



# WISCONSIN Sierran

NEWS OF THE WISCONSIN CHAPTER OF THE SIERRA CLUB

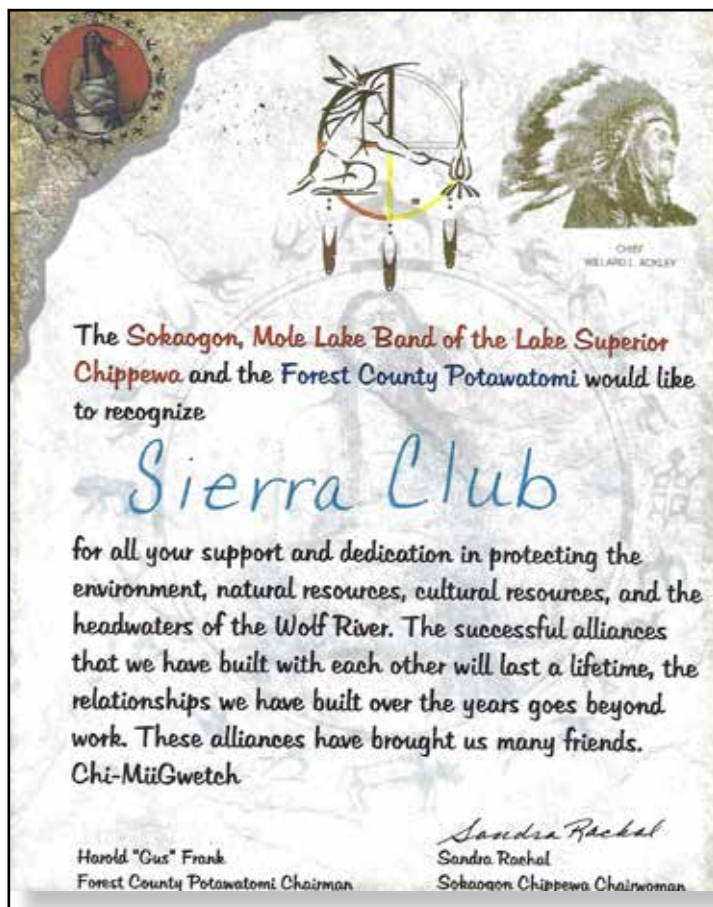
## 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CRANDON MINE DEFEAT

The historic defeat of the Crandon mine proposal was celebrated by the Mole Lake Sokaogon Chippewa Community and the Forest County Potawatomi on October 28. This victory over multinational mining companies is truly extraordinary in the history of anti-mining campaigns, and Sierra Club members should be proud of playing a significant role in supporting the movement.

The story of this fight begins when Exxon discovered the Crandon deposit in 1975. Exxon worked on developing a mine proposal only to put it on hold in the mid-1980's due to poor mineral prices. Exxon then partnered with Canadian uranium miner Rio Algom to form Crandon Mining Company in the early 1990's and resurrected the proposal in 1993.

The proposed mine was a huge environmental and cultural threat, as it was located along Swamp Creek, which feeds Mole Lake's only wild rice lake and then flows into the Wolf River. The company proposed dumping mine wastewater into Swamp Creek and a permanent waste dump of acid-causing metallic sulfide mine wastes destroying more than half a square mile of land, threatening both groundwater and Swamp Creek. The Wolf River runs through the Menominee Nation's lands downstream from Mole Lake, which united the tribes and nearby concerned landowners in opposition.

An important part of this story takes place during the years when Exxon put development on hold. Racist opposition



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## LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

# LOOKING FORWARD

A Happy New Year to all our members and supporters. We want to thank you for your ongoing commitment to people and the environment. Your enduring support makes what we do possible.

Looking back, here are some of the key victories you helped us accomplish in 2023:

- ❑ U.S. District Court Judge Conley directed Enbridge to remove their Tar Sands Line 5 pipeline from the Bad River Band of the Chippewa's lands in three years.
- ❑ The Public Service Commission ruled that MGE and Alliant Energy must retain their current net-metering programs, keeping homeowner solar affordable and accessible to more people.
- ❑ The Wisconsin DNR put forth a Wolf Management Plan based on science, not arbitrary numbers.

In 2024, political outcomes will be a critical part of determining our future, including whether redistricting will result in new and fair maps in Wisconsin. We're already in the process of endorsing candidates, and we'll provide strong support for those who want to engage with us in electing environmental champions at the national and local level.

This means your support will be more important than ever – whether it's educating others, volunteering your time, or providing financial support. It all matters, it all counts, and it all adds up.

That's why we're kicking off the year on January 20 and 21 with annual campaign planning. On January 30, we will host our annual virtual volunteer fair. This is a great way to learn more about our efforts and to see if any of our many opportunities to volunteer might be right for you. Simply contact [cassie.steiner@sierraclub.org](mailto:cassie.steiner@sierraclub.org) for more information. There are support teams and committees where you can apply your skills, and we also have six regional groups in Wisconsin where you can get involved more locally. They're all great ways to feel good by doing good.



Our new Volunteer Coordinator, Heather Wittrock, who has been a great office volunteer for many years, started at the end of November, and she is ready and willing to help you find your niche.

Your support this year will help us:

- ❑ Turn out a strong response to the DNR's Environmental Impact Statement regarding a permit for a Line 5 reroute.
- ❑ Ensure that the Wolf Management Plan is implemented appropriately and that other critical wildlife such as beavers are also managed according to good science.
- ❑ Fight for environmental equity, whether it is keeping energy costs affordable to everyone, ensuring good transit options for all citizens, or guaranteeing that the air is safe to breathe and the water safe to drink.

The national Sierra Club has been undergoing a reorganization in order to strengthen our efforts. Your Wisconsin Chapter remains strong thanks to our grassroots membership and your commitment to supporting our efforts and protecting Wisconsin's environment with your time and money. We are grateful – since there is so much more we can do together.

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

## THE WISCONSIN SIERRAN

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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.*

### **Deadline:**

The deadline for submission of articles to the April 2024 issue is midnight on February 10, 2024.

### **Change of Address:**

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to Ojibwe legal spearfishing rights led to armed conflict and protests at boat landings in northern Wisconsin. Tensions continued into the early 1990's but began to abate as it became clear that the tribes were not harming fish populations or tourism. One of the major successes of the anti-Crandon mine movement is the successful effort to work with sportfishing groups to recognize the true threat to fisheries – metallic sulfide mining.

It's impossible to detail all the various efforts that led to the victory. Glenn Reynolds, attorney for Mole Lake, called the win “death by a thousand cuts” due to the sheer volume of opposition efforts. I offer here highlights of a few of the major initiatives.

The Midwest Treaty Network – non-natives organized to support Ojibwe treaty rights – helped activists and tribal members form the Wolf Watershed Education Project (WWEP) in 1996 through regular organizing meetings hosted by the Mole Lake Sokaogon, the Menominee Nation and others. An immediate goal was to educate the public downstream along the Wolf River via a speaking tour with representatives from tribes and environmental and sportfishing groups. Shortly after the tour began, the mining company proposed a 38-mile pipeline to dump wastewater into the Wisconsin River instead of Swamp Creek to get around water quality standards. The pipeline proposal only created new widespread opposition for those downstream of the pipeline on the Wisconsin.

A parallel campaign to ban metallic sulfide mining in Wisconsin had been underway since the early 1990's. When the DNR Natural Resources Board rejected a ban, activists statewide worked to support legislation to establish a moratorium instead. The campaign became the Mining Moratorium Coalition, made up of more than 60 statewide organizations networked in support of what ultimately became the Prove It First bill. Many rallies and protests were held at the Capitol during this time, and more than 1,000 supporters attended a 1997 Milwaukee rally and hearing.

The Moratorium Coalition demonstrated the huge change in attitudes about the shared need to protect water and natural resources. Tribes, churches, labor, hunting and fishing and environmental groups statewide networked to support legislation. State Representative Spencer Black (former Wisconsin Chapter Director and Sierra Club National Board member) led the legislative effort to pass the bill in 1997 with Governor Thompson signing it into law in 1998.

The mine proposal included the use of huge amounts of cyanide to process ore, and we learned the mining industry routinely mishandled and spilled cyanide causing massive

fish kills – not just on mine sites but during transport, thus endangering far more people and natural resources. An effort to pass new legislation to ban cyanide in mining began in the late 1990's. The Coalition to Ban Cyanide in Mining included 100 organizations, 11 county governments and many towns, villages and cities.

We weren't able to pass a cyanide ban, but the Prove It First Law did much to stand in the way of development of other metallic sulfide deposits until it was overturned in 2017. Note that the industry still has not demonstrated examples of safe metallic sulfide mining, despite overturning the law, and the Sierra Club and others are working in Minnesota to pass a Prove It First law.

Local opposition accomplished even more than the state efforts and ultimately led to the mining company abandoning the state. Residents of the Town of Nashville took back their government from pro-mining representatives and initiated legal action to challenge an agreement giving the company local approvals. The Forest County Potawatomi established Class 1 Air Authority to protect their lands from air impacts that included potential mining operations. The Mole Lake Sokaogon undertook a costly but successful effort to establish their own Water Quality Authority. These dual regulatory protections ensured that only a mine operation capable of meeting those standards could proceed, and the company ultimately acknowledged it couldn't meet them.

The two Tribes ultimately took on considerable debt and purchased the mining company and land twenty years ago, on Oct. 28, 2003. They divided up control of the land and mineral rights to ensure that the deposit cannot be mined. We owe a tremendous debt of gratitude for their determination and sacrifices that finally halted the destructive proposal.

Wisconsin Chapter members have maintained vigilance over the industry in the years since then. We helped fight off Gogebic Taconite's huge and dangerous proposal to mine low-grade taconite ore in the Penokee Hills of Ashland and Iron Counties. We continue to track Green Light Metals as it attempts to gain permits to explore for metals in Marathon, Taylor and Oneida Counties. I'm confident that the statewide network of opposition, combined with our strong membership and lessons learned from the Crandon struggle, will help ensure dangerous metallic sulfide mining proposals here are halted.

**Dave Blouin**  
Chapter Mining Committee Chair

# GOVERNOR EVERS COULD HAVE LAST WORD ON KOHLER-ANDRAE DECISION

Wisconsin Sierrans remain deeply concerned about the fate of Kohler-Andrae Lakeshore, a single ecosystem that consists of both Kohler-Andrae State Park (KASP) and the land north of the park where in 2014 Kohler Company revealed plans to build an elite golf course. **Kohler-Andrae Lakeshore is one of the most important habitats for rare animals and plants in the state of Wisconsin.**

Despite statewide opposition to the golf course plan, Kohler has not yet responded to calls to preserve the land it owns and to leave KASP intact. The matter is currently before the Wisconsin Court of Appeals as a consequence of a 2018 lawsuit against the DNR brought by Friends of the Black River Forest (FBRF), a grassroots Sheboygan group that partners with Sierra Club-Wisconsin Chapter in organizing opposition to the golf course plan. The proposed course would be Kohler's fifth in Sheboygan County.

**The plan to build an elite golf course on 247 acres of old-growth forest and globally rare wetlands** was first approved during the administration of Governor Scott Walker, when businesswoman Cathy Stepp served as DNR secretary. Walker's motto – "Wisconsin is Open for Business" – resulted in widespread layoffs of scientists and poor morale at the DNR.

Dirk Willis, vice president of golf for Destination Kohler, has frequently declared that Kohler's proposed golf course would be "minimalist" in its disruption of the landscape. Willis referred to a plan that includes clear-cutting 50,000 old-growth trees, bulldozing a rare wetland and destroying the habitat of thousands of plants and animals, some of them threatened and endangered.

In a 2018 ruling, Administrative Law Judge, Mark Kaiser, stated that

Kohler's Environmental Impact Statement, the basis for the Wetland Fill Permit the DNR issued to the company that would allow it to begin construction, was founded not on "scientific facts and definitive plans, but speculation and promises." Kohler appealed the decision. The Circuit Court concurred with Kaiser's reversal. Kohler appealed this to the appellate court. In December, the appellate court upheld the Administrative Law Judge's finding. Kohler does not have a wetlands permit and cannot build without one. This marks a significant victory in the regulatory process on this issue.

In 2022, the Wisconsin Supreme Court denied standing to FBRF to sue the DNR in an effort to halt its land swap deal with Kohler Company. The land swap trades to the state nine acres of no conservation value in exchange for 4.9 prime acres of Kohler-Andrae State Park. **Kohler intends to use the land inside the park to build a rotary and four-lane road to route traffic to its golf course,** as well as a 22,000 square foot maintenance facility.

"We believe it is incumbent upon the governor to ensure that this questionable giveaway of state park land is not allowed to stand," said Mary Faydash, president of FBRF. The land-swap deal would open "the door for future administrations to use our state parks as political bargaining chips. The Land Exchange Agreement signed by the previous governor, the DNR and the Kohler Company clearly benefits the company over the taxpayers of Wisconsin. Governor Evers should take action."

The park land the Walker DNR conveyed to Kohler Company through **the land-swap agreement consisted of sections of the park "that had not previously been developed with campsites or boardwalks because it**

**was so ecologically significant,"** said a letter from FBRF to Governor Evers requesting his intervention. Comprised of dunes, wetlands and forest, this section of the park is used by hikers and birders.

Residents living near the site fear that locating a golf course on top of the sandy soil at Kohler-Andrae Lakeshore will cause chemicals used on the greens to leak into the aquifer that serves local wells. Since 2015, glyphosate, the active ingredient in Roundup, a Bayer/Monsanto herbicide widely used on U.S. golf courses, has been listed by the WHO as a "probable human carcinogen." Glyphosate is listed in Kohler's environmental report.

FBRF has also appealed to U.S. Secretary of the Interior Debra Haaland to ask her to order the review of the National Park Services approval of converting conserved land to private land. **The land inside KASP where Kohler wants to build its road and maintenance facility was purchased in part with federal funds. Under the LAWCON Act, it is illegal to sell such land for private development.** Haaland referred the matter to the National Park Service.

The DNR's Migratory Bird Report identifies **Kohler-Andrae Lakeshore as a priority stopover site for more than 10,000 waterfowl and landbirds and 1,000 raptors,** including 35 species of "greatest conservation need."

Now, Kohler Company needs to drop its plans for the golf course. Meanwhile, the Governor should send the land swap back to the Natural Resource Board (NRB), and the NRB should remedy its processes so that a land swap like this cannot happen again.

RT Both  
Chapter Lands Team

## SUPPORTERS RALLY FOR LOWER ENERGY RATES AND NET METERING



This fall, all of Wisconsin's major utilities were engaged in rate cases before the Public Service Commission, gaining significant attention from the media and advocates for lower rates and clean energy. Hundreds of people submitted comments or testified at public hearings opposing rate hikes and some utilities' attempts to eliminate net metering, which allows customers who produce their own power (via solar panels) to sell excess electricity back to their utility. In good news, the PSC rejected Madison Gas and Electric's and Alliant Energy's proposals to eliminate net metering. The PSC also slightly decreased the rate increases that Madison Gas and Electric, Alliant Energy and We Energies had proposed!

## SUPERIOR LEADERS SPEAK OUT AGAINST NEMADJI TRAIL ENERGY CENTER

In spring of 2023, the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced the New ERA program, a \$9.7 billion program funded through the Inflation Reduction Act to assist rural electric cooperatives in their transition to clean energy. Sierra Club leaders and partners advocated for Dairyland Power Cooperative to apply for this funding, using it to speed their transition away from fossil fuels and as an opportunity to walk away from the proposed Nemadji Trail Energy Center, a gas plant they hope to build in Superior. Dairyland applied for this funding in the fall – a major success – and we're awaiting news on whether their request will be granted. While this was a big step forward, Dairyland is still pursuing NTEC, despite the fact that today's energy landscape is completely different than when the plant was first proposed in 2017. Nothing makes that more clear than Superior's elected leaders speaking out against the plant. While the city had supported the plant initially, Mayor Jim Paine, along with city council members Jenny Van Sickle, Nick Ledin, Garner Moffat and Ruth Ludwig, spoke this fall in opposition to the plant, naming concerns including impacts on climate change, environmental justice and a neighboring indigenous burial site, local water and wetlands, and on economic concerns. We're sending our thanks to these leaders who are showing what it means to care for our communities and are pressing on with our work to stop this fossil fuel plant from being built!

## EIGHT LANE EXPANSION FOR I-94 WOULD ADD THE MOST GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS OF WISDOT CONSTRUCTION OPTIONS

The Sierra Club Wisconsin Chapter's Mann Grant, along with other funding from the Sierra Club, paid for some of the large amount of legal work that was done with attorneys from the ACLU of Wisconsin and Midwest Environmental Advocates to prepare extensive comments early in 2023 on behalf of the club and other organizations in response to the late 2022 Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the I-94 East-West expansion project. These comments objected to spending what will probably amount to about \$1.5 billion on expanding the highway to eight lanes and greatly enlarging the Stadium Interchange. This would increase the highway's footprint by more than 40 acres and lead to increased traffic volumes – while public transit continues to be underfunded and in decline. The 105 pages of submitted comments were supported by over 100 exhibits and raised issues ranging from civil rights, segregation, and environmental justice to air pollution and health impacts, climate change, water quality and flooding, sprawl and land use, and noise and visual impacts. Just before the end of October, Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) issued a 170-page Greenhouse Gas Analysis for the project, something which the Sierra Club and other members of the Coalition for more Responsible Transportation had long been requesting. WisDOT's analysis agrees that the two eight-lane alternatives being proposed by WisDOT would result in the highest levels of greenhouse gas emissions of any of the seven alternatives being considered. The club will be looking carefully at WisDOT's analysis to see whether it accurately evaluates the amount of greenhouse gasses that the project will add.

Attorney Dennis M Grzezinski  
Legal Chair

# SCIENCE PREVAILED IN CONTENTIOUS WOLF DEBATE

After an extremely contentious three-year fight over wolf management in Wisconsin, science and wolf conservationists have prevailed. In October, Wisconsin's Natural Resources Board (NRB) approved a Wolf Management Plan and a Wolf Hunting Rule that contain major victories, including:

- ❑ **RECOGNITION OF THE ECOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL IMPORTANCE OF WOLVES**, including biodiversity, forest health and public support for Wisconsin's wolves.
- ❑ **ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT** instead of an arbitrary, numeric population goal. This is a best practice that was supported by numerous scientists and is in line with most natural resource management in Wisconsin.
- ❑ **NEW ZONES AND SUBZONES** with tags that are zone-specific. (In the 2021 hunt here, tags were issued for any zone in the state, so as zones closed, people would just move to any open zone, leading to a cascading amount of pressure all at the same time. That will not be allowed now.)
- ❑ Where requested by the tribes, **"LOW QUOTA" SUBZONES** were created that extend six miles around their reservation land to help protect reservation wolf packs.
- ❑ **THE REGISTRATION TIME TO REPORT A WOLF KILL IS NOW EIGHT HOURS** (in the past, a 24-hour period led to excessive quota exceedances).
- ❑ The time allowed for **HOUND TRAINING ON WOLVES HAS BEEN RESTRICTED** - it will run only during the time a harvest zone is open for hunting. Hound training will close as the respective zone closes to hunting. Previously this was open 365 days a year. Additionally, hunters are not allowed to use hounds at night.
- ❑ **THE PLAN OUTLINES STRATEGIES FOR INCREASING PUBLIC EDUCATION** related to the implementation of non-lethal conflict-deterrence techniques.

During the public comment period, many wolf and environmental groups, science advocates, the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission and many individual Tribes supported the plan. The debate was multi-layered and complicated, with several different elements, so it's important to take a step back and remember where we were three years ago.

## WHERE WE CAME FROM:

In February of 2021, a local judge forced a wolf hunt in the middle of wolf breeding season. In less than three days, trophy hunters wiped out a third of our wolf population. It was a devastating and dark time in Wisconsin. Immediately, hundreds of Sierra Club members contacted the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) calling on them to prioritize science and Tribal consent in wolf management in Wisconsin.

A lawsuit later that year put a moratorium on wolf hunting in Wisconsin, and the Sierra Club and other groups won a suit to have wolves relisted on the Endangered Species List in early 2022. This bought some much-needed time, but what followed was a very contentious fight. Trophy hunting groups called for a population cap of 350 wolves (wanting to wipe out two-thirds of our wolf population). Their aggressive campaign led to legislative proposals and dozens of counties passing resolutions supporting the cap. **We defeated that horrible narrative by advocating for a plan that prioritized the latest science by using adaptive wolf management, not an arbitrary population goal, and certainly not one as ridiculous as 350 wolves.**



Adding to this low point in Wisconsin's history, a leader on the NRB called for the state to ignore the Tribe's undeniable, court-affirmed share of the wolf quota. **The new plan respects Tribal authority and the Tribe's portion of the quota, and contains 'subzones' around Tribal reservations at their request.**

## HOW WE WON:

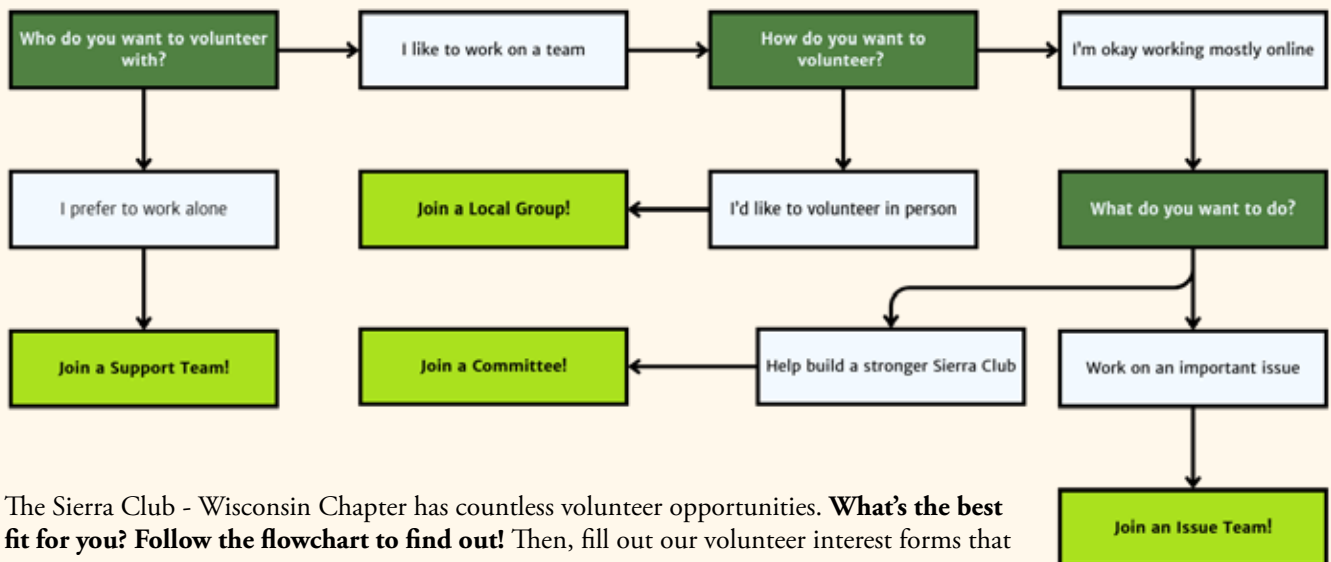
This campaign was a demonstration of what makes the Sierra Club powerful. The combination of policy analysis, grassroots pressure and advocacy, regulatory engagement and media allowed us to secure such a critical win. Some highlights from our work:

- ❑ We had the **opportunity to be on the Wolf Stakeholder Committee** to ensure that science and Tribal input remained the focus of the conservation.
- ❑ Our educational work, including the annual Wolf Awareness Week, **helped correct misinformation** and likely influenced the public attitudes survey conducted in 2022.
- ❑ Over the past two years, we have **mobilized thousands of comments on the new wolf plan** and rule – providing talking points, pre-drafted emails and updates! **In the latest comment period, Sierra Club members were over a quarter of all comments received!**
- ❑ We have **built positive relationships** with the DNR and NRB that have positioned us as credible partners, which will only benefit us moving forward.

## WHAT'S NEXT:

The elephant in the room continues to be Act 169, the Wisconsin law that requires a wolf hunt, regardless of the science or Tribal input, as long as wolves are not protected by the Endangered Species Act. Unfortunately, the plan and rule calls for a hunt and allows hounding, baiting, trapping and electronic predator calling, as required by the law. We need to get Act 169 repealed if we want sustainable wolf management in Wisconsin.

## VOLUNTEER TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE!



The Sierra Club - Wisconsin Chapter has countless volunteer opportunities. **What's the best fit for you? Follow the flowchart to find out!** Then, fill out our volunteer interest forms that are relevant to you at <https://www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/volunteer>.

If you want to learn more about volunteering, please save the date for our virtual volunteer fair on January 30. This online event answers questions you have about getting involved and walks through the various opportunities with the chapter!

# 2023 YEAR IN REVIEW

## JANUARY

- ❑ **Ben Jealous started his first day as Executive Director of the Sierra Club** by spending time with and listening to Wisconsin Chapter leaders.
- ❑ **Hundreds called for an environmentally friendly, equitable solution for the I-94 corridor** through the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's public comment period.

## FEBRUARY

- ❑ The Sierra Club Chapter Director traveled to Washington, D.C., to **ensure strong implementation of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)** in Wisconsin.
- ❑ The Public Service Commission began an investigation on **additional low income and energy affordability programs** in We Energies territory.

## MARCH

- ❑ Thousands of comments were submitted in response to Wisconsin's draft **Wolf Management Plan**. Hundreds of Sierra Club members submitted comments.
- ❑ Sierra Club members advocated for a Wisconsin **state budget that supports clean air, clean water, public lands and public transportation**.

## APRIL

- ❑ Sierra Club-endorsed **Janet Protasiewicz was elected to the Wisconsin State Supreme Court**.
- ❑ **Conservation Congress** Results showed support for lands, water and wildlife.
- ❑ Local groups hosted **Earth Day** events around the state.

## MAY

- ❑ The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) program that made **\$9.7 billion available for electric co-ops to reduce emissions** and move to clean energy was announced.
- ❑ Fun was had at our 2023 **Locally Grown, Nationally Known** annual fundraiser. We raised \$11,295!
- ❑ We celebrated the **50th anniversary of the Endangered Species Act**.
- ❑ The Water Team **hosted a fantastic screening of Kiss the Ground**. Over 70 people attended and learned about sustainable agriculture and what is possible.

## JUNE

- ❑ A federal judge ordered **the shutdown of Line 5 by 2026** where it crosses the Bad River reservation.
- ❑ Advocates called for a **transit-friendly and multi-modal transportation solution** for the Beltline Highway corridor in Madison through the Department of Transportation's Planning and Environmental Linkages Study.



To learn more about any of these exciting victories, go to [sierraclub.org/wisconsin](https://sierraclub.org/wisconsin), where the timeline will link to more information about this work.

## JULY

- ❑ Issue teams **raised over \$7,000** in their Team Sierra Campaign.
- ❑ More than 100 Dairyland electric co-op members called on the utility to submit an application for IRA funding to **transition off of coal and gas and build out clean, renewable energy**. Later in the year, Dairyland submitted an application.

## AUGUST

- ❑ The DNR finalized a **strong draft Wolf Management Plan**.
- ❑ Dozens, including elected officials, pledged to **participate in World Car Free Day**.

## SEPTEMBER

- ❑ Sierra Club volunteers took to Washington, D.C., to **call for the protection of the Endangered Species Act**.
- ❑ Legislation that allows **fourth graders and their families to access state parks for free** passed the Wisconsin Assembly Committee on Forestry, Parks and Outdoor Recreation.

## OCTOBER

- ❑ We celebrated the **20th anniversary of the Crandon Mine purchase**.
- ❑ Hundreds submitted **comments against a We Energies rate increase**.
- ❑ The Natural Resources Board passed a **science-based Wolf Management Plan**.
- ❑ Superior, WI, local elected officials **opposed the Nemadji Trail Energy Center gas plant proposal**.

## NOVEMBER

- ❑ Six fantastic chapter volunteers and two partner organizations received **Chapter Awards**.
- ❑ The Public Service Commission **protected solar benefits** for Alliant Energy and Madison Gas and Electric customers.
- ❑ The Sierra Club and Friends of the Black River Forest **held a rally and met with the governor's office about protecting Kohler-Andrae State Park and the lakeshore from being developed into a golf course**.

## DECEMBER

- ❑ Sierra Club volunteers took to Washington, D.C., to **call for the shutdown of Line 5**.
- ❑ We welcomed our **new Volunteer Coordinator, Heather Wittrock** to Sierra Club Wisconsin Chapter staff.
- ❑ The Appellate Court affirmed that **the DNR did not have adequate information to issue a wetlands fill permit to Kohler Company**, protecting the Kohler Andrae lakeshore from being turned into a golf course.

# 2023 CHAPTER AWARDS

Each year Sierra Club Wisconsin recognizes outstanding volunteers and community leaders for their work on behalf of the environment. From new activists to lifetime achievements, we want to acknowledge their amazing efforts and accomplishments. On November 1 we celebrated our 2023 award winners by uplifting the work they've done and hearing from their teammates and colleagues. Read more about our award winners below and watch the recording of the celebration on our YouTube channel: [www.YouTube.com/SierraClubWisconsin](http://www.YouTube.com/SierraClubWisconsin).



## 2023 AWARD WINNERS

**CAITLIN MOELLER** received the **New Activist Award**. Caitlin has made a huge impact on the Wildlife Team, particularly with her graphic design and social media work, which has brought the team's campaigns to life and brought in new volunteers. She's been a big part of the successful organizing around the Wolf Management Plan and the recent Wolf Awareness Week, and is celebrated by her teammates for her dedication, the time she puts into this work, and for taking on less visible tasks that make a big difference.

**JENNY ABEL** received the **Wildflower Award**. Jenny is chair of the Great Waters Group, where she has worked tirelessly to push her local and global communities to be less racist and fight against the worst effects of climate change. Jenny has brought new people into the group, is a wonderful relationship builder, and has dedicated herself to issues from energy burden to public transportation. She was also involved in the Sierra Club before moving to Wisconsin, helping to shut down a coal plant and pass a 100% renewable electricity resolution in Virginia!

**LINDA FRANK** received the **Merit Award** for her dedication to climate and environmental work with teams, committees and groups spanning every level of the organization in Wisconsin. Linda was deeply engaged in the Milwaukee climate and equity plan and has also been engaged in the energy burden coalition to stop unjust electric rate increases, increase energy efficiency opportunities and decrease racial disparities in energy burden in Milwaukee. As if that's not enough, Linda has been engaged with both the Lands Team and the Water Team, serves on the Chapter Executive committee, helps with fundraising and leads the Nominations Committee. Her work has made a huge impact!

**MAUREEN MCCOY** received the **LD Rockwell Award**. This award is presented to an individual for their political or electoral work with the chapter. Maureen is a member of Sierra Club's Lands Team, and is being recognized for her contributions to holding legislators accountable to their promises, especially on the Every Kid Outdoors legislation, which would increase access to parks. In this work, she has contacted legislative committees, bill sponsors and other legislators about the legislative process and ensured that Every Kid Outdoors is staying on track to pass.

This year, two groups were recognized with the Good Citizen Award.

**CITIZEN ACTION OF WISCONSIN** was recognized with the **Good Citizen Award** for their work across the state. In Milwaukee, Citizen Action of Wisconsin is a leader and strong advocate on energy burden work, especially focusing on racial disparities in energy burden in Milwaukee. They have also engaged in the We Energies rate case, the PIPP (percentage of income payment program) docket, and public awareness building. On the other side of the state, Citizen Action of Wisconsin has also been a partner in our clean energy work focused in western Wisconsin, where we've been organizing with electric co-op members to push their utilities to invest in renewable energy and move away from fossil fuels.

**VERNON COUNTY ENERGY DISTRICT** was presented with the **Good Citizen Award** for its advocacy in western Wisconsin, particularly Vernon County. An energy district is a nonprofit that serves a specific county and helps develop clean energy given the local context, needs and barriers. Vernon County Energy District has been doing amazing work in – you guessed it – Vernon County! Ranging from home audits, energy efficiency and education to advocating for clean energy on a large scale, VCED has made a major impact in its area. It has also been a wonderful partner in pushing local utilities to take advantage of electric cooperative funding offered through the Inflation Reduction Act.

**The chapter's highest award, the JJ & Pat Werner Award**, was presented to **CAROL AND KEVIN OLSON**. Carol and Kevin have led the River Touring Section for years, which encourages enjoyment of recreational waterways, protects these areas, promotes safety when paddling and fosters appreciation for these activities. In doing this, Carol and Kevin have coordinated countless paddling trips and outings over the years, advocated internally for an easier process for outings leaders and championed connecting people to the outdoors. Many Sierra Club volunteers point to outings like these as key factors in why they got involved in the organization and as experiences that helped build their love for the outdoors. Thank you to Carol and Kevin for all of their work over the years!

## GREEN REVIEW

# Weird and Wonderful Nature:

**Tales of More Than 100 Unique Animals, Plants, and Phenomena**

by Ben Hoare, DK Treasures, 2023, 192 pages.

Adults who buy *Weird and Wonderful Nature* for their children will send them to bed early so that they can have time with this striking book. The book description claims it's for children 7-9, but it's engaging for just about every age. Let's call it a family book. We are drawn to novelty, and Ben Hoare celebrates and educates, but more importantly, he feeds us wonder on his *Weird and Wonderful Nature* tour.



Clear, detailed and colorful photos and illustrations offer an authentic experience.

Hoare organizes the book into chapters about species, behavior, phenomena and Earth, sharing intrigue about the most unusual animals, plants, fungi, minerals and more.

The Species chapter includes oddities such as the anglerfish, who swims in the depths of the ocean with a natural fishing rod and a light-up lure that dangles in front of her large jaw. An endangered Mexican salamander can regenerate ripped-off limbs and parts of its heart and brain in just a few weeks — without even leaving a scar. Can scientists learn from this phenomenon? Not if the few that still survive are lost. Equally as arresting is a see-through frog and the Oxpecker bird's appreciation of tasty earwax.

Plants are just as weird. While Chicago might dye its river green for St. Patrick's Day, the South American "River of Seven Colors" becomes a liquid rainbow when the sun, wet season and a particular river weed create a colorful alchemy.

The wonder continues: a desert spider prefers her meals cooked, so she sizzles them on the hot sands. Phantom quartz gets its name from the ghostly apparitions and outlines within the stone. Learn about the phenomenon of clouds that look like layers of floating pancakes. A discovery: tomato plants wail when thirsty or when their stems are cut, but their sound is too high-pitched for humans to hear.

These brief facts offer only a glimpse into Hoare's tribute to the richness of nature and science. What would a child or family say when asked if they enjoyed the book *Weird and Wonderful Nature*? One could easily imagine the response: "You had me at bone-eating snot flower."

Amy Lou Jenkins is the author of *Corners: Voices on Change*. Contact her through [JackWalkerPress.com](http://JackWalkerPress.com) if you would like to forward a book for possible review.

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**WELCOME: VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR HEATHER WITTROCK**

Heather Wittrock joined the staff of the Wisconsin Chapter as Volunteer Coordinator in late November. Heather is the first point of contact for those interested in exploring volunteer opportunities within the chapter and helps them find roles that match their interests and expertise. In addition to welcoming and placing volunteers, she also supports the administrative functions of the chapter office, a role that is very familiar to her. Heather began volunteering at the chapter office in 2016 while earning a degree in Community & Environmental Sociology and continued as a weekly Admin Volunteer after graduation.

Heather grew up in northern Wisconsin before moving to Madison in 2013. In her spare time she loves to hike, soak up sunshine, work on jigsaw puzzles, and watch movies. In her new role, she is especially excited to meet new volunteers while learning more about the day-to-day operations of the Sierra Club.

**Support the Wisconsin Chapter**

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

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

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_  
 Credit Card \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

## CALENDAR

### JANUARY 2

**Book Club Discussion on Nathan Coulter by Wendell Berry**  
7:00 p.m.

### JANUARY 6

**River Touring Section (RTS) Annual Meeting**  
11:00 a.m.

First United Methodist Church at 615 Broadway Street in Baraboo. Socializing starts at 11 a.m., potluck dinner at noon, followed by the business meeting. Please bring a dish to pass and your own plates, cups and utensils. RTS will provide beverages. For further details contact Kevin Olson, 608-356-8992, 608-963-2678, or [olsonfam44@rucls.net](mailto:olsonfam44@rucls.net).

### JANUARY 8

**Great Waters Group Program: Journey Down the Gila (film)**  
6:30 p.m.  
<https://www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/great-waters/events>

### JANUARY 19-21

**Sierra Club Wisconsin Chapter Issue Campaign Team Kickoffs**  
More details to follow. Contact [cassie.steiner@sierraclub.org](mailto:cassie.steiner@sierraclub.org) with interest.

### JANUARY 30

**Virtual Volunteer Fair**  
Have you considered getting involved? Now's the perfect time to find the best fit for you.

### APRIL 2

**Wisconsin Spring Election**  
[myvote.wi.gov](http://myvote.wi.gov)



### MORE OPPORTUNITIES COMING SOON!

As we welcome new Volunteer Coordinator Heather Wittrock to the staff, she will begin to coordinate more volunteer opportunities. Please check our website regularly to find events online or near you.

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



## OUR MEMBERS IN ACTION

In November, the Sierra Club Wisconsin Lands Team took to the capitol with Friends of the Black River Forest. Together, we called on Governor Evers to reverse the illegal land swap that removed prime parts of Kohler-Andrae State Park for Kohler Company to build another golf course in the area.

