



Sierra

Newsletter of the Coulee Region Group

SEPTEMBER 2026

"Rewilded land remains green amid drought-stricken English countryside, images show" -

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2026/aug/21/somerset-rewilding-holnicote-estate-wetlands-rivers-resilience>

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.

September 18, 5:30 p.m.

Action Gathering: Transportation

First Congregational Church, Losey & Main

Join us at 5:30 p.m. on Friday, September 18 at the First Congregational Church, Main & Losey, for pizza, education, and action. [NOTE NEW LOCATION!]

This month's CRSC Action Gathering will focus on transportation access and equity in preparation for national Week Without Driving (WWD), October 1 through 8. WWD brings attention to our current car-centric transportation

systems and how that affects those who can't or do not drive and our environment and climate. We'll learn more about what we can do to participate in WWD and take action for more and better transportation choices in our area and state.

Please email CRSierraClub@gmail.com or call or text 608-315-2693 with questions about this event. EVERYONE IS WELCOME!

Sept. 9 - Aldo Leopold



Join us for a Lunch and Learn on Aldo Leopold's Land Ethic on September 9 at noon. In his classic work A Sand County Almanac (1949), Aldo Leopold called for an ethic that respected land as "a community to which we belong." That land community included "soils, waters, plants, animals, and people." Curt Meine will explore Leopold's

legacy for the emerging water ethic here in Wisconsin and beyond.

Call 608-315-2693 for access information or visit <https://tinyurl.com/wisc-aldotalk> to register.

Sept. 14 - Roadless Rule

Join us on Monday, September 14 at 5:30 p.m. for an online program that includes a screening of "Why We Need the Roadless Rule" along with some discussion and time to write comments for the Roadless Rule.

Visit <https://tinyurl.com/wisc-roadless> to register for the link.



October 1 - ORA Trail Farm Tour!

See attached flyer.

Sept. 1 - Film: VS. Goliath - Greater Chaco

Join us at 7:00 p.m. on September 1 for a virtual screening of VS GOLIATH: Greater Chaco. What happens when ordinary people take on billion-dollar industries?

The sacred Greater Chaco region of New Mexico, ancestral homeland of the Pueblo and Diné peoples, is under siege from a relentless surge of oil and gas extraction. After a life-changing call to Standing Rock, young Sandia Pueblo leader Julia Bernal returns home to confront the same forces threatening her own community. Uniting with Diné elder Daniel Tso and an intergenerational coalition, they lead a powerful fight to defend tribal sovereignty and protect Chaco for future generations.

The screening will be followed by a panel discussion with Julia Bernal and Daniel Tso, the protagonists of the film, and will be moderated by Judith LeBlanc, Executive Director of the Native Organizers Alliance.

Register here: <https://tinyurl.com/sc-chacofilm>



August Action Gathering Report

by Chris Miller, CRSC Board Member

We gathered at the Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship on August 21. Our initial discussion focused on updates about the Data Centers in Wisconsin. Please see the brief power point at <https://tinyurl.com/crsc-dcup-date826>. The action step was to sign a letter to gubernatorial candidate, David Crowley, expressing our support of a moratorium on Data Centers...not forever...but for now until a more robust guidelines can be developed in managing data centers. Kelda Roys' plan for working with data centers was reviewed and will be included in the letter to David Crowley.

We then had an outstanding presentation by Carol Wesley. She is a prominent director and leader for Lights Out Wisconsin. She also works closely with the Kickapoo Valley Dark Sky Initiative. She covered the science behind dark sky lighting; the money saved by dark sky lighting; and how to fashion your residence with dark sky lighting. The actions taken were 1) the personal commitment to use dark sky lighting; 2) personal commitment to spread the word; and 3) several participants will join with Carol to engage and motivate Kwik Trip's exploration of dark sky lighting.

She spoke of her concern with the recent approval from the FCC for the Reflect Orbital Space Mirror Project. This is a 60-foot-wide mirror that will be sent into space. The mirror will be capable of reflecting the sun to earth during the night. There are major groups not in favor of this including: professional and amateur astronomers; dark sky advocates, aviation and public safety experts; legal scholars and spatial activists. The action was to engage and motivate Sierra Statewide Chapter to act against this FCC decision.

Carol has provided these summaries of her presentation and the issues we discussed.

THE VALUE OF DARK SKIES FOR ALL LIFE ON EARTH

Outdoor lighting is necessary for a productive modern society. However, there are penalties we are paying with increased light pollution which causes glare, light trespass and sky glow.

Light scattered through the atmosphere brightens the night sky, making stars and planets difficult to see due to the reduced contrast. Light pollution also prevents the human eye from fully dark-adapting and reaching its maximum sensitivity. Sometimes, the more light there is at night, the less we can see. Light pollution tends to be most acute in urban environments, have pronounced ecological effects, and potentially influence human circadian rhythms. Light pollution also disrupts ecosystems, wastes energy, increases impacts of climate change and can have adverse health effects in humans.

When properly designed and installed, dark sky friendly outdoor lighting has many benefits, including but not limited to:

- Improves energy efficiency and Reduces carbon footprint

- Preserves night skies and Enhances wilderness character
- Provides for basic human safety and Enhances human health
- Enhances historic authenticity and Reduces operational and cyclic maintenance costs
- Minimizes impacts to wildlife and visitors
- Provides opportunities for economic development through astronomy-based tourism

Dark sky friendly lighting fixtures provide immense practical, financial, and ecological value. By directing light strictly downward and using warm, low 1800-2700 Kelvin rated bulbs, they eliminate wasted energy, reduce electricity costs by up to 70%, and minimize glare. Additionally, they protect nocturnal wildlife and preserve stargazing visibility.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE?

Reflect Orbital, a California-based space technology company, plans to test a satellite carrying a giant reflective mirror 59 feet by 59 feet.

The company expects its inaugural test mission, Eärendil-1, to launch later this year and hopes to have 36 satellites in orbit by 2027.

By 2035, Reflect Orbital aims to launch up to 50,000 satellites to provide sunlight to Earth-based solar panels and to redirect sunlight back to Earth from low Earth orbit.

The demonstration mission aims to test whether sunlight can be reflected onto specific locations on Earth.

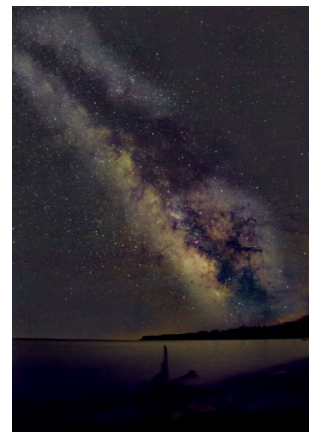
The reflected light would illuminate an area around 3 miles wide, with the satellite repositioning its mirror roughly every 4 minutes as it circles the planet.

The technology goal is to reflect sunlight back to Earth to illuminate streets and neighborhoods without electricity, enhance light exposure for agriculture, and to provide additional sunlight to data center and other industrial sectors solar energy farms and other solar farms after dark, increasing energy generation.

On August 6, 2026, several environmental organizations, including Earthjustice, Dark-Sky International, Environment America, Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility, and the American Bird Conservancy filed a petition for the FCC to rescind its approval.

Learn more here: <https://darksky.org/news/darksky-and-allies-ask-the-fcc-to-reverse-its-approval-of-the-reflect-orbital-space-mirror>

Door County night sky (Rick Wayne/Red Wolf Astrophotography) <https://wisconsinlife.org/story/capturing-the-beauty-and-wonders-of-wisconsins-night-sky-with-astrophotographer-rick-wayne/>



Owls!

This spring, CRSC awarded several Earth Month environmental education grants. We received a bundle of delightful thank you notes from students at Southern Bluffs Elementary School in La Crosse. Their CRSC grant helped pay for a visit from an owl and educators from the International Owl Center in Minnesota.

Here are their messages:

Dear Sierra Club - Thank you for donating money so we could learn about owls. I like the owls. You should go to the Houston Owl Center. from Brooklyn

Dear Sierra Club - The most interesting thing I learned about owls is owls can spot creatures to eat from a mile away! Sincerely, Leo

To Sierra Club. Thank you for letting the owl come to our school.

Dear Sierra Club. The most interesting thing I learned about owls is they grow really big. Sincerely Mallory

Dear Sierra Club, The most interesting thing I learned about owls is that they grow really big. Thank you for supporting us! Sincerely, m2v

Dear Sierra Club, the most interesting thing I learned about owls is that they grow really big and have hollow bones. Sincerely, wes



Dear Sierra Club,
The most interesting
thing I learned
about owls is
That they grow
grow really
big! Sincerely,
Lighton.

To: The Sierra
Club

THANK YOU
I LOVE
THE OWL.
BRIDG N

Week Without Driving - Oct. 1-8!

How do you get around?
What if you couldn't drive?
How do limited transportation options affect individual's autonomy and ability to live full lives? How do car-centric policies affect carbon emissions, pollution, family finances, health, and safety?

Consider signing up for the Week Without Driving experience. Learn and think about changes we can advocate for to make life better for everyone. Sign up here: <https://weekwithoutdriving.org/join>

Learn about local WWD events at <https://tinyurl.com/wwdlacrosse>. WWD is supported at the national, state, and local levels, by the Sierra Club.

**WEEK
WITHOUT
DRIVING**
October 1 - October 8, 2026

Ride the bus.



Carpool.



#WeekWithoutDriving

**Week Without Driving
is About Access.**

**What would change
in your life if driving
was not an option?**

Walk or roll.



Ride a bike or micromobility.



Reflect on transportation options.



weekwithoutdriving.org

NONDRIVERS
ALLIANCE

tinyurl.com/wwdlacrosse

Climate Fellows!



Sustainability Institute Climate Fellows Program is a cohort-based leadership and learning experience that empowers young adults to design, implement, and lead meaningful climate action projects in the La Crosse community.

Through a partnership between the Sustainability Institute and City of La Crosse, this program looks to build on previous Youth Climate Action Fund (YCAF) success - taking what worked, tweaking what didn't and mixing in our wins from a past program - MPower.

Sustainability Institute Climate Fellows combines hands-on project development with collaborative learning, mentorship, and connections to local sustainability.

Fellows will join the cohort to explore past projects, make connections to the City of La Crosse's Climate Action Plan, learn from local leaders, and ultimately

develop/execute a climate action project in our community. By blending education, collaboration, and real-world action, Climate Fellows equips participants with the skills, confidence, and experience to discover their role in advancing a more sustainable and resilient future.

The Climate Fellows program is open to high school graduates ages 18-24 who are passionate about making a positive impact in their community through climate action. No experience is necessary!

Learn more at <https://www.sustaininstitute.com/cfp>. Apply by NOON on September 23.

More September events

9/ 2: Nature is More Than Meets the Eye at The Nature Place. 7 pm. <https://tinyurl.com/926-envweds>

9/ 2: Coon Creek Community Watershed Council Fifth Anniversary Party 5:30 pm E6136 Jore Rd, Westby cooncreekwatershed.org

9/ 3, 4, 5: Monarch Butterfly Journey. Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge. <https://explorelacrosse.com/event/monarch-butterfly-journey-2/>

9/ 3: Toxic Taps - Iowa's Water Quality Crisis 6:30 pm Online <https://www.youtube.com/@thelibrarychannel/streams>

9/ 3: Invasive Brush Removal 9 am Water's Edge Woods, Jackson County <https://tinyurl.com/mvc091226>

9/ 5: Family Friendly Nature Saturday at The Nature Place. 9:30 am.

9/ 5: Nature Scavenger Hunt 10 am Wildcat Mountain State Park <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/events/121816>

9/ 5: Snake, Rattle, & Roll! 4 pm Perrot State Park <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/events/128511>

9/ 6: Raptor 101. 10 am Perrot State Park. <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/events/129206>

9/ 6: Wildlife in Your Backyard 4 pm Perrot State Park <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/events/128516>

9/ 9: Swift Night Out at the Concordia, 1127 La Crosse St. 6:30 pm <https://tinyurl.com/cbrswifts>

9/11: Science Cafe - Grazing & Grassland birds. 6 pm at JavaVino. www.facebook.com/LaCrosseScienceCafe

9/12: Outdoor Adventure! 9-11 am. Black River Falls School Forest, W9420 Castle Mound Rd <https://www.blackrivercountry.net/event/outdoor-adventure/>

9/12: All Abilities Stroll 10 am. BRF District 1 Community Center <https://www.jacksoninaction.org/abilities>

9/12: Friends of the Blufflands Second Saturday Hike. 8 a.m. at the first parking area on the left going up Bliss Road. Email friendsoftheblufflands@gmail.com for more.

9/12: MVC Science in the Stream: Black River Mussel Survey 10 am to noon. Get details from Karen Solverson (karen@mississippivalleyconservancy.org) or 608-784-3606, ext. 8.

9/12: Incredible Insects at The Nature Place. 10 am. <https://natureplacelacrosse.org/calendar/driftless-area-bioblitz-incredible-insects-free-family-program/>

9/12: Gardens & Grazing at St. Joseph's Ridge 5:30 pm <https://tinyurl.com/mvc-fspa2026>

9/16: Coulee Audubon meeting 7 pm The Nature Place <https://www.facebook.com/CouleeRegionAudubon/>

9/19: Exploring the Night Sky 6:30 pm Perrot State Park <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/events/127366>

9/19: Trash clean-up at Kickapoo Bottoms. 9 am <https://tinyurl.com/mvckicktrash>

9/23: Driftless Dialogue: Monarch Butterfly - Biology & Conservation in a Changing World 5:30 pm Kickapoo Valley Reserve <https://kvr.state.wi.us/Events/Calendar>

9/30: Seed Collection at New Amsterdam Grasslands. 9 to noon. <https://tinyurl.com/mvcgrasseed>



Community Trail Farm

FIND *your*
CONNECTION

Come join us!

ORA Trails staff will provide a tour of the
Community Trail Farm Project

All are welcome! Please dress for the weather.

Tour

Hike

Campfire

Thursday, October 1
5:30PM

W5723 HWY 33, La Crosse

CONSIDER CAR POOLING! To offer or seek a ride, call 608-315-2693 or visit <https://tinyurl.com/crsc2ora>

PLEASE RSVP so we can alert you in case of a change of plans.
Call or visit <https://tinyurl.com/crsc2ora-rsvp>

