



Sierra

Newsletter of the Coulee Region Group

JULY 2026

“How Oil Execs Shaped a Landmark Climate Study” - ProPublica, June 25, 2026
<https://www.propublica.org/article/wedges-climate-research-bp-fossil-fuel-princeton>

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

July 7, 6:00 p.m., Online

Line 5 Reroute Update

Online: tinyurl.com/wisc-Line5Info-0726

Enbridge's Line 5 Pipeline transports oil across Wisconsin and Michigan into Canada. It has spilled over one million gallons of oil and is being operated well beyond its intended lifespan. The proposed Line 5 reroute is 41 miles long and would allow the pipeline to continue operating over the opposition of the Bad River Band, on whose land the pipeline is currently trespassing. Hundreds of thousands of people from those near the Line 5 pipeline to every state in the

country have taken action to oppose Line 5 and highlighted the need to shut down the pipeline and protect the Great Lakes, tribal sovereignty and treaty rights, and our climate and environment.

In February of this year, Enbridge began clearing the right of way for the Line 5 reroute as the legal case challenging their state permits for the projects continues. Despite the serious concerns raised by the Bad River Band and the environmental groups, Enbridge is proceeding with construction and preparing for the intensive, risky work they've proposed. Over the last few months, Enbridge's behavior has raised concerns about the threats Line 5 opponents have warned of for years. Join us to hear an update on what's happening with Line 5 and how you can plug in to protect the Great Lakes, tribal sovereignty and our climate!

July 8 - Highway Clean-Up



It's time for the summer highway clean-up on our club's section of River Valley Drive. We'll meet at 6 p.m. at the pumping station just west of the intersection with Gillette Street and then spread out to pick up litter. Bags and vests are available or bring your own. We'll work for about an hour and then

gather (optional) at Rudy's on La Crosse Street for refreshments.

July 12 - PSC Hearing Prep

Learn how to provide powerful testimony for upcoming Public Service Commission hearings on issues related to data centers. Several pending proposals call for an explosion of new gas plants which will increase power bills and methane emissions. Sign up for this 6 p.m. online webinar. <https://tinyurl.com/WISC-pscrep726>

No Action Gathering in July

There will be no local Action Gathering in July. We will resume in August. Watch for details in the August newsletter.

Support Our Teams!

Our dedicated volunteer teams are fighting to stop the worst impacts of climate change, safeguard Wisconsin's lands and wildlife, and ensure that when you turn on the tap, your

water is safe to drink. This is your chance to support them and the important work they are doing for our environment and our communities. From now through August 13, each team will be raising funds and offering fun ways to celebrate grassroots activism and Wisconsin's special places. Donate to your favorite team!

- Wildlife Team: tinyurl.com/wisc-wildlife26
- Water Team: tinyurl.com/wisc-water26
- Transportation Team: tinyurl.com/wisc-transport26
- Tar Sands Team: tinyurl.com/wisc-tarsands26
- Lands Team: tinyurl.com/wisc-lands26
- Beyond Coal Team: tinyurl.com/wisc-nocoal26

And, on **July 29 at 6:30 p.m.**, join us online for a fun evening to celebrate the grassroots advocacy of the Wisconsin Chapter and explore how our work matters to the parts of our environment that come alive at night. Donate any time at: <https://sc.org/DarkSkies>



Revisiting Plastics at the June Action Gathering

by Chris Miller, CRSC Board Member

“Plastic pollution free world is not a choice
but a commitment to life –
a commitment to the next generation.”
Amit Ray, Indian author and spiritual master

We decided on the theme of reawakening ourselves to the plastic dilemmas for these reasons:

- Plastic Free July started in Australia in 2011. It is now one of the largest environmental campaigns on the planet. We wanted to jump on board this global movement.
- Ninety-one percent of plastics are still not recycled.
- These statistics lead to a tendency to feel helpless, become discouraged, and feel less empowered. So we wanted to re-imagine what can be done, how we can be inspired, and how we can feel empowered again.

The narrative that consumers are the ones to blame has been perpetuated by the fossil fuel and petrochemical industry. Through targeted advertising and promotion of waste management solutions that rely on individual choices, like recycling, the fossil fuel industry has once again relied on manipulation and strategizing to keep us looking away from them and their responsibility.

We watched CAN WE FIX THIS? Why the plastic pollution problem is so much worse than you think (<https://youtu.be/6jkN50X9gZc?si=X7duUoeydfvbDMEz>)

The key point: We cannot clean our way out of our plastic dilemma.

What can be done?

- Reduce how much we make: packaging material, single use beverage
- Reduce how much we use
- Make more reusable and refillable options
- Design more products to be recyclable
- Scale up waste collection in underserved countries: 4 billion people lack access
- Expand recycling capacity by double
- Make recycling cheaper and more profitable than landfills
- Use science to redesign plastic so it can be used over and over
- Build places where plastic can be stored and by products not disturb the environment
- Reduce waste we export to lower income countries

You can see that these all depend on system changes. The hopeful note is that if we did these things, we can cut our total plastic waste by 90% by

2040! So the most important action individuals can take is to advocate for systems change like that illustrated in the zero waste hierarchy.

While we can't fix the problem through individual choices alone, we can still choose to practice a joyful zero waste lifestyle and to incorporate principles into our lives. Practicing zero waste is a great way to resist dominant models of linear consumption, reduce our exposure to chemicals, save money, and inspire others to take action.



We took action:

- We signed a letter to the mayor educating him about Plastic Free July and advocating that he make plastic waste a priority in the Climate Action Plan.
- Will work to set up a tour of Harters Recycling to educate ourselves on really what is going on with recycling in our area.
- We took individual pledges that inspired us all including using plastic-free household items, being more mindful of use, using a metal refillable cup or bottle, using Ridwell (<https://www.ridwell.com>), writing to companies about packaging, talking to others, including children, about zero waste.

View the PowerPoint presentation from our Action Gathering at <https://tinyurl.com/crsc-plastic0626> and check out the Sierra Club's Room-By-Room Plastic Free Action Guide at <https://www.sierraclub.org/Sierra/plastic-free-guide-room-by-room>. You can read more about the Zero Waste movement at <https://www.zerowaste.com>.

We invite you to make your own pledge on July 1 at <https://www.plasticfreejuly.org/pledge/>

"We don't need a handful of people doing zero waste perfectly. We need millions of people doing it imperfectly."
- Anne Marie Bonneau, @zerowastechef

CRSC Potluck

Despite threatening weather and a few rain drops, our annual summer potluck was a great success. Many old and new friends gathered to share great food, stories, and plans. We learned a bit about upcoming state and local club initiatives and how we can be involved in the many challenges facing our environment. Thanks to all who attended!



Because of the unsettled weather, our tour of Southern Bluffs School's Prairie was postponed until this fall. More details will be announced when it's rescheduled.

Coulee Region Youth

by Aditi Muduganti, Grade 12, Onalaska High School

Project Get Outdoors is a La Crosse initiative that connects youth experiencing mental health challenges with local natural spaces. A school club started by La Crosse teachers last fall has been taking students on weekly trips to local bluffs, creeks, and forests. Both efforts are built on the same idea: that young people are spending less time outside and that it matters.

That outdoor access requires real work to maintain. La Crosse County has spent years cutting energy use across county buildings and recently installed solar panels at sites including Goose Island and the downtown offices as part of a larger push toward carbon neutrality by 2050. A recent county survey found strong majorities of residents worried about clean drinking water and ecosystem loss. The county is now developing a Community Sustainability Plan and seeking resident input to shape it.

The City of La Crosse is moving alongside that work. The Climate Action Plan Steering Committee has backed goals this year to expand the urban tree canopy, increase renewable electricity generation, and improve recycling access for renters. The School District already has solar running at three schools, with a fourth on the way. For the students hiking bluffs on Tuesday mornings and the county planners meeting on Monday nights, the work is pointing in the same direction.

More July Events

7/ 1, 18, 28: Mississippi Valley Conservancy Work days. <https://www.mississippivalleyconservancy.org/events>

7/ 1: Who Is In The Creek? with Coon Creek Watershed. 6 pm. Bohemian Valley Fishery Area, Hwy G <https://tinyurl.com/whosinthecreek>

7/ 2: Author talk - "WISDOM FROM THE WOODS: A Year of Gentle Guidance From Mother Nature" Noon at McIntosh Memorial Library, Viroqua. <https://tinyurl.com/viroquabooktalkJuly>

7/ 8: Wisconsin Conservation Voters Listening Session 6 to 7 pm at The Nature Place, La Crosse. <https://tinyurl.com/26wcvlisten>

7/ 9-11: Basic wetland and aquatic plant ID at UWL Prairie Springs Center. <https://www.uwlax.edu/events/?e=33684>

7/11: Second Saturday Hike - The Dance of the Native Bees at 9 am at the Upper Hixon Parking Lot, La Crosse. <https://tinyurl.com/fobbeehike>

7/11: Bat Ecology Cave Tour 9:30 am at Kickapoo Caverns Nature Reserve. Must register. <https://tinyurl.com/mvcbatcavetour>

7/11: Youth Outdoor Fest 10 to 2 at Pettibone Park. <https://www.fws.gov/event/youth-outdoor-fest-2026>

7/11: Paddle in Lunda Park 4 to 6 pm Black River Falls. <https://www.blackrivercountry.net/event/friends-of-the-black-river-2026-paddle-schedule-paddle-in-the-park/>

7/12: Friends of Kickapoo Valley Reserve Garden Tour. <https://kvr.state.wi.us/Events/Calendar>

7/15: Author Talk - "The Burntwood Anthology" 6 pm Turtle Stack Brewery. <https://davidnashcollective.com/>

7/16: Author Talk - "A Year at a Beaver Pond" 5:30 pm at McIntosh Memorial Library, Viroqua. <https://tinyurl.com/viroquabooktalkbeaverpond>

7/23: Enhancing Biodiversity on Your Land: Habitat Improvement from 6 to 8 pm at Nature Nooks Retreat in Vernon County. MississippiValleyConservancy.org/events

7/25: Dragonfly Discovery from 10 am to Noon at The Nature Place. <https://tinyurl.com/tnp-dragonflies>

7/25: Universe in the Park 8 pm Wildcat Mountain State Park. <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/events/124756>

7/29: Field Trip to Foraker School in Vernon County. <https://mcintoshmemoriallibrary.events.mylibrary.digital/event?id=358691>

8/ 1: MVC Bee ID & Conservation Walk in Grant County. <https://tinyurl.com/mvcbewalk>



Our community is joining the challenge.

Together we can make a difference by simply choosing to refuse single-use plastic.

Yes, I will join the challenge!

- ✓ Switch plastic water bottles for refillables
- ✓ Skip the straw
- ✓ Choose to refuse disposable cups
- ✓ Keep single-use plastics out of our community