lacinda.athen@gmail.com).





## MOSTLY D'S- JOIN US AT VOLUNTEER NIGHTS!

Our Volunteer Nights currently happen on Zoom. We break out into virtual rooms and work on different types of projects that help advance our work. These are a great opportunity to meet other new and current volunteers and learn a little about our work. If you only have two hours a month to make a difference, this may be your perfect fit!

Now that you've discovered your perfect volunteering match, are you ready to jump in? Contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Katie Hogan at [katie.hogan@sierraclub.org](mailto:katie.hogan@sierraclub.org) with your results and to learn more! Or, you can check out our Volunteer Page at [sierraclub.org/wisconsin/volunteer](https://sierraclub.org/wisconsin/volunteer) to learn more about these different volunteer opportunities.



## GREEN REVIEW

# Where the Deer and the Antelope Play:

## The Pastoral Observations of One Ignorant American Who Loves to Walk Outside

by Nick Offerman, Dutton, 2021, 352 pages



Ralph Waldo Emerson may have a cheeky younger brother – 167 years younger. Offerman has enlarged the American canon of walking essays as he hikes, farms and road trips across the country in an Airstream trailer. These “walking” essays explore history, science, relationships, wilderness, agrarianism, family dynamics, and the divisive subjects that divide us. He writes with the thoughtful analysis of a reader, thinker, and dry humorist.

Offerman travels with friends. In part one, he hikes in Glacier National Park with famous buddies, writer George Saunders and musician Jeff Tweedy. The trio and their guide experience enough wilderness and risk to evoke awe and separation from the salesmanship of civilization. There's also acknowledgment that the National Park formation didn't just save land, it evicted those who depended upon and lived in harmony with the land, the people of the Blackfoot Nation.

In Part Two, Offerman digs into the challenge given to him by mentor and buddy, Wendell Berry, to explore the ideology of Aldo Leopold and agrarian values, rather than adhere to John Muir's attraction to the wilderness that is separate from the places we inhabit. Hyperbolically and jocularly appreciative of ethically raised meat, he's enamored by the writer/farmer James Rebank as he embeds in the family with their robust, capable, and unplugged lifestyle.

The Covid-19 pandemic inspires a socially isolated road trip in part three. His wife, Megan Mullally, joins him as they Airstream their way from campsites to family visits, and as they negotiate their California urban perspectives on the pandemic against a more rural, cultural experience with their Oklahoma and Illinois relatives who work on the front lines. Negotiations ensue.

Throughout the meandering travels and essay threads, Offerman displays his wit, love for books, science, history, and penchant for thoughtful analysis. He's not a subject expert (he mistakenly refers to Luna Leopold as Aldo's daughter, rather than son); he's a humorist and essayist. His progressive ideas are adamant enough to straighten the back of conservative thinkers; he's also a man in progress. Although much funnier than Emerson, Offerman embodies the advice from *Self-Reliance*: “Speak what you think today in hard words and tomorrow speak what tomorrow thinks in hard words again, though it contradict everything you said today.” *Where the Deer and the Antelope Play* exemplifies the founding ideals of the nation the Transcendentalists aspired to. Emerson would give Nick an approving pat on the head.

Amy Lou Jenkins is the award-winning author of *Every Natural Fact*. Contact her at [AmyLouJenkins.com](https://AmyLouJenkins.com) to forward review copies for consideration.

## NEW PFAS STANDARDS



**Good news for Wisconsinites' health:** the EPA released drinking water health advisory levels for four PFAS chemicals, and the WI Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is in the process of setting groundwater standards for those four chemicals. The Natural Resources Board (NRB) of the DNR approved the scope of the proposed rule, and the DNR is now preparing the rule and economic impact analysis.

PFAS have been linked to a wide variety of health problems including cancers, high cholesterol, immune suppression, and hypertension, especially during pregnancy.<sup>1</sup>

The NRB approved surface and drinking water standards for PFAS last February, and the groundwater rule will be a welcome addition. Keep your eyes open for public hearings once the new rules are drafted!

**Pat Bowne**  
Water Team member

<sup>1</sup> *Center for Disease Control. (2022, November 1). Potential health effects of PFAS chemicals | ATSDR. Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry. <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/health-effects/index.html>*

## NEW GAS PROPOSAL IN WHEATON

Xcel Energy is proposing a buildout of gas electric power at one of their current sites in Wheaton, Wisconsin. Despite the need to transition to clean energy, and Governor Evers' Task Force on Climate Change's recommendation to avoid all new fossil fuel infrastructure, including gas, the utility wants to increase generation at the site using this fossil fuel. In this case, batteries are an excellent alternative and we will advocate for them while demanding Xcel's fossil fuel project be canceled.

## 2023 VIRTUAL VOLUNTEER FAIR

We kicked off our year of volunteering with more than 30 prospective volunteers who joined us on Zoom, learned about our volunteer opportunities, and met some of our current volunteers. Folks joined from all over the state, and are now getting involved with our conservation issue teams, digital support teams, and our legislative committee. Did you miss our volunteer fair, but still want to get involved? You can learn more on the volunteering page of our website at <https://www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/volunteer>, or contact our volunteer coordinator at [katie.hogan@sierraclub.org](mailto:katie.hogan@sierraclub.org).

## SIERRA CLUB'S NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR VISITS WISCONSIN

Last fall, Sierra Club announced that Ben Jealous would become the next Executive Director on February 20, 2023. He has made it clear that he believes Sierra Club's power lies in its grassroots structure, so he decided to spend time visiting chapters across the country to hear directly from volunteers about their work and experiences.



We were honored that he chose to begin his tour in Wisconsin! Chapter Director Elizabeth Ward joined Ben, along with Sierra Club Board President Ramón Cruz, as they met with about 30 volunteers in Milwaukee and another 20 in Madison. Here are some of the highlights: In Milwaukee, we heard from the Great Waters Group Chair Jenny Abel, Great Waters Group volunteers and other Milwaukee area about the incredible work happening to address the energy burden disparities in Milwaukee, their great Nearby Nature program, and their work to get clean transportation solutions to the region. In Madison, volunteers talked about their work to fight for clean water, increase access to the outdoors, advance clean energy, stop dirty pipelines, and expand access to public transportation.

Everyone spoke sincerely about ways to grow and expand the Sierra Club and to ensure that we are in a position to stop the pending climate catastrophe, restore clean air and water, and protect our wildlife from the biodiversity crisis.

Ben congratulated the leaders for their dedication to engaging thoughtfully with partners and campaigns. At the end of the visit, everyone left feeling excited about Ben's commitment to supporting Sierra Club Chapters and the work we're doing here in Wisconsin.

## CHAPTER DIRECTOR ELIZABETH WARD VISITS THE WHITE HOUSE

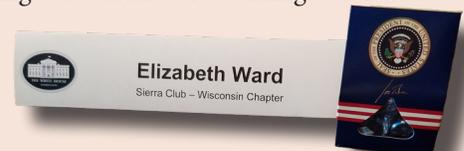
In February, I joined leaders from across Wisconsin at the White House in Washington DC for Communities in Action: Building a Better Wisconsin. I left the meeting so optimistic and energized about our ability to take on some of the big challenges in Wisconsin, including cleaning up our water, acting on climate change, and protecting our ecosystems from the biodiversity crisis.

We listened to a briefing from members of the Biden-Harris Administration, including Department of Agriculture Secretary Thomas J. Vilsack and John Podesta, Senior Adviser to the President for Clean Energy Innovation and Implementation. It's clear that Wisconsin is a top priority for the Administration. The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) are already making a difference in Wisconsin. These include funding for clean energy projects, lead pipe removal, and energy efficiency measures.

Hearing about all of the significant projects that these laws are already creating, and the potential for even more, I was filled with so much hope and optimism that I wanted to share it with you. Your actions in the past few years helped us garner the political will we needed for legislation like the IRA to pass. The IRA alone is expected to enable 40 percent emissions reductions by the end of the decade. This is the huge momentum shift we've been waiting for and this will make the United States a climate leader while helping our most marginalized communities.

No matter which way big polluters and their friends in the Legislature work to fight progress, local communities in Wisconsin have the tools and resources to begin creating the healthy and thriving Wisconsin we're working towards.

**Elizabeth Ward**  
Chapter Director



# SPRING ELECTION ENDORSEMENTS

The Wisconsin Chapter is proud to endorse Janet Protasiewicz for Wisconsin Supreme Court and Jodi Habush Sinykin for election to Senate District 8 on April 4. Protasiewicz faces conservative activist Dan Kelly who lost a previous election to the Supreme Court in 2020. Habush Sinykin is running to fill the vacant District 8 seat created by the retirement of Alberta Darling.

We support electing Janet Protasiewicz to the Supreme Court due to her commitments to democracy, reproductive rights and environmental justice. Her opponent is widely considered a “judicial conservative” and is endorsed by anti-abortion groups including Pro-Life Wisconsin and anti-choice group Family Council Action Committee. He voted in favor of gerrymandered political districts while serving on the Supreme Court as an appointee of Gov. Scott Walker. He represented the Legislature’s Republicans in 2010 to redraw electoral districts to significantly favor their candidates and elected officials subverting electoral democracy in Wisconsin.

Jodi Habush Sinykin is our choice for election to the State Senate District 8. She faces Rep. Dan Knodl who scored zero on our scorecard of priority issue votes in the last legislative session.



She was an environmental attorney and policy expert for Midwest Environmental Advocates. She brought her years of collaborative experience to work with members of the state legislature on the enactment of a strong Great Lakes Compact, which set key regulations in place at the state, regional and national level to protect the Great Lakes for generations to come. Jodi worked on litigation to stop the use of dogs for hunting wolves and was appointed in 2021 to the Wisconsin DNR’s Wolf Management Plan Committee. Jodi has long been an active member and supporter of the Sierra Club, at both the local and national level. Jodi’s leadership and unwavering advocacy efforts on behalf of the Wisconsin Chapter’s Wildlife Committee earned her the Sierra Club Wisconsin Merit Award in 2021.

We urge Wisconsin Chapter members in Senate District 8 to vote for Jodi Habush Sinykin and for all members to vote for Janet Protasiewicz for Supreme Court on April 4.

Dave Blouin  
Chapter Political Chair

## SEEKING EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CANDIDATES

Would you like to join other passionate volunteers in working toward the general and operational health of the Wisconsin Chapter? We are seeking dedicated Sierra Club members with an interest in maintaining a strong and vibrant state chapter to run for the Executive Committee. The ExCom helps guide the chapter through governance, strategic planning, budget oversight

and fundraising. If you have experience and a willingness to learn skills, and if your values, purpose and passion align with Sierra Club’s mission, then we’d like to hear from you! In this fall’s election, three at-large seats each serving three-year terms will be elected. Members from across the state are encouraged to apply for these positions, and meetings are scheduled for weekends

and evenings to accommodate work/school schedules. The deadline for completed applications is August 1, 2023. The positions run from January 2024 through December 2026.

Please contact Linda Frank at [Linda@frankenvironmental.com](mailto:Linda@frankenvironmental.com) to learn more about the opportunity to serve.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

## LOCALLY GROWN, NATIONALLY KNOWN EVENT

Our annual celebration of local food and grassroots activism will be held May 18th. Healthy food and a healthy environment go hand in hand. This year we will be featuring a behind the scenes look at River Valley Ranch (RVR) in Burlington, WI. RVR is a sustainable family food business that produces 5 varieties of mushrooms year round, without using any chemicals, preservatives or growth enhancers.

This popular and fun-filled event will be held online so friends from across the state can join in the fun. The event is free to attend but will also offer the opportunity to make online donations to support our work. Find out more and register to attend here: <https://bit.ly/LGNK2023>. If you are interested in sponsoring this event please contact Liz Wessel at [lizard59sc@yahoo.com](mailto:lizard59sc@yahoo.com).



## RIVER TOURING SECTION – TRIPS ON PAUSE

The River Touring Section (RTS) has been a proud part of the Wisconsin Chapter of the Sierra Club and the paddling community in Wisconsin for 56 years. Since its inception in 1967, RTS has offered dozens of paddling trips and instructional clinics each year to its members and the general public. RTS has embodied Sierra Club's motto, to 'enjoy, protect and explore' our environment by introducing the rivers of Wisconsin and beyond to new generations of paddlers. RTS has provided endless opportunities for people to safely improve their paddling skills, explore new waterways, ingrain 'leave-no-trace' practices, and develop and share a love of the natural world.

RTS will not be offering any trips or clinics in 2023. Sierra Club's water outings policies are currently being reviewed, revised, and rewritten. When the new policies are implemented, we will review them with our trip leaders to determine if RTS can resume trips and clinics in the future.

Find more information here: <https://www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/river-touring-section>

Kevin Olson  
RTS Co-Chair

## 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.

\$50    \$100    \$250    \$500    other \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

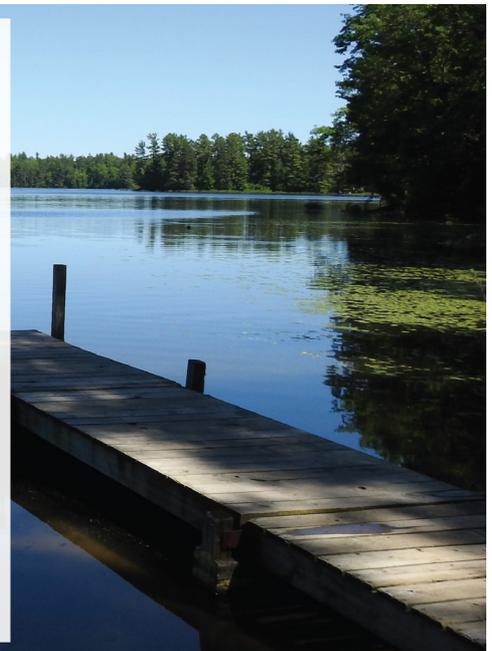
Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. \_\_\_\_\_

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

Contributions, gifts and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax-deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts.



# SPOTLIGHTS FROM OUR LOCAL GROUPS

## EARTH DAY '23

Did you know ... we have local groups across Wisconsin? Our local groups are planning all sorts of fun events this Earth Day, Spring, and Summer. Scan their QR codes to go to their websites and learn more! More events are being planned all the time, go to our blog for the most up to date list of Earth Day events:

[sierraclub.org/wisconsin/blog/2023/02/earth-day-2023-sierra-club-wisconsin](https://sierraclub.org/wisconsin/blog/2023/02/earth-day-2023-sierra-club-wisconsin)

**SOUTHEAST GATEWAY GROUP [SEGG]** of Sierra Club includes Kenosha County, Racine County, and Walworth County.

You can follow SEGG on facebook ([facebook.com/SierraClubSoutheastGatewayGroup](https://facebook.com/SierraClubSoutheastGatewayGroup)) and meet-up ([meetup.com/Southeast-Gateway-Group-Sierra-Club-Hikes-and-Activities/](https://meetup.com/Southeast-Gateway-Group-Sierra-Club-Hikes-and-Activities/)) to find the latest happenings!

**COULEE REGION GROUP [CRG]** of Sierra Club includes Crawford, Grant, Jackson, La Crosse, Monroe, Richland, Trempealeau and Vernon Counties.

The Group will be tabling at the **La Crosse Earth Fair on April 30** at Myrick Park from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. ([sustaininstitute.com/earthfairlacrosse](https://sustaininstitute.com/earthfairlacrosse)) and cleaning up our adopted roadside near the La Crosse Marsh on April 29.

If you are a member of the Coulee Region group and aren't currently receiving our monthly newsletter emails but would like to, please let the group know at [crsierraclub@gmail.com](mailto:crsierraclub@gmail.com)!

**CHIPPEWA VALLEY GROUP [CVG]** of Sierra Club includes Barron, Buffalo, Chippewa, Dunn, Eau Claire, Pepin, Pierce, Polk, Rusk and St. Croix Counties

Chippewa Valley Sierra Club's annual Gaylord Nelson Earth Green Award event is scheduled for Monday, Apr. 17, 2023, 5:30 p.m., where we recognize the work of a person or group that has made significant contributions to the environmental health in western Wisconsin. Full Info available at: <https://d.pr/3dbBXE>

Our CVSC Earth Green awardee this year will be Jerry Sazama, a leader in the Ice Age National Scenic Trail maintenance and trail-building in the Chippewa Moraine Chapter.

The group will table alongside other community groups at an **Earth Week Open House on Apr 20, 2023, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.** at the Brewing Project, 1807 N Oxford Ave., Eau Claire, WI.

**GREAT WATERS GROUP [GWG]** of Sierra Club includes Washington, Ozaukee, Waukesha and Milwaukee Counties

The Group is helping with **Nearby Nature's cleanup along Lincoln Creek on April 22**. It's one of the sites of Milwaukee Riverkeeper's annual spring river cleanups and Nearby Nature needs as many volunteers as possible to help with clearing trash along the Hopkins Hollow section of Lincoln Creek.



**FOX VALLEY GROUP [FVG]** of Sierra Club includes Walworth, Racine, and Kenosha Counties

The group is planning two events for Earth Day. The group is planning an **Appleton rally and march** with ESTHER, POP Earth and Citizens Climate Lobby. FVG is working with Baird Creek Preservation Foundation for a cleanup and tree planting in Green Bay.

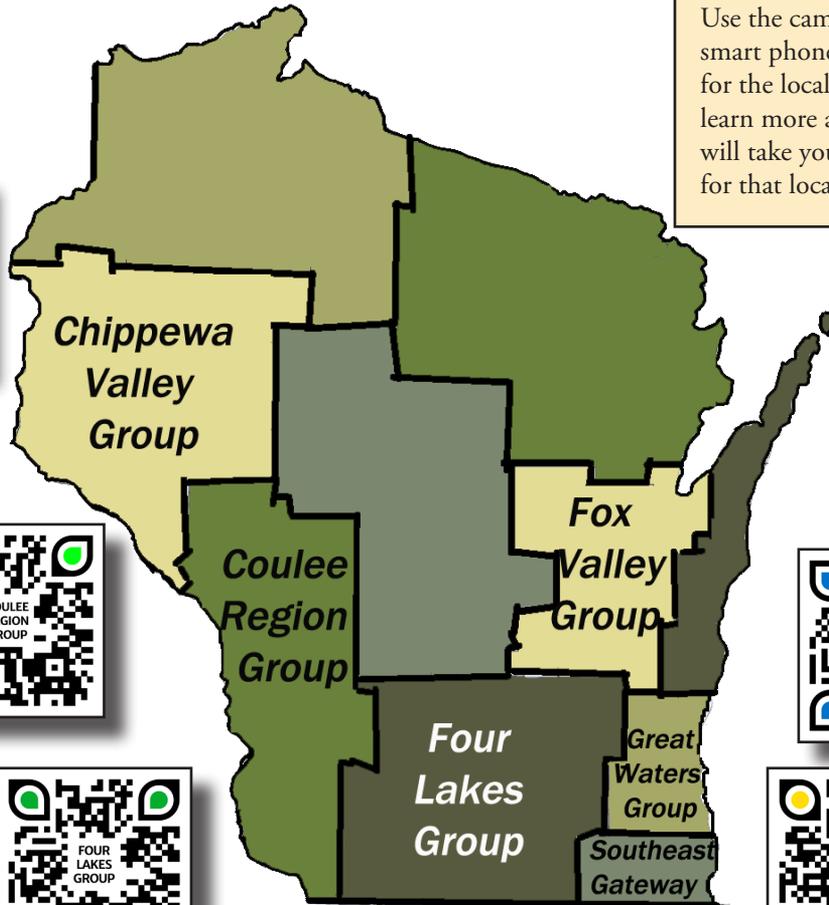
**FOUR LAKES GROUP [FLG]** of Sierra Club includes Columbia, Dane, Dodge, Green, Iowa, Jefferson, Lafayette, Rock & Sauk Counties

Join the FLG for some tree planting projects this spring! Many of us live in homes or neighborhoods with lots of trees, but others do not. Trees and shrubs provide beauty, shade and cooling and respite from the hot sun, and help battle climate change by taking in CO2 and providing oxygen. They also help remove pollutants and clean the air, and provide visual and noise screening.

For 2023, we are making plans for: **Fitchburg Planting projects on park/public land** partnering with Fitchburg Parks Department. Dates: Fri April 21 & Sat April 22 (note 4/22 is Earth Day) & Fri April 28 & Sat April 29 (note 4/28 is Arbor Day)

We're looking for volunteers to participate in tree planting projects. By participating, you'll learn about different trees and how to properly plant and care for them while improving local communities and the planet. It's a great activity for families and volunteers of all ages, so if you'd like to help, email Jake at [jake@paradymeproductions.com](mailto:jake@paradymeproductions.com).

Use the camera or QR app on your smart phone to scan the QR code for the local group you want to learn more about. Each QR code will take you to the relevant website for that local group.



## NATIONAL SIERRA CLUB ELECTIONS

### A DEMOCRATIC SIERRA CLUB DEMANDS GRASSROOTS PARTICIPATION

Those eligible to vote in the national Sierra Club election should have received in the mail (or by Internet if you chose the electronic delivery option) your national Sierra Club ballot in early March. This will include information on the candidates and where you can find additional information on Sierra Club's website.

Your participation is critical for a strong Sierra Club. The Sierra Club is a democratically structured organization at all levels. Sierra Club requires the regular flow of views on policy and priorities from its grassroots membership in order to function well. Yearly participation in elections at all Sierra Club levels is a major membership obligation.

In a typical year less than 10% of eligible members vote in the Board elections. A minimum of 5% is required for the elections to be valid. Our grassroots structure is strengthened when our participation is high. That means your participation is needed in the voting process.

#### How can I learn about the candidates?

Members frequently state that they don't know the candidates and find it difficult to vote without learning more. Each candidate provides a statement about themselves and their views on the issues on the official election ballot. You can learn more by asking questions of your group and chapter leadership and other experienced members you know. You can also visit the Sierra Club's election website for additional information about candidates: [sierraclub.org/board/election](https://sierraclub.org/board/election)

Additionally, please check out [sierraclub.org/wisconsin](https://sierraclub.org/wisconsin) for national board endorsements made by the Wisconsin Chapter. Then make your choice and cast your vote!

Even if you receive your election materials in the mail, we encourage you to use the user-friendly Internet voting site to save time and postage. If sending via ground mail, please note your ballots must be received by no later than noon EST on April 26, 2023.

# MAKE YOUR VOICE COUNT!

## WISCONSIN CONSERVATION CONGRESS SPRING HEARING 2023



Every spring the Wisconsin Conservation Congress (WCC) holds a Spring Hearing, an opportunity for all residents to voice their opinions on conservation and natural resource issues. Formerly held in person, it is now hosted in an online survey. This allows you to weigh in on important state issues and show public support for things that

the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) could ultimately influence or change here in Wisconsin.

If you aren't familiar with the WCC, it is a state-funded statutory group focused on collecting input from Wisconsinites that serves as an advisory partner to the Natural Resource Board (NRB), the governing body of the DNR.

It is their mission to “gather and convey the wisdom and influence of Wisconsin citizens in the formation of natural resource policy, research, education and conservation.”

The problem we face is that very few people even know about the WCC in our state!

**Why is it Important?** Wisconsin lawmakers, the DNR and the media look at the overall results of the Spring Hearing survey. The results provide a gauge of public opinion that agencies can turn to and which the legislature leverages when drafting bills and when voting throughout the year.

A great example comes from the environmental analysis of the Line 5 pipeline. In it, the DNR referred to the WCC vote showing concern for the pipeline as one indication of the public's thoughts on this issue.

**Give Your Input:** The online survey is open from Monday, April 10th at 12 noon through Thursday, April 13th at 12 noon.

### 2023 CONSERVATION CONGRESS VOTER GUIDE -- WCC SPRING HEARING QUESTIONS

Q	Question	Position	Background
14	Does the public support more testing and stricter standards for PFAS levels including in biosolids and groundwater?	<b>YES</b>	PFAS are dubbed “forever chemicals” because they're very difficult to break down, and, what's more, are carcinogenic, interfere with our hormone systems, and have made their way into Wisconsin's waterways and drinking water.
15	Do you support increasing the protection of Wisconsin's environment by recommending the Wisconsin Legislature reinstate the Prove It first Mining Law-1997 Act 171?	<b>YES</b>	The reason for Wisconsin's landmark “Prove it First” law for mining in metallic sulfides is simple and remains true to this day: there has never been an example of a metallic sulfide mine that has safely operated and closed without polluting the environment
16	Do you support the WCC working with the DNR, the Natural Resources Board and our state legislature to implement a statewide ban on lead jigs and sinkers weighing 1oz or less?	<b>YES</b>	As responsible stewards of the land, it is our responsibility to reduce lead in the environment to ensure a diverse and viable wildlife population for future generations.
17	Do you support the Conservation Congress and WDNR working cooperatively with other conservation organizations to develop a statewide outreach program that increases the use of non-lead ammunition to end the lead poisoning of wildlife?	<b>YES</b>	Lost tackle directly impacts populations of loons, swans, eagles, and osprey. In the last 27 years, Northern Wisconsin's Common Loon population has decreased by 22%.  A recent study that sampled 1200 eagles in thirty-eight states, including Wisconsin, found nearly half of all bald and golden eagles suffer from chronic lead poisoning.

Q	Question	Position	Background
18	To reduce potential groundwater and surface water nitrate and ecoli contamination, do you support the DNR requiring best available groundwater monitoring protocols for all permitted CAFO operations in Wisconsin?	YES	Wisconsinites deserve to be able to drink their water without concerns for safety, yet many can not.
19	Do you support a ban on the shining of wildlife in the state of Wisconsin from Sept 15th thru December 31st?	YES	Hunting at night with dogs, ATVs, and snowmobiles raises public safety concerns, is highly disruptive to people who live in rural areas, and contributes to a greater likelihood of illegal poaching activities.
21	Do you support the conservation Congress work with the DNR and the Legislature to develop language to strengthen Wis Waste of Resources 23.095 (1M) to prohibit the waste of game animals and fish in Wisconsin?	YES	Most states have wanton waste laws to prevent people from harvesting animals and then not utilizing them. Wildlife killing contests leave piles of dead coyotes, crows, and other species. Our state's wildlife is considered a public resource, and behavior that results in the needless killing of wildlife without any utilization undermines the ability for everyone to enjoy our natural resources.
23	Do you support opening the beaver season two weeks earlier and closing it four weeks later in each zone?	NO	With such an outdated Beaver Management Plan, and new information about the benefits of beavers on ecosystems and flood mitigation, the plan should be updated before increasing hunting of beavers
24	Do you support allowing the continuously scanning of the landscape while hunting at night, using infrared light-based equipment?	NO	Hunting at night with dogs, ATVs, and snowmobiles raises public safety concerns, is highly disruptive to people who live in rural areas, and contributes to a greater likelihood of illegal poaching activities.
25-30	Hazardous Wake from Wake Surfing Boats	YES	These boats create hazardous wakes that create a safety hazard to others using the lake; damage the environment; and erode the shoreline. Particularly concerning is the churning of the lakebed, destruction of aquatic plants & spawning beds, and swamping of loon nests.
36	Would you Support Legislation Creating a Free Fishing Weekend Specifically for Veterans "Vets on the Lake" for All Waters in Wisconsin?	YES	Removing barriers like the cost of a license or entrance fee are important steps to making sure everyone has access to enjoy our natural resources.

Allow about 45 minutes to take the full survey and read the questions fully. We have developed several resources to help everyone, including a voter reference guide, to help save you time and highlight the critical questions.

**Share with others!** It's important that you make your voice heard in this survey. Encourage your family and friends to participate as well. We want the survey responses to be inclusive of all natural resource users. Anyone old enough to read the questions is encouraged to participate. (Multiple family members per household may respond.)

**Additionally, we're asking voters to support the following resolutions we've put forward** (these will only be in counties where residents introduced the resolution):

- **Removal of administrative barriers to Stewardship Program project approvals (Legislation Required):** Do you support a change to the administrative approval process of Stewardship Program projects, removing the Joint Finance Committee's review of individual projects?
- **Wisconsin DNR Support of Farmers with Non-lethal Prevention Programs (Legislation Required):** Do you support helping Wisconsin's farmers mitigate livestock conflicts with non-lethal preventative solutions with dedicated state funding?



**SIERRA CLUB**

WISCONSIN CHAPTER

754 Williamson Street

Madison, WI 53703

Our newsletter is printed on recycled paper

## CALENDAR

Volume 61 / Number 2 APRIL - SEPTEMBER 2023

### APRIL 4

#### Spring Election

[myvote.wi.gov](http://myvote.wi.gov)

### APRIL 12

#### Monthly Virtual Volunteer Night

6:30 p.m.

### APRIL 13-15

#### Voting in Conservation Congress

### APRIL 22

#### Earth Day

Check out the events happening across the state at [sierraclub.org/wisconsin/blog/2023/02/earth-day-2023-sierra-club-wisconsin](http://sierraclub.org/wisconsin/blog/2023/02/earth-day-2023-sierra-club-wisconsin)

### APRIL 29

#### Wetlands Restoration and Preservation hike in Eau Claire

9:00 a.m.

### MAY 2

#### Book Club Discussion on *The Unsettling of America*

### MAY 6

#### Ambling the Forest Exploration Center in Wauwatosa

10:00 a.m.

### MAY 10

#### Monthly Virtual Volunteer Night

6:30 p.m.

### MAY 15

#### Make Your Home More Sustainable Using Community Resources in Wauwatosa

6:00 p.m.

### MAY 18

#### Locally Grown, Nationally Known Virtual House Party

6:30 p.m.

### MAY 20

#### Garlic Mustard Pulling at High Cliff State Park

9:30 a.m.

### MAY 23

#### Songs To Make The Heart Grow Fonder: Frog and Toad Listening Walk in Eau Claire

7:45 p.m.

### JUNE 3

#### Lawn Alternatives Tour in Eau Claire

9:00 a.m.

### JUNE 14 - JULY 12 - AUGUST 9

#### Monthly Virtual Volunteer Night

6:30 p.m.

### AUGUST 1

#### Chapter Award Nominations due

[sierraclub.org/wisconsin/awards](http://sierraclub.org/wisconsin/awards)

For the most up-to-date event information, visit our website at [sierraclub.org/wisconsin/calendar](http://sierraclub.org/wisconsin/calendar). Any events that do not have a website listed can be found on our website calendar.



## OUR MEMBERS IN ACTION

New Sierra Club Executive Director Ben Jealous and Sierra Club President Ramón Cruz started their listening tour by visiting Wisconsin. They met with approximately 50 Sierra Club volunteers, as well as staff in Wisconsin, to hear about the state's most pressing issues and the work we are doing here together.

