



SOUTHEAST SIERRAN

News of the
Southeast Gateway Group
of the Sierra Club

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REWIRING AMERICA

By Gloria Randall-Hewitt

The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) sounds so great with its goals to help Americans save money when they purchase electric appliances and automobiles that are lower cost to run (average \$1,800 per year savings! ☺), make our homes healthier with clean running appliances (gas appliances release unsafe gasses into our homes ☹) and help us pitch in to tackle the climate crisis. So, how do we get started?

The short answer is some programs are already in place and others will be available later in 2023, with still others starting in 2024. The programs include both tax credits and upfront discounts with qualifying criteria in place for each program. For example, for tax credits you must have federal taxes you pay for the credits to be applied against. Upfront discounts available are dependent upon your income and family size. Some programs, such as tax rebates for the purchase of a new or used electric vehicle, are available by completing an application that is submitted with your tax return, while electrification rebates will be administered by each state for its residents.



The IRA requires that states design a program to administer the federal funds allocated to that state. The IRA home energy rebate amounts that are available to Wisconsin are: \$74,904,830 for home efficiency rebates and \$74,470,200 for home electrification and appliance rebates for a total of \$149,375,030 for home energy rebates. Each state must apply for their allocation of the available funds with the application period opening July 27, 2023.

www.energy.gov/scep/articles/ira-home-energy-rebates-state-allocations

As mentioned in our last issue, there are many resources available to help us sort through what rebates and tax credits we may be eligible for and when they will be available to us. In addition to timing questions, upfront discounts are available only for low to moderate income households, while electrification tax credits are available regardless of income levels. Since some incentives are now available and some will be available later in 2023, in 2024, or will be on-going, now is a good time to research what the IRA will cover, when funds will be available, how to access the money and make a personal plan for electrification.

For an estimate of your own personal eligibility for rebates and tax credits, Rewiring America includes a simple tool that provides a quick estimate of what you may be able to receive in both rebates and incentives. Rewiring America's calculator is located at: www.rewiringamerica.org/app/ira-calculator

For instance, I entered into the calculator the information for a homeowner with a household size of 3, living in Racine County with an average household income \$67,000 (These are Racine averages per US census: www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/racinecountywisconsin/PST045222). With this information, this Racine County family is eligible for \$14,000 in upfront discounts, plus \$4,300 in available tax credits for a total of \$18,300 in incentives. This household could expect an estimated energy savings of \$1,100 per year!

Con't on page 3

GET INVOLVED → START HERE!

Offset Summer Travels Locally by Tom Rutkowski

It's been a difficult few months for people across the country, months that brought deadly fires to Hawaii and flooding to Vermont and California. Extended, extreme heat settled over the Southwest and uncontrolled fires in Canada brought a week-long cloud of wildfire smoke here to Southeast Wisconsin. One way to respond to what has clearly become a climate emergency is by donating to a local initiative that will help reduce consumption of coal in our area, build community resilience and equity and, in the long run, improve our air quality and public health.

In 2022, Focus on Energy, the energy efficiency program funded by the state's investor-owned energy utilities, funded solar installations on five homes in Racine, part of a larger effort to fund installations on 65 homes statewide. This year that funding has been cut in half. Racine's Habitat for Humanity's hopes to continue this program that will, along with other energy efficiency measures, greatly reduce the amount that low-income families will pay for energy for decades to come and spread the benefits of renewable energy to those who have previously been excluded. In addition to Focus on Energy funding, Racine Habitat solar initiative has received a donation of solar panels from the Solar for Good Foundation and a private donation of \$10,000 to help fill the gap in this year's funding.

If you're traveling this summer and want to offset your travel footprint, or you've always wanted a home solar installation but lack a suitable location, you can contribute to this project. Carbon offset programs often support projects like planting trees or constructing wind farms thousands of miles away. This effort will allow Racine's Habitat for Humanity to provide both immediate and long-term benefits to local families that will ripple throughout our community.

Please consider helping this project by donating at www.habitatracine.org/green-energy-program

You can calculate how much it would cost to offset your own emissions at www.carbonfootprint.com/calculator.aspx



Join Us Saturday, October 7 at 9 AM for the Season's Final Adopt-a-Highway Cleanup

Meet at Blessed Hope Church, 4949 Hwy 38, on the SE corner of Hwy 38

and Four Mile Road. New faces are welcomed!

Contact Jeff Sytsma at jeff12759@aol.com or 262 637-6845



October 28: National Make A Difference Day!



Join *Weed Out! Racine* to Make A Difference in the restoration of Colonial Park. After the devastation caused by the emerald ash borer, we are rebuilding a functional ecosystem to improve water quality, provide habitat for native species, and create a beautiful nature experience for people that use the park. As I write, we expect we'll be working to improve growing conditions for the trees that were planted a few years ago to rebuild the canopy. We need to remove not only the often-present honeysuckle and buckthorn, but also the encroaching raspberry canes and grape vines that compete with our young trees, often covering them, with the result that the branches are deformed if not broken. They also take in water and nutrients that our trees need.

We'll be working in the westernmost portion of Lower Colonial Park in the newly paved(!) lot at the end of West High Street (navigate to 2300 West High Street). Follow

the signs across the bridge. Dress for the weather, with long trousers and sturdy shoes. Bring your own work gloves and drinking water. You may prefer using your own hand clippers. Other tools will be provided. We work from 9:00 to noon; come when you can, leave when you must.

SEGG's financial support allows Weed Out! Racine to purchase native seeds to sow in areas where various invasives have been treated. We especially value the SEGG volunteers who spend their time and energy in the Park. *Please join us!*



Continued from page 1 **REWIRING AMERICA**

After adjusting the inputs to a family of 4 with household income of \$120,000, the calculator shows this Racine family would be eligible for upfront discounts of \$14,000 and tax credits of \$10,900 for a total of \$24,900 in incentives and estimated energy savings of \$1,100. Homeowner incentives include rebates for heat pump air conditioner/heater, water heater or dryer; electric panel, electric wiring and efficiency rebates, weatherization and electric/induction stove. Tax credits are for a list of items including battery storage, rooftop solar, new or used electric vehicles and weatherization.

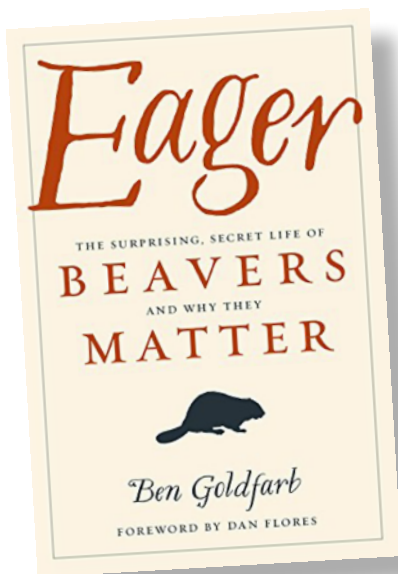
Household Electrification Incentives All the savings you may be eligible for!			
Electrification Rebates			
ITEM	AMOUNT	TIMELINE	
Heat Pump Air Conditioner/Heater	\$8,000	Late 2023	More Info >
Electric Panel	\$4,000	Late 2023	More Info >
Efficiency Rebates	\$4,000	Late 2023	More Info >
Electric Wiring	\$2,500	Late 2023	More Info >
Heat Pump Water Heater	\$1,750	Late 2023	More Info >
Weatherization	\$1,600	Late 2023	More Info >
Electric/Induction Stove	\$840	Late 2023	More Info >
Heat Pump Clothes Dryer	\$840	Late 2023	More Info >

Tax Credits			
ITEM	AMOUNT	TIMELINE	
Battery Storage Installation	30%	Available Now!	More Info >
Geothermal Heating Installation	30%	Available Now!	More Info >
New Electric Vehicle	\$7,500	Available Now!	More Info >
Rooftop Solar Installation	30%	Available Now!	More Info >
Used Electric Vehicle	\$4,000	Available Now!	More Info >
Heat Pump Air Conditioner/Heater	\$2,000	Available Now!	More Info >
Heat Pump Water Heater	\$2,000	Available Now!	More Info >
Weatherization	\$1,200	Available Now!	More Info >
Electric Vehicle Charger	\$1,000	Available Now!	More Info >
Electric Panel	\$600	Available Now!	More Info >

Renters may also be eligible for tax credits such as an electric vehicle (new or used) or electric vehicle charger, and tax credits for electric/induction stove, air conditioner/heater or clothes dryer. The same calculator can be used by renters for an estimate of their potential benefits.

Overall, tax credits are currently available -- with rebate programs to be implemented after our state has everything set up. Rewiring America’s calculator page also includes a listing of items that will be available for electrification rebates and those where tax credit are currently available (see above.) Also included are links for more detailed information – since there are qualifying guidelines and criteria for each program. For example, electric vehicle tax credits are only for qualifying vehicles and income levels. Solar panel tax credits are for up to 30% of the cost of rooftop solar and an electric panel upgrade if made in conjunction with rooftop solar. Heat pump air conditioner/ heaters have electrification rebate amounts for different amounts for low to moderate incomes only.

For your inspiration, Rewiring America’s Electric Digital Guide (available for free download) includes some very informative case studies of different families planning for changes they can make based on the IRA incentives. Now is a great time to do some research and then make a plan to take advantage of this program!



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, Nov. 14 from 7-8 PM.

We will be discussing, *Eager: the Surprising, Secret Life of Beavers and Why They Matter* by Ben Goldfarb.

Eager is a powerful story about one of the world’s most influential species, how North America was colonized, how our landscapes have changed over the centuries, and how beavers can help us fight drought, flooding, wildfire, extinction, and the ravages of climate change. Ultimately, it’s about how we can learn to coexist, harmoniously and even beneficially, with our fellow travelers on this planet.

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!

Chiwaukee Prairie Outing with Botanist Kay McClelland

Saturday, September 23 at 9AM

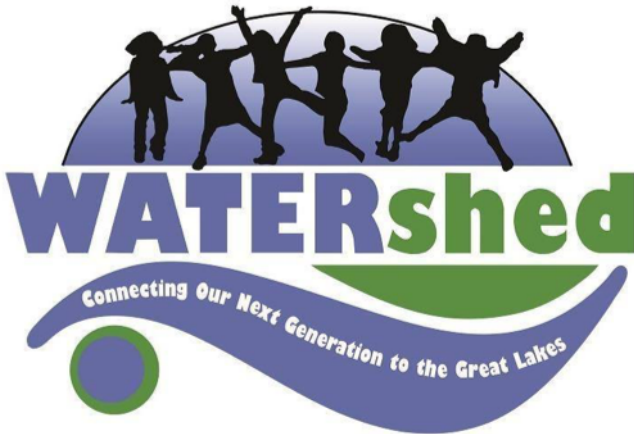


Join us for a walk in Kenosha County's Chiwaukee Prairie on September 23 with botanist, Kay McClelland. Kay is an expert on the plants of this unique and treasured area on Lake Michigan and assures us that there will be a lot of interesting things to see and learn on this first day of autumn.

Southeast Gateway Group has a long history with Chiwaukee Prairie as many of our founding members were also instrumental in saving this State Natural Area from being developed into a residential subdivision.

Meet at 9 AM at the intersection of 2nd Ave and 121st Street in Pleasant Prairie. This is accessible off of 116th St east off of Hwy 32 (Sheridan Rd). Take 116th St to 1st Ct. and turn right to 2nd Ave, then right to 121st St.

In case of inclement weather, the walk may be canceled. If interested, please contact Jeff Sytsma at 262 497-4761 or call this number on the morning of the walk for event confirmation.



WATERshed field trip at Southport

Join master naturalist, Nancy Carlson, Executive Director of the WATERshed Program for a fun field trip at the Southport Beach House in Kenosha on **Wednesday October 18th at 6:00PM.**

Explore the Kenosha Dunes, hear about the water quality of Lake Michigan, and visit the wetlands while learning about these natural areas. This program is open to Sierra Club members of all ages!

Please note, this event does include a short, relatively moderate hike. Meet at the Southport Beach House 7501 2nd Ave, Kenosha, WI 53143.

Please RSVP to Laura Schulz at schulztwin2@gmail.com

To learn more about the WATERshed program visit: watershedprogram.com/

Volo Bog Outing - November 5

Join SEGG Outings Chair, Al Sommer as he leads us on a hike at Volo Bog—the only open water, quaking bog in Illinois and the southern-most bog in all North America to exhibit all stages of bog succession.

Formed in an ancient glacial kettle hole lake, Volo Bog features a floating mat of sphagnum moss, cattails and sedges surrounding the open pool of water in the center of the bog. Further from the open water, the mat thickens enough even to support floating trees!

Due to the high level of acidity of the water, bog plants are not able to synthesize amino acids from the nitrogen in the water and are required to trap or lure insects to utilize their amino acids. As a result we may see pitcher plants and Venus flytraps from the boardwalk as we walk over the different layers of bog succession.

Meet Sunday, November 5 at 1:00 PM in the parking lot at Volo Bog: 28478 Brandenburg Rd, Ingleside, IL 60041

If interested, please contact Allan Sommer: 262-716-6955 or sommerallan4@gmail.com so he can contact you in case of cancellation due to bad weather.





Logo by Melanie Ariens

RIGHTS OF NATURE WISCONSIN

By Gloria Randall-Hewitt

The concept of the “rights of nature” can be traced to indigenous cultures that recognized their interconnectedness with nature and saw nature as a living entity, not just resources to be exploited by humans for their benefit. Recognizing the rights of nature to exist, flourish and evolve requires that human beings take a different, more respectful and responsible approach to how we live with nature. Have you heard talk about “the rights of nature” and wondered how you could become more informed or be involved in this effort? A group has been formed in Wisconsin with the goal of “codifying the rights of nature in our legal system.”

Read more at: www.rightsofnaturewi.org

Cranberry time is here! We're taking orders now for cranberry deliveries beginning the first weekend in November.

The cost is \$4.25 per one pound bag. Fresh from a family-operated farm, these berries are large, nutritious and delicious. Cranberries are a superfood rich in antioxidants. Stock up now for your holiday and healthy eating needs. They can be stored in the refrigerator for weeks or in the freezer for up to a year.

Place your order with Jeff Sytsma at jeff12759@aol.com or 262 637-6845

Think beyond cranberry sauce with cranberry orange muffins, cranberry walnut bread, cranberry-maple chicken, cranberry cobbler, cranberry glazed ribs, cranberry pumpkin muffins, white chocolate cranberry scones, Christmas cranberry jam, sweet potato cranberry bake and fresh Cranberry Cosmopolitan cocktails!



2024 Sierra Club Wilderness calendars will be available this fall.



Just \$16

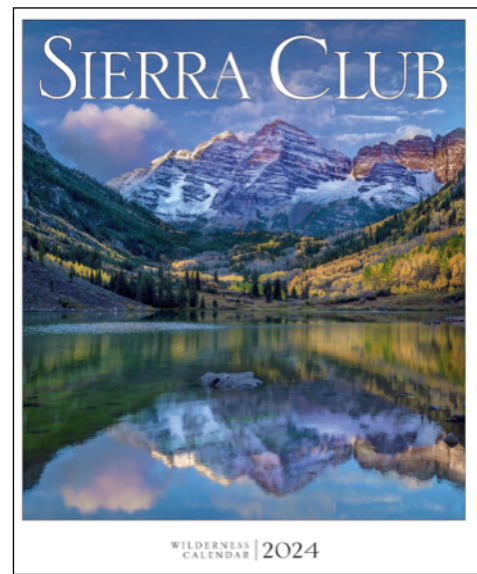


The spiral bound calendars are available in either a monthly wall calendar or a weekly engagement calendar. Both have award winning wilderness photographs on each page.

The wall calendars are \$15 each and the engagement calendars are \$16 each.

To order, contact Jeff Sytsma at jeff12759@aol.com or call 262-637-6845

They make great gifts!



Just \$15

The Soil Profile

Soils are stratified into layers called horizons.

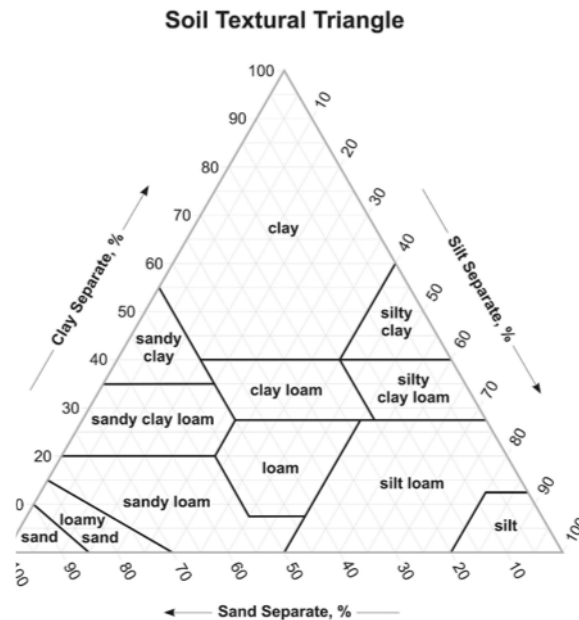
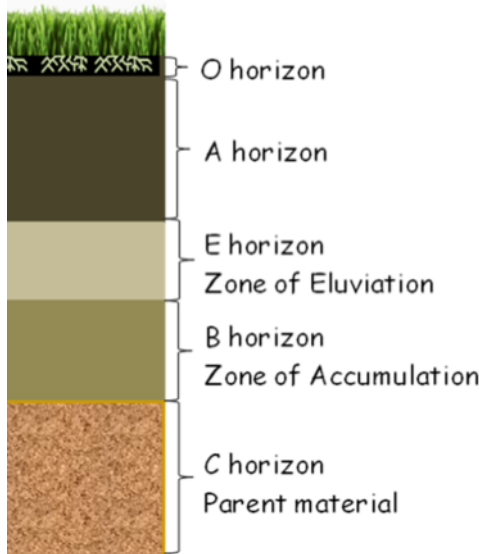
The O horizon consists of the undecayed or partially decayed organic matter in the leaf litter. This layer is usually dark brown to black with visible plant parts.

The A horizon contains mostly decayed organic material and has the highest level of biological activity. This layer is usually dark brown to black.

The E horizon is the zone of eluviation, where water-soluble particles such as clay are leached out by infiltrating rain water. This layer is significantly lighter in color than the O and A horizons.

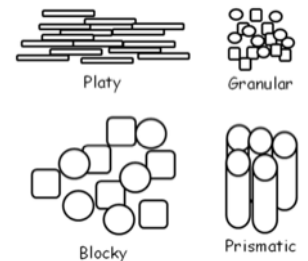
The B horizon, or zone of accumulation, lies beneath the E horizon. The materials leached out of the E horizon are deposited in this layer. This layer is usually darker than the overlying E horizon.

At the bottom is the C horizon, which includes broken down but not chemically altered pieces of the parent material, which is the material from which the soil formed. The parent material is typically bedrock or glacial deposits.



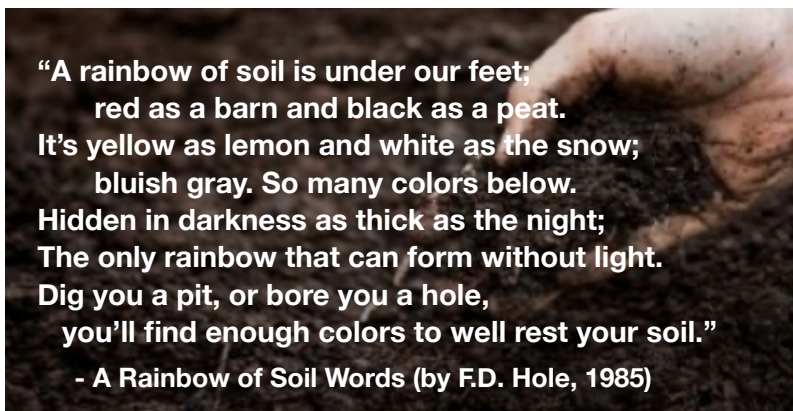
Soil Structure

Soil structure is determined by the shape clumps of soil take when it is carefully broken apart. Each clump is called a ped, and peds can be granular, blocky, prismatic or platy. Granular peds look similar to cat litter. Blocky peds are larger than granular peds but have a similar shape. Prismatic peds form columns, and platy peds are flat and horizontal.



Soil Texture

Texture class is one of the first things determined when a soil is examined. Texture refers to soil particle size. Texture class can be determined fairly well in the field by feeling the sand particles and estimating silt and clay content by flexibility and stickiness. Soil scientists determine the soil texture by using a soil textural triangle. The three major particle sizes that comprise soil are sand, silt, and clay.



Soil Color

Soil color can indicate the composition of the soil. Soils can exhibit a wide range of colors including black, gray, white, red, brown, yellows, and sometimes even green! Soils with a very dark black color contain a large amount of organic matter whereas soils with a reddish color are usually nutrient poor. A grey color indicates water-logged conditions.



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

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2022 Southeast Gateway Group Leadership

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Alex Weyenberg (*Conservation Chair*) alex.weyenberg@gmail.com
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Keith Kohlmann.....rowdyjunction@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: Laura Schulz - schulztwin2@gmail.com

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sierraclub.org/wisconsin/southeast-gateway

A Big Thanks to Our Highway Cleanup Crew—Jeff, Raina & Steve!

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

We need your help to keep the tradition alive!

Please join us **October 7** for the final cleanup date of the season (p. 2).



IMPORTANT DATES

Sept. 23 - Chiwaukee Prairie Outing (p. 4)

Oct. 7 - Highway 38 Cleanup (p. 2)

Oct. 18 - WATERshed Fieldtrip (p. 4)

Oct. 28 - National Make a Difference Day (p. 2)

Nov. 5 - Volo Bog Outing (p. 4)

Nov. 14 - Book Club (p. 3)



Join the e-news fun!

Due to technical problems 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.

