



WISCONSIN *Sierran*

NEWS OF THE WISCONSIN CHAPTER OF THE SIERRA CLUB

THREE YEARS TO SHUTDOWN: LINE 5 HAS AN END DATE

On Friday, June 16, Judge William Conley of the U.S. District Court of the Western District of Wisconsin ruled on the case brought by the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians against Enbridge for its illegal operation of Line 5 since 2013. This decision marks a major turning point in the years-long effort to shut down Line 5 over major threats to climate, water and Tribal sovereignty. Since 2019, our Tar

Sands Team, co-coordinated through 350 Wisconsin and the Wisconsin Chapter of the Sierra Club, has been an active part of the movement to shut down Enbridge’s Line 5, a tar sands oil pipeline that stretches from Superior, Wisconsin, to Sarnia, Ontario, and runs through 12 miles of the Bad River Band’s reservation. We are extremely pleased that the judge ordered a shutdown date on this Line 5 segment – which is unheard of – but three years is a long way away, and there’s a lot to be done to protect this area from a catastrophic spill in the meantime.



Court drawings by Susan Simensky Bietila

In 2013, some of Enbridge’s 50-year easements, which allowed it to operate Line 5 on the Band’s land, expired, and in 2017, the Bad River Band took action and resolved not to renew these easements in an effort to protect its lands and water, as well as Lake Superior and the health of the entire community. The Band ordered the shutdown and removal of the pipeline from its lands and the entire Bad River watershed. Since then – for the past 10 years – Enbridge has been knowingly operating Line 5 illegally.

In 2019, in the face of Enbridge’s continued arrogant refusal to remove its pipeline, the Bad River Band filed a lawsuit to force Enbridge to shut down and cease operation of Line 5. After more than three years, the Band finally got its day in court last fall.

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SOME GOOD NEWS

It's been quite a year already for the Wisconsin Chapter! Thanks to our faithful members, donors and volunteers, we've had some great victories, and continue to persevere on a number of significant environmental and environmental justice issues.

As you can read more about in our lead article, we had a tar sands pipeline victory with the judge telling Enbridge that Line 5 must be shut down in 3 years. While the Bad River Band of the Chippewa would like to see the line stopped now to alleviate the ongoing risk of spills, Enbridge is on notice that Line 5 cannot continue to operate indefinitely, and that the Bad River Band's treaty rights will be upheld. While not the end of the battle, this is a significant ruling.

Likewise, the DNR's recent Wolf Management Plan also marks a milestone that wildlife management will be based on science, not political whim. Those who understand wildlife and ecology understand that wolves belong on our lands, and play a vital role in providing ecosystem balance. Living together with and being good stewards of nature, not just consumers, is vital to a sustainable future.

Our Beyond Coal team continues to oppose any new fossil fuel based infrastructure for electricity, including proposals for a gas plant in Superior and several gas peaker plants. We're

also pushing back on anti solar proposals by MGE and Alliant Energy in their rate cases this year. In addition, we're advocating for the Public Service Commission to adopt or expand programs to support low-income customers and cap the percentage of income customers pay to utilities, especially for We Energies customers who are overly burdened in Milwaukee.

The Transportation team remains adamantly opposed to an 8-lane expansion of I-94 in Milwaukee that would further harm low income residents near the freeway, rather than fixing I-94 at 6 lanes and putting much needed support into mass transit.

Our Lands team continues to advocate for expanding the Every Kid Outdoors program that provides free passes to national parks to fourth graders and their families, and expand it to Wisconsin state parks to provide better access to all.

You may not always hear the Sierra Club's name a lot in conjunction with these efforts. That's because we understand that environmental justice means helping raise the voices and supporting the efforts of those who are most impacted and harmed. Justice can only truly be served by empowering those who have historically been marginalized and disenfranchised. That's what every membership and your donations support, and what our volunteers strive to achieve. So when you're considering renewing your membership, getting others to join, sending an additional donation, or contemplating volunteering for one of our teams, know that it's not having our name splashed everywhere, but what your support helps us accomplish that counts.

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

THANK YOU KATIE!

We recently said goodbye to our Volunteer Coordinator, Katie Hogan, who has decided to move on and pursue other endeavors. After 5 years of helping us onboard and guide volunteers, and running our very successful monthly Volunteer Nights, she will be missed. But she's already been spending more time pursuing her passion for painting. You can follow her on her art journey on Instagram: *@Katie.Hogan.Art*

THE WISCONSIN SIERRAN

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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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Please include the author's first and last names, and day and evening phone numbers at the top. Acceptance of submission contingent upon availability of space and must meet Sierra Club guidelines.

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Deadline:

The deadline for submission of articles to the January issue is midnight on November 10, 2023.

Change of Address:

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

Continued from page 1

Judge Conley ruled in September 2022 that Enbridge had been trespassing on the Band's lands for the previous nine years and had been profiting at the Band's expense. Then, on June 16, 2023, he ruled that Enbridge must shut down this segment of Line 5 within three years and pay the Band \$5 million in trespassing fees. These fees are a drop in the bucket for a company that makes up to \$2 million per day by operating Line 5. The ruling was nevertheless a win against a major company that wields its money to get its way. The Chairman of the Bad River Band, Mike Wiggins Jr., stated in response to the decision that "Tribal sovereignty prevailed over corporate profits. But the Band's victory is not a cause for unqualified celebration. We are under no illusion that Enbridge will do the right thing. We expect them to fight this order with all of their corporate might. This is just one step in protecting our people and water."

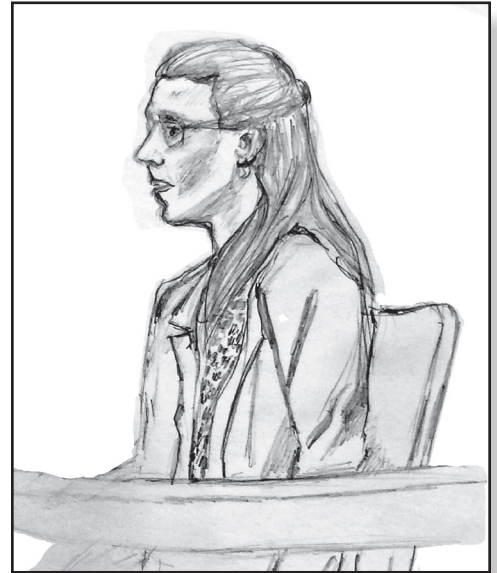
Enbridge is fighting the order, not only with an appeal of the decision but also in its ongoing plans to build a 42-mile reroute just outside the boundaries of the Bad River Reservation. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have the power to reject the needed permits. Both entities are currently reviewing public comments on environmental reviews from early 2022. The Band has also appealed Judge Conley's decision; the case will be heard by the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit.

Now is not the time to wait and see what happens in the regulatory realm. Every day poses a risk that Line 5 will spill, contaminating the Great Lakes, local drinking water, ecosystems, wildlife and more. With Enbridge's track record of spills and safety, it cannot be trusted. Canadian wildfires and their smoke are making millions more aware that climate change is here and now, and getting worse with every gallon of fossil fuels burned. Now is a crucial time to take action, and

there's one person who can shut down Line 5 immediately and for good: President Biden has the power to revoke the presidential permit that allows Enbridge to operate Line 5. It will take all of us to speak up and show him that not acting is not an option – we need people across the country to uplift the danger of Line 5 and make it clear that shutting it down is necessary. Please let the president know that you want him to do just that.

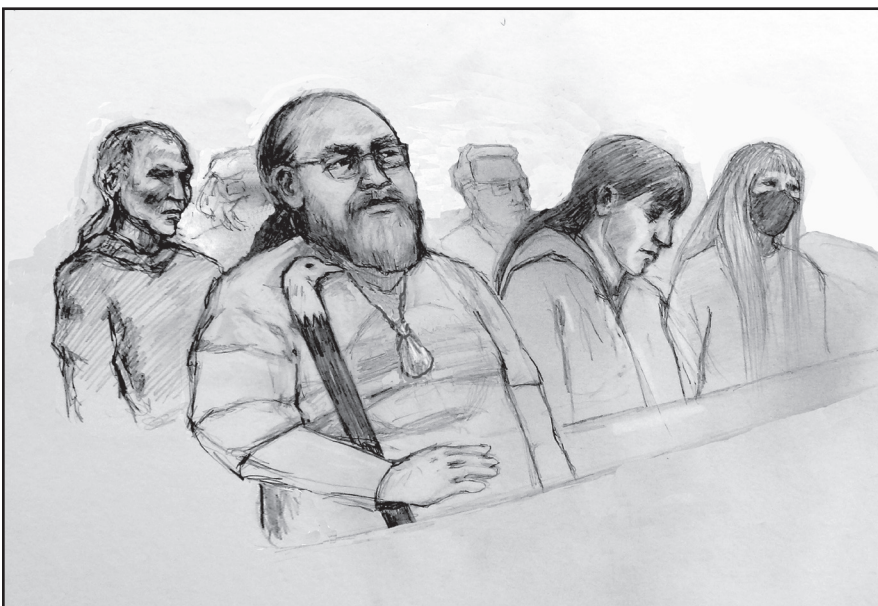
After all, "the three-year shutdown timeline leaves the Bad River vulnerable to catastrophe," as EarthJustice, one of the legal organizations representing the Bad River Band, explains in a recent article. The next large rainstorm could wash away the few feet of dirt protecting Line 5 at the meander of the Bad River, resulting in a major pipeline breach, and this is not a risk we can take.

You can be a part of this movement that's fighting for a safe, healthy, clean world! Tell President Biden that you expect him to stop our greenhouse gas emissions, like he promised in his 2020 election campaign. You can take action online at sc.org/WiLine5 link to demand that President Biden revoke the presidential permit for Line 5 in order to respect the sovereignty of the Bad River Band, help slow climate change and avoid another catastrophic oil spill. The health of Lake Superior and our whole world is at stake.



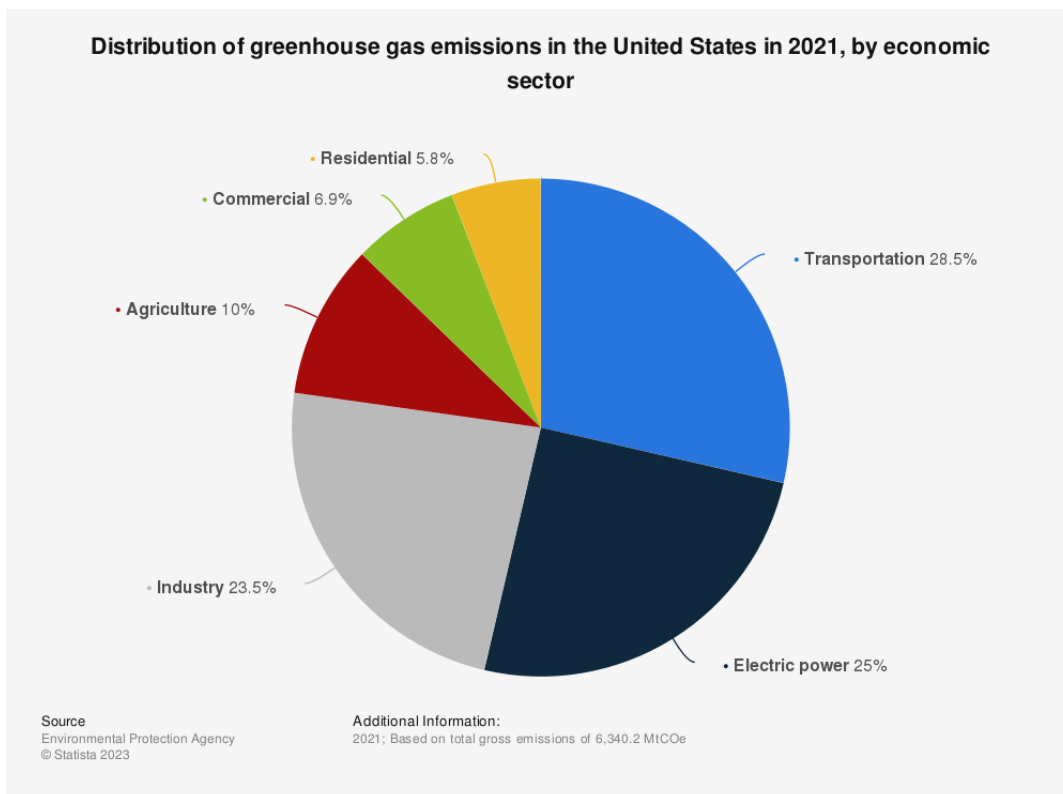
Alex Goetsch
Sierra Club / 350 Wisconsin
Tar Sands Team Co-Lead

Court drawings by Susan Simensky Bietila



GREENING THE TRANSPORTATION SECTOR

The transportation sector is responsible for the largest portion of greenhouse gas emissions in the United States. It contributes nearly 30 percent of total emissions, more than manufacturing, resource extraction and the electric sector. Of that, **81 percent comes from single-occupancy vehicles** like cars and trucks. This year, Wisconsin has seen heat waves, poor air quality, droughts and flooding exacerbated by climate change. It is clear that we need to do something to decrease carbon emissions from the transportation sector. But how?



ELECTRIC VEHICLES

Many climate advocates prioritize electric vehicles as the solution to climate change impacts from transportation. As the electric sector continues to become cleaner and more renewable, electric vehicles certainly play an important role in the transition to carbon-free transportation. However, electric vehicles are not the sole solution for many reasons.

As climate advocates push for all sectors to become electrified, we will continue to see an increase in electric use. This makes energy efficiency and conservation, as well as updated transmission and distribution infrastructure, even more important. Additionally, relying on single-occupancy vehicles – electric or otherwise – has a wide range of negative environmental impacts, including increased sprawl and exurban development in areas that could otherwise be conserved, as well as increased pavement that contributes to water pollution and hotter microclimates. Rather than believing that an electric vehicle will remove the harms of the transportation sector, it is worth looking for ways to decrease how much we drive, which can be measured by Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT).

VMT POLICIES AND RETHINKING LAND USE

Another piece of solving the transportation sector puzzle is to promote VMT reduction policies and goals. In 2022, the Minnesota Department of Transportation adopted a policy to reduce VMT by 20 percent per capita by 2050. Oregon and Utah have VMT fees to produce revenue for their state transportation budgets. Many climate plans at the local and state levels include goals of decreasing VMT as well. Wisconsin should set a similar commitment to reduce VMT.

To realize these policy goals, Departments of Transportation have to rethink land use decisions. Currently, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WISDOT) overwhelmingly prioritizes highway construction and expansion, which is harmful for many reasons: it makes traffic congestion worse; it increases water runoff, pollution and flooding; it contributes to suburban sprawl; and it reinforces the prioritization of single-occupancy vehicles. One local example of this is the recent flooding of Valley Park in Milwaukee, which abuts the I-94 corridor; neighborhood residents are concerned that added highway lanes will add to the flooding in their area and risk the park that the neighborhood has fought so hard for.

There is a suite of policies that WISDOT and local governments could and should pursue, including limiting growth in high-VMT areas, building compact mixed-use growth in low-VMT areas and improving multimodal transportation options.

INVESTING IN MULTIMODAL OPTIONS

Not only are multimodal transportation options like transit, walking and biking important for the health of the environment and climate, but they are also key components of an equitable and accessible transportation system.

For those who cannot drive due to age (young or old) or disability, for those who cannot afford a vehicle or car insurance, for those who have had their licenses revoked and for those who do not want to drive, transit, walking and biking provide essential connections to necessities and to recreation. The Wisconsin Nondriver Advisory Council has published an interactive map that indicates that 31 percent of Wisconsinites are nondrivers. That's a significant portion of the state that relies on modes of transportation other than driving! Additional studies have demonstrated that access to reliable transportation is one of the key factors for poverty alleviation. And, because people of color are disproportionately likely to rely on public transportation, multimodal options help to decrease racial disparities.

CURRENT OPPORTUNITIES

Wisconsin has several key opportunities to make the right choices on transportation, and your advocacy can help us get there.

1. Key highways in Wisconsin like the Beltline in Madison and I-94 in Milwaukee are being studied for expansion. Participate in public comment opportunities to make clear to WISDOT that you do not want to see these expansion projects.
2. Several public transportation systems in Wisconsin are struggling after years of disinvestment from the state. Participate in local campaigns like #SaveMCTS in Milwaukee to save (or expand!) your local transit system. Many cities in the state have local transit advocacy organizations.
3. Wisconsin has not set a VMT reduction goal. Encourage WISDOT, your legislator and the governor to commit to an equitable and clean transportation sector with a goal to reduce VMT in the state.

As always, you can also consider your personal choices and time spent. Are you able to take the bus or ride a bike to your destination? Can you carpool? Do you have time and talents to share with the Sierra Club's Transportation Team to help with our advocacy? We'd love to have you en route to a cleaner future with us! If you're interested in learning more, reach out to cassie.steiner@sierraclub.org.

Cassie Steiner
Senior Campaign Coordinator, Sierra Club - Wisconsin Chapter



BEAVER BELIEVERS: WE GIVE A DAM!

(ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE, WATER PROTECTIONS AND BIODIVERSITY)

Beavers are usually known for having big teeth, flat tails and rarely anything positive!

But that is starting to change! Why? Beavers are our partners in protecting and restoring the planet! The increased presence of beavers throughout North America has the potential to reverse the most devastating impacts of human-made climate change, including wildfires, drought and floods.



THESE BUSY BEAVERS ARE A KEYSTONE SPECIES THAT:

- Supports incredible levels of **biodiversity**.
- Improves **water quality**, filtering out contaminants and heavy metals.
- **Reduces downstream flooding** damage from large storm events.
- **Lessens the impact** of increased wildfires.
- Restores **watershed health** and stream flows.
- Replenishes **drinking water** aquifers.

In fact, the wetlands created and watersheds restored by the natural engineering of beavers behave as “kidneys” for the planet, and the support they provide for biodiversity is comparable to the value of rainforests and coral reefs!

This year, the Wildlife Team has begun working on beaver policy in Wisconsin to ensure decisions are made based on the best available science, recognizing the positive ecological benefits these eco-engineers provide!

Working towards that goal, this summer we have officially secured a seat on the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Beaver Task Force. The timing is critical, as next year a new beaver management plan will be discussed, and we are looking forward to focusing on non-lethal alternatives to beaver trapping and ensuring this keystone species is properly valued for the work it does on the landscape.

You are invited to become a beaver believer too! Please join us for a discussion of *Eager: The Surprising, Secret Life of Beavers and Why They Matter* by Ben Goldfarb at our upcoming Book Club meeting at 7 p.m., Tuesday, November 14. The book takes you on a humorous journey through beaver history from the early trappers to the reintroduction efforts of today, providing interesting facts and stories of individuals working on the front lines (or the deep mud banks) of this effort! Register to attend the Book Club discussion on the chapter website by clicking on the event in the November activities calendar: www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/calendar.

Source credit: Photos and facts from beaverinstitute.org

Amy Mueller
Sierra Club Wisconsin Wildlife Team Member

YEAR END GIVING: PLANNING AN IRA DISTRIBUTION?

If you are planning to make a tax deductible gift directly from your IRA, please make sure that you instruct your fund manager to make the check payable to: Sierra Club Foundation-Wisconsin Chapter. The word “foundation” is necessary for us to deposit the check into our fund at the Sierra Club Foundation.

All other, non-tax deductible gifts to support our grassroots advocacy should continue to be made payable to: Sierra Club-Wisconsin Chapter. Questions? Please call the chapter office at 608-256-0565 or email jacinda.tessmann@sierraclub.org.

TRANSMISSION IS A PIECE OF OUR CLEAN ENERGY FUTURE

Proper transmission is an important piece of our clean energy future, but it's something we don't talk about often. For Wisconsin to get to 100% clean energy, we need to stop building any fossil fuel plants and replace our existing coal and gas plants with clean energy and batteries. We also need to invest in energy efficiency to make sure we're using less energy and we need to make it easy for people to put solar on their roofs. We also need to build transmission lines where they are necessary, so we can bring clean energy to Wisconsin from states like North Dakota that have much better wind resources than we do.



A June New York Times article by Nadja Popovich and Brad Plumer explained the issue:

“Already, a lack of transmission capacity means that thousands of proposed wind and solar projects are facing multiyear delays and rising costs to connect to the grid. In many parts of the country, existing power lines are often so clogged that they can't deliver electricity from wind and solar projects to where it is needed most and demand is often met by more expensive fossil fuel plants closer to homes and businesses.”

The need to make sure there are plans to build transmission to fix these problems is urgent. But that doesn't mean we should build them in places that could negatively affect the environment. We will be actively engaging in the processes for the proposed transmission lines to ensure they do not cause unnecessary environmental damage and to support more transmission.

If you'd like to get involved with our work to move to 100% clean energy, contact Cassie Steiner at cassandra.steiner@sierraclub.org.

SUPPORT THE WISCONSIN CHAPTER THROUGH WORKPLACE GIVING

Workplace giving is a charitable giving program that allows employees to donate a portion of their salary to a chosen charity or nonprofit organization. Many companies offer workplace giving programs as part of their corporate social responsibility initiatives. These programs often include options for one-time donations or ongoing payroll deductions, making it convenient for employees to support causes they care about. Enrollment typically occurs in the fall.

If your workplace offers a giving program, this is a great way to support the Sierra Club Wisconsin Chapter! We are one of the charities listed with Community Shares. We truly appreciate your support.

If you have any specific questions or need assistance with workplace giving or any other topic, feel free to ask!

Support the Wisconsin Chapter through Workplace Giving

Does your employer offer a Community Shares workplace giving campaign?

Designate your gift to the Sierra Club Foundation and you'll be supporting our work to protect Wisconsin's water, land & wildlife.

For a list of workplace campaigns or information on starting a campaign, visit www.communityshares.com



ISSUES AT A GLANCE

BIRDWATCHING AND A RALLY FOR THE KOHLER-ANDRAE LAKESHORE

In September, the Sierra Club Lands Team **held an event at Kohler-Andrae State Park**. Together, advocates birdwatched, learned about the migratory birds in the area and called on Kohler Company to drop its plans for developing the lakeshore into a golf course. Let Kohler Company know that you stand with the lakeshore, the park and the birds by signing the petition at <https://addup.sierraclub.org/campaigns/act-for-public-lands-and-forests>.

WOLF MANAGEMENT PLAN PROTECTS WISCONSIN'S WOLVES

Despite efforts by trophy hunters to alter the draft version, **the DNR's final Wisconsin Wolf Management Plan remains committed to science, Tribal authority and public opinion**. This is an especially important achievement because there was a concerted effort, led in part by some radical Wisconsin legislators, to have the plan create a population goal of 350. Not only would that have contradicted what the science says, it also would have disregarded the ecological benefits of wolves and the cultural significance they have for many of Wisconsin's Tribes.

The plan will now go to the Natural Resources Board (NRB) at its October 25 meeting. Public comment will be accepted at the meeting. If you'd like to learn more about the plan or testify at the meeting, contact Elizabeth Ward at elizabeth.ward@sierraclub.org.



THANKS FOR BEING ON OUR TEAM!

This summer, Sierra Club volunteers and supporters raised important funds for our priority issue campaign work, legislative advocacy, volunteer support and more through Team Sierra. Thank you to everyone who helped fundraise or gave! **Together, we raised more than \$6500!**

EVERY KID OUTDOORS LEGISLATION MOVES FORWARD

Legislation that will **allow fourth graders and their families to access state parks for free is moving forward – slowly but steadily!** This program has widespread bipartisan support, and the bill has passed through one of the required committees. Help it pass the second committee and the floor vote by contacting your legislator at <https://addup.sierraclub.org/campaigns/state-parks--land-conservation>.



DECREASING ENERGY BURDEN DISPARITIES

Last year, the Sierra Club and our allies who work on the energy burden in Milwaukee engaged in improving Focus on Energy (the state's energy efficiency program) and in fighting We Energies' efforts to increase electric and gas rates. **As a result of this advocacy, the Public Service Commission acknowledged that more could be done to assist We Energies customers, especially those with high energy burdens.** One of the outcomes is an investigation into starting a Percentage of Income Payment Program (PIPP) in We Energies territory. PIPPs limit the bills of eligible customers to a specific percentage of their income; the programs have been effective at decreasing electric arrearages and shutoffs in other states. Given the heat waves Wisconsinites experienced this summer, keeping the power on year round is of growing importance. To find out more and support the PIPP program, contact Cassie at cassie.steiner@sierraclub.org.

TRANSIT TAKES A MASSIVE LOSS IN STATE BUDGET

This year's state budget process was similar to the past two budget cycles. Governor Evers proposed several programs that would benefit Wisconsinites and our environment, and the majority were eliminated in an omnibus action by the legislature. Beyond removing many positive proposals, the **Joint Finance Committee also moved public transportation funding out of the state transportation budget and into the state's general fund**, an action that the Sierra Club has long opposed. This means that public transit will now have to compete for funding next to many other important areas like education and healthcare. The outcome is a state budget that doesn't just perpetuate a harmful status quo, but continues to worsen the quality of life for Wisconsinites.

A NEW ERA FOR RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES IN WISCONSIN

In last year's October issue of the Wisconsin Sierran, our chapter co-chair outlined the opportunities in the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) to reduce the impacts of climate change. This year, we're seeing those opportunities in action! A program funded through the IRA called New ERA, which stands for Empowering Rural America, was announced this spring. New ERA is run through the Rural Utility Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and provides \$9.7 billion in grants and low-cost loans for rural electric cooperatives to pursue clean energy projects. Historically, co-ops' structure has made it extremely difficult for them to access funds supporting their transition to clean energy, but New ERA was designed to specifically meet their need. This money can be used for new infrastructure like solar, wind, storage and more, and can also be used to help retire current fossil fuel plants, like coal and gas plants. The Rural Utility Service is prioritizing applications that would achieve the largest climate emissions reductions.

Dairyland Power Cooperative is the biggest co-op in Wisconsin, with 18 member co-ops in the state. Dairyland holds agreements with these member co-ops to produce the bulk of their electricity, and each member co-op then distributes this energy to its customers throughout much of western Wisconsin. Dairyland also holds agreements to provide electricity to several municipal utilities.

Western Wisconsin has been significantly impacted by the increased frequency and severity of flooding triggered by climate change, especially in rural areas served by the electric cooperatives supplied by Dairyland Power. We know that fossil fuel combustion is the largest single driver of climate change, and any more investment in fossil fuel infrastructure like gas plants will further contribute to the looming climate crisis. Fossil fuel energy is also quickly becoming more expensive than clean energy, and many counties in Dairyland Power territory already pay more in annual energy costs than the statewide average (see more here! <https://www.energy.gov/scep/slscllead-tool>). This is why it's so crucial that Dairyland invest in clean, renewable energy instead – because our communities can't take even more extreme weather events or higher energy bills.

The New ERA program allows co-ops to apply for up to \$970 million, and if its application is accepted, Dairyland could bring good-paying jobs and clean energy to western Wisconsin and ultimately help lower customer electric bills.

When we heard about this opportunity, we jumped into action to show our support for Dairyland submitting a bold application. In May, along with partners like Vernon County Energy District and Citizen Action Wisconsin, we hosted four events in Superior, Wheaton, Alma and Sparta, Wisconsin, to share information about the New ERA opportunity, and heard strong support for clean energy and excitement about the program (you can watch a virtual version of this program online!*). Over the summer, clean energy advocates wrote to Dairyland CEO Brent Ridge to share their support for a strong application, and we're looking forward to seeing what the utility proposes. No matter what, this program has changed the energy landscape for co-ops in Wisconsin, making it more clear than ever that we have a path to a 100% clean energy future.

The Rural Utility Service is considering applications this fall. Are you interested in getting involved in this work? Are you a co-op member wanting to learn more? Reach out to jadine.sonoda@sierraclub.org for more info.

*Visit this link to watch the recording of a Know Your Utility presentation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XYPSVWEoRfY>

Kathy Allen, Coulee Region Group chair and member of the Beyond Fossil Fuels to Clean Energy Team
Jadine Sonoda, Campaign Coordinator with Sierra Club Wisconsin

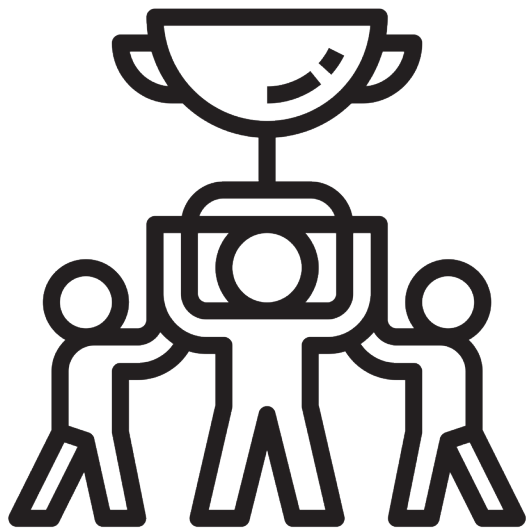
DAIRYLAND POWER WISCONSIN MEMBER CO-OPS

Barron Electric Co-op
Bayfield Electric Co-op
Chippewa Valley Electric Co-op
Clark Electric Co-op
Dunn Energy Co-op
Eau Claire Energy Co-op
Jackson Electric Co-op
Jump River Electric Co-op
Oakdale Electric Co-op
Pierce Pepin Cooperative Services
Polk-Burnett Electric Co-op
Price Electric Co-op
Richland Electric Co-op
Riverland Electric Co-op
St. Croix Electric Co-op
Scenic Rivers Energy Co-op
Taylor Electric Co-op
Vernon Electric Co-op

WISCONSIN MUNICIPAL UTILITIES

City of Arcadia
Village of Argyle
Village of Cashton
City of Cumberland
City of Elroy
City of Fennimore
Village of La Farge
Village of Merrillon
City of New Lisbon
Village of Viola

SAVE THE DATE TO CELEBRATE OUR AWARD WINNERS!



**SAVE THE DATE FOR
THE 2023 AWARDS CELEBRATION!**

**WE HOPE TO SEE YOU ON
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 1 FOR THIS EVENT.**

Every year, the Sierra Club - Wisconsin Chapter recognizes some of our many wonderful volunteers and community leaders for their dedication, passion and leadership. We could not do our work alone, and celebrating our award winners is one of the best parts of our year. This virtual ceremony will allow us all to be together and celebrate these environmental leaders from across the state. You can RSVP for the event on our calendar at <https://www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/calendar>.

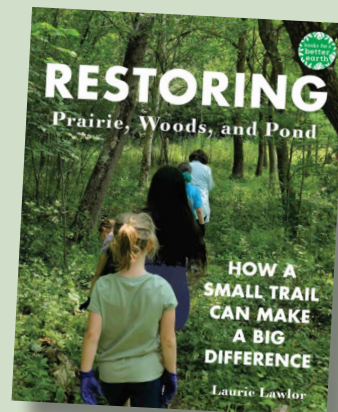
GREEN REVIEW

Restoring Prairie, Woods, and Pond: How a Small Trail Can Make a Big Difference

by Laurie Lawlor, Holiday House, 2023, 85 pages.

Many environmental books and stories are tales of woe; this one isn't. Laurie Lawlor writes about a community project in Eagle, Wisconsin, that turned an eight-acre dumping ground into a nature trail for children. The Eagle Nature Trail organization includes Dave Traver, a library board member; Jean Weedman, an experienced prairie restorer; and a cadre of miracle-making volunteers.

Writing for middle grades and above, Lawlor provides an overview of the natural and cultural history of the land. This land was (and is) treasured by the Native Americans who were removed.



By the time the volunteers began to make the trail, the land was overgrown with invasive buckthorn, garlic mustard and more. Dumped chain-link fences, tires, shattered bottles and other junk littered the forest floor. Under the detritus, an ephemeral pond, prairie and woods seemed to await renewal. As volunteers cleared invasives, planted and sprouted, native trees and prairie plants took hold. The project began to bring joy and pride to the community, especially the children walking the trail between the elementary school and Alice Baker Memorial Library.

Lawlor includes specific stories of nature adventures in and around the trail. Children hurl milkweed pods to distribute seeds to make more habitats for monarchs and other pollinators. They learn about how frogs can enter a frozen dormancy in winter. Third-graders help plant prairie plants each spring. The changing seasons move plants and animals through colorful and exciting cycles of rebirth. This seasonal rebirth has seen an annual biodiversity increase since the initial 2010 plant inventory.

Find family lessons and activities for each season. Discover motivation to walk the trail. Be inspired to participate on any level. Plant native species in your yard or a pot on the porch. Participate in restoration projects in your community. Lawlor and the volunteers will inspire you.

European settlers, on the whole, didn't value the natural systems in America. And they didn't have a plan for wise use. When children learn to care for native species and systems, they become adults who will care for the planet. And – we need that.

A review copy of this book was provided.

Amy Lou Jenkins is the author of *Every Natural Fact: Five Seasons of Open-Air Parenting*. Contact her through JackWalkerPress.com if you would like to forward a book for possible review.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CANDIDATES

VOTE FOR OUR ORGANIZATION'S LEADERSHIP!

Leadership of the Wisconsin Chapter of the Sierra Club is entrusted to a 15 member volunteer Executive Committee. Nine at-large seats are elected by Sierra Club members to serve staggered three year terms and each of our six Local Groups appoint one delegate to represent them. The Executive Committee provides direction to the Chapter on fiscal matters, policy, fundraising, and prioritizing issue work, and ensures that the Chapter evolves with the times and remains an effective organization.

This year Chapter members are asked to **choose three volunteer leaders from the slate of candidates below**. These three leaders will serve a three-year term starting in January 2024 and finishing in December 2026.

After reading the candidates' statements, use the ballot on page 15 to cast your vote. Each member can VOTE FOR UP TO THREE CANDIDATES. **Ballots must be postmarked by November 11, 2023.**

CANDIDATE QUESTIONS:

1. Please describe your interest in the Sierra Club, and any leadership or volunteer activities with our organization or other non-profit groups that will help you fulfill your role (See the Executive Committee Job Description).
2. What unique skills, experience, or perspective from your personal or professional background (fundraising, legal, accounting, communications, Board, political) will you bring to the Sierra Club – Wisconsin Chapter's Executive Committee?
3. Looking forward over the next 3 years, what do you think the Chapter needs to do, or how do we need to grow and change to be effective on our issues?
4. Although the Wisconsin Chapter works on a variety of conservation issues, we focus on a limited number of priority issues affecting Wisconsin. Of the Chapter's priority issues, which one are you most passionate about and why? Currently these are: *1.) Protecting Our Water Resources 2.) Moving Beyond Coal to Clean Energy, 3.) Moving Beyond Oil to Clean Transportation 4.) Protecting Habitats from Destructive Mining and 5.) Protecting native Forests and Wildlife.*

SCOTT COULTHURST OF GERMANTOWN, WASHINGTON COUNTY



My interest in the Sierra Club is based on my belief that volunteering is an important part of who I am. The Sierra Club allows me to participate in causes which relate to my love of nature. I have been a member of the Sierra Club Great Waters Group Executive Committee as Secretary since 2022. Previously, I was a member of the Village of Germantown Park and Recreation Committee for 9 years, during 8 of which I was Chair of the Committee.

For much of my 30-year career in operations and human resources, I have been leading and developing people. I believe my unique skills in emotional intelligence can help facilitate success in a group setting.

I believe Sierra Club, or any group trying to influence environmental activism, needs to reach out to people on how issues affect their everyday life. No one is going to outright say they don't want clean air, clean water, or more birds in their local park. However, we must show society, and specifically voters, how decisions on fossil fuel pipelines, large carnivore

regulation, or electric utility increases directly influence the lives of Wisconsinites from the rural Northwoods to inner city Milwaukee.

I am most passionate about protecting native forests and wildlife. Since a young age, I have been an outdoor enthusiast. I treasure my time in nature, whether it is hunting whitetails in fall, mountain biking the great trails of southeastern WI or just taking a walk in a local nature preserve on my lunch hour. Being a member of the Sierra Club helps me share this passion to preserve and protect nature and help people understand the value nature brings to people of all backgrounds.

LELAND PAN OF MADISON, DANE COUNTY



While I recently moved back to Madison, I spent several years in Milwaukee. There, my neighbors and I started a Parks People group in our neighborhood to support our local park – Friends of Valley Park. In addition to community building, park beautification, Menomonee River cleanup, and promotion of gardening, we took a stance against the proposed I-94 expansion. We joined the coalition that Sierra Club is part

of in pushing back against highway expansion. This effort reconnected me with Sierra Club's work.

Previously, I had experience as a community and labor organizer and as a former elected Dane County Supervisor, where I pushed back on the Enbridge pipeline and served on the Environment, Agriculture, and Natural Resources Committee for two years. I am also currently an elected representative in Madison Teachers, Inc., the union representing Madison Metropolitan School District educators, and have some experience in organizational logistics from this.

I bring an equity-oriented perspective driven by my own identity as a person of color and my experiences in majority nonwhite and majority working class communities in both Madison and Milwaukee. We know environmental issues disproportionately affect these communities, but these communities face extra barriers to self-advocacy and organizing. Continuing to build these relationships, such as through the I-94 expansion coalition, is an important step to accurately address the most pressing environmental concerns.

While all of Sierra Club's causes are critically important, Clean Transportation has been my focus for the past few years. Car-centric urban planning has directly harmed communities I live and work in. Moving away from it is not only necessary for our climate and environment, but critical for people's health and to reduce the socioeconomic disparity, as we expand public transit and remove the pressure to fall into the financial hole that is car ownership.

**PETER SKOPEC
OF MADISON, DANE COUNTY**



Over the last decade, I have been fortunate to work in close partnership with the Sierra Club–Wisconsin Chapter's outstanding staff, leaders and volunteers on a number of issue campaigns. I deeply admire and have learned a great deal from the Chapter's strategic, grassroots-driven and inclusive approach to advocacy and organizing, in service of protecting our climate and environment for this and future generations. I would be thrilled to support the Chapter's impactful

work as a member of the Executive Committee.

I hope to bring my ten years of professional experience in grassroots organizing, advocacy, campaign planning, and organizational and financial management – including as the past executive director of a Wisconsin public interest group, and as the current advocacy director of a national voting rights

organization – to the Chapter's Executive Committee.

The Sierra Club–Wisconsin Chapter is an indispensable, widely respected voice in the state's environmental movement; as such, I hope the Chapter will continue to lead by example and demonstrate how grassroots-driven, inclusive organizing can produce lasting change and more just outcomes for all Wisconsinites. I also hope the Chapter will invest in welcoming young people into the environmental and environmental justice movement. Finally, I believe the Executive Committee should play a strong role in ensuring the Wisconsin Chapter remains a fulfilling, rewarding and welcoming place for staff to work.

I am particularly passionate about Moving Beyond Coal and advancing Clean Transportation. Our continued use of fossil fuels in the energy and transportation sectors is detrimental to public health, the global climate, and current and future quality of life in Wisconsin, particularly for already vulnerable populations. The work of the Sierra Club's staff, leaders, volunteers and partners has led to important wins in these issue areas, and I'm grateful that the Chapter is continuing to push for progress.

**SARAH MARIE STREED
OF MILWAUKEE, MILWAUKEE COUNTY**



I have a lifetime of environmental advocacy behind me. I began a wetlands group, I was the Executive Director of the Wisconsin Interfaith Climate & Energy Campaign, and project writer for the River Alliance of Wisconsin, among others. I also am a writer. My book *Leaving the House of Ghosts* was published by McFarland & Company. I have written lots of climate journalistic pieces and I taught writing at UW-Madison for some years.

I am passionate and enthusiastic and that inspires others. I can write almost anything quickly and easily. I also finish what I start and so can be relied upon. Most of all, I am persistent and do not give up.

I think the chapter needs to do concrete things. I have written up a plan to follow the *Held v Montana* lawsuit here in Wisconsin based on the Wisconsin Public Trust Doctrine, which I would love for the Sierra Club to go after with all their resources.

1. Protecting our Water Resources and
5. Protecting native Forests and Wildlife

WISCONSIN NEEDS THE KNOWLES-NELSON STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM TO REMAIN STRONG

The Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program is one of Wisconsin's most exciting achievements and a **rare bipartisan success story**. Since 1989, the **Stewardship Program has helped Wisconsinites care for our state's land and water as well as build the trails, campgrounds, and boat launches that allow us to get out and enjoy Wisconsin**. Disappointingly, the Stewardship Program has been subject to political chess games that undermine the goal of the program.

The Stewardship Program is popular among Wisconsinites, and **90% of voters support dedicated public funding for conservation!** Despite widespread public support for the Stewardship Program, Republican Legislators on the Joint Finance Committee have been voting along party lines to reject funding stewardship projects like Pelican River Forest and Cedar Gorge Clay Bluffs. Governor Evers used COVID relief dollars to fund the conservation of Cedar Gorge, expanding outdoor recreation opportunities for the public and preserving ecosystems that are important to public health. Pelican River Forest still has not received funding to conserve the forest, but it is still possible. You can sign the petition to protect the forest at pelicanriver.org.

Outside of specific projects, the Stewardship Program played a large part in the state budget debate this session. Governor Evers vetoed a budget provision that would have further restricted how some Knowles-Nelson dollars can be spent, but there were still negative impacts to the Stewardship Program that made it through. The **shared revenue bill created new restrictions for conservation projects north of Highway 8**; moving forward, all local governments (county and towns, villages, and municipalities) must pass resolutions in support of the project before it can move to the Joint Finance Committee for funding approval. This adds layers of bureaucracy and allows for a small number of opponents to a project to stop projects from moving forward.

It is key for **all Sierra Club members, especially those who live north of Highway 8, to contact their local and state elected officials** and share why the Stewardship Program is important to them, and to get involved in the process when a conservation project is proposed in their area!

Cassie Steiner
Senior Campaign Coordinator



Wisconsin Chapter-Executive Committee
ELECTION BALLOT 2023

Instructions: Read the candidate statements on the preceding page(s). Select up to three candidates. Indicate your choices by marking the appropriate box. Ballots clipped from *The Sierran* must have a legible membership number on the back to be valid. One vote per member. "Voter 2" column for use in households with a "joint membership."

Voter #1:

- Scott Coulthurst
- Leland Pan
- Peter Skopec
- Sarah Marie Streed
- Write In: _____



Voter #2:

- Scott Coulthurst
- Leland Pan
- Peter Skopec
- Sarah Marie Streed
- Write In: _____

Online: <https://www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/2023-wi-chapter-executive-committee-elections>

Mailed ballots must be postmarked by November 11, 2023

Mail to: Linda Frank, 1845 N Farwell Ave. #202, Milwaukee WI 53202



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



SIERRA CLUB

WISCONSIN CHAPTER

754 Williamson Street

Madison, WI 53703

Our newsletter is printed on recycled paper

Volume 61 / Number 3 OCTOBER 2023 - JANUARY 2024

CALENDAR

OCTOBER 15-21

Wolf Awareness Week

Daily wolf-related activities

OCTOBER 25

Natural Resources Board meeting regarding the Wolf Plan

9:00 a.m.

NOVEMBER 1

Chapter Awards Celebration

6:00 p.m.

NOVEMBER 11

Deadline to vote in chapter Excom election

See candidate bios and ballot in this newsletter

NOVEMBER 14

Book Club Discussion on *Eager* by Ben Goldfarb

7:00 p.m.

NOVEMBER 28

Giving Tuesday

Please consider including the chapter in your giving:

sierraclub.org/wisconsin/donate

DECEMBER 23-JANUARY 2

Winter break

Sierra Club offices closed

JANUARY 2

Book Club discussion on *Nathan Coulter* by Wendell Berry



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



OUR MEMBERS IN ACTION

Energy burden (the percentage of household income spent on utility bills) is a major issue in Milwaukee, particularly in predominantly Black and Latinx neighborhoods. The Sierra Club - Wisconsin Chapter has been supporting local partners in uplifting this issue and advocating for solutions! In June, we joined partners and community members in Milwaukee for listening sessions held by the Public Service Commission about how it can address energy burden, and one of the big asks was to create a Percentage of Income Pilot Program (PIPP). This work is continuing – please reach out if you'd like to get involved!

