Newsletter of the Coulee Region Group
NOVEMBER 2026

Sierra

in Wisconsin, 88% of the electricity comes from out-of-state energy sources: coal, natural or fossil gas, and nuclear. ,,, we pay $14 billion a year to import coal, natural gas, and uranium as energy sources for electricity, - Lynn Markham, UW-Extension

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.*

VOTE NOV. 3 FOR THOSE WHO CAN'T

November 17, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

CHAPTER AWARDS Watch Party

The Nature Place, Myrick Park, La Crosse

RSVP: https://tinyurl.com/crsc-chawardsparty

Each year the Chapter recognizes volunteers and community members for outstanding service and accomplishments on behalf of our state's environment. At a time when the journey toward a sustainable future seems daunting, it is inspiring to be reminded of all the impactful work being done, often behind the scenes, to make our world better.

Join CRSC friends and members for an Awards Watch Party from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Nature Place, Myrick Park, La Crosse with pizza, conversations, and celebrations for **this year's winners, including the La Crosse Area Planning Committee and City of La Crosse agencies for their work to support active and public transportation in the region**! Please RSVP at https://tinyurl.com/crsc-chawardsparty or 608-315-2693 so we'll know how much pizza to get. (If you would like to bring a dessert or snack, please do!) ALL ARE WELCOME - bring a friend!

CRSC Enviro Education Grants!

Every year, the Coulee Region Sierra Club offers grants of up to $200 each for environmental education programming for students in grades K through 8. Teachers, schools, and programs that serve students in the eight-county CRSC area (Crawford, Grant, Jackson, La Crosse, Monroe, Richland, Trempealeau, and Vernon counties) are eligible to apply. The deadline will be January 8, 2027. Learn more at https://sierraclub.org/wisconsin/coulee/education.

CRSC hopes to promote student exploration, protection, and enjoyment of the natural environment. Projects must provide hands-on experience for students to learn about and explore the natural environment, promote a world which allows all life forms to live and prosper, show students that they can make a difference in their environment, whether rural or urban; and be completed within the school year. A follow-up report will be due upon completion.

Grant recipients will be asked to send us pictures and/or write an article for this newsletter, be open to presenting about the project at a local Sierra Club meeting, and be accessible to local media if desired.

To apply, visit the link. For questions, please email CRSierraClub@gmail.com or call or text 608-315-2693. Please help spread the word in your community!



CRSC Board Elections

The Coulee Region Group is guided by a board of seven directors elected from the region's membership. The board usually meets monthly online to discuss club priorities and plan activities and events for our group. Three directors' terms expire at the end of the year. We will hold elections from November 24 through December

To nominate someone to serve from 2027 through 2028, please email CRSierraClub@gmail.com with name, contact information, and a short statement about the nominee's background and why they would like to serve. Please email by November 20 if possible. If you aren't a member, you can join at https://tinyurl.com/crsc-join.

Our Club in October

By Dorothy Lenard, CRSC Board member A gathering of Sierra Club members and friends attended an outing at the new **ORA Community Trail farm** located on October 1. Josh Hein, Trail Farm Project Manager, was our host. Josh was a wealth of information as he told us the history of the project from the start and then led the group on a hike around the property to show us the impressive progress they have made. ORA has reached out to numerous local groups for collaboration including college students, which makes this truly a community project. There are many trails already established and plans for a large community garden in the future. Recently, ORA was awarded a $1.15 million grant from the Knowles-Stewardship to assist in funding work on the farm. The evening concluded with a campfire and s'mores!



On October 2, Kathy Allen, CRSC Board President and a La Crosse County Board Supervisor participated in the Week Without Driving **Ride with Local Leaders** hosted by the La Crosse Area Planning Committee and the City of La Crosse. About 30 leaders and bicycle advocates rode the six-mile loop from the Black River Beach House, to the Bud Hendrickson Trail and Bridge, up to the Onalaska Library, and back along Rose Street. We heard about transportation challenges, projects, and plans from representatives of the La Crosse Area Planning Committee (LAPC), the City's Planning Department, WISDOT, and Onalaska's mayor. Leaders on the ride included State Senator Brad Pfaff, La Crosse City Council member Chris Kahlow, French Island Village Trustee Mike Stolpa, and representatives from the offices of Senator Tammy Baldwin and Representative Van Orden. CRSC board member Cathy Van Maren also participated.





Several club members participated in our annual fall **Highway Clean-up** on October 14. Road construction reduced the coverage area, so the clean up was thorough and quick!

By Colleen Gnabasik, CRSC board member On October 21, 15 Sierra Club members and some friends toured the **Green Circle Recycling Center**, 2800 Larson Street in La Crosse. Zach Harter, one of the founders of the company, led the two-hour tour through the plant and then the mattress recycling plant. With great passion, facts and industry insights were relayed.

Green Circle Recycling is a single-stream material recovery facility, commonly referred to as a MRF. They receive commingled recyclables and separate them into commodity streams for baling and sale. It was impressive to see the baled plastics, aluminum, white paper, and cardboard bundled and ready to be transported so that they could morph into a different form by other companies. Green Recycle is able to process 92% of the received materials and send them out to mostly domestic processors, including some in Wisconsin.

Another impressive sight was the "Chutes and Ladders" way that material flies, rolls and shoots through the maze of levels for sorting. Sorting is accomplished by robotic sorting arms, optical sorting, bypass belts, and recirculation. This is done to improve bale quality for sale.

Health and safety is also an area of concern for Green Recycle. They have air monitors in place that collect dust measurements, Emplify comes in once a year for a hearing test and the mattress facility is a no-touch facility. This contributes to the low employee turnover rate. Green Circle has a three year retention rate.

This is a worthwhile tour for anyone to see and learn. It is free and Zach Harter genuinely wants people to visit, learn and ask questions.

October Action Gatherings

By Chris Miller, CRSC Board member Our October 16 Action Gathering in La Crosse was all about voting and getting out the vote!

We reminded people of early voting options and of the very helpful site : https://myvote.wi.gov. At this site one can find out what is on your ballot. It is also the place to check to be sure you are correctly registered to vote.

We emphasized the importance of not only oneself voting, but also engaging and motivating others to vote. Our main action was signing 125 GET OUT THE VOTE postcards.

If you want to be a poll observer, you can go to this League of Women Voters site: https://my.lwv.org/wisconsin/employment-and-volunteer-opportunities-league.



Article continued on page 5

Solar Celebration Nov. 12

First Congregational Church in La Crosse will host a Solar Installation Open House on Thursday, November 12, from 4:00 to 5:30 pm. at 2503 Main Street. The congregation is committed to caring for the environment and their neighbors. Per the invitation, "We support the La Crosse Climate Action Plan and are pleased we can do a part in reaching a net zero carbon emission. A member of the La Crosse Climate Action Plan will briefly speak on how individuals and organizations contribute to the success of the plan. Our creation care and solar team members will all be in attendance to share our journey. This event is for all ages. Santa and Mrs. Claus will be helping with the ribbon cutting. There will also be mini solar panels to explore. ALL ARE INVITED.



Inspiring Sustainability



Congratulations CRSC members Alysa Remsburg and Pat Wilson who were honored at the La Crosse Sustainability Institute's 2026 *Inspiring Sustainability* awards event on October 27 where individuals, organizations, agencies, and businesses dedicated to sustainability and climate action network, celebrate, honor leaders, and rededicate their energies for future work. Other winners included Roz Schnick, Ethos Green Power Co-op, and Dynamic Recycling!

Focus on Energy Awards

Congratulations to the La Crosse School District which was honored by Focus on Energy as one of their 2026 Energy Efficiency Champions at a ceremony at the State Capitol on October 15. District representatives and CRSC member Alysa Remsburg, representing Solar on La Crosse Schools, joined other honorees for the ceremony which included remarks by Governor Tony Evers. Learn more about the awards and the event, and find a link to the La Crosse School District video at https://tinyurl.com/26foeawards

Solar on La Crosse Schools Honored

Solar on La Crosse Schools (SOLS) was a grassroots group started by CRSC members in 2020 after the club had successfully worked to pass a "Ready for 100" carbon reduction resolution in the La Crosse City Council. in 2019. The group initially asked the La Crosse School Board to pass a similar pledge and plan, but soon morphed into an effort to help raise funds for and support district installations of solar panels to immediately reduce the schools' carbon emissions (and energy bills) and provide proof that dedicated climate action was good for the district, the students, and the future.

After six years, five major district installations plus some smaller initiatives, and many programs, SOLS disbanded earlier this year with the district's pledge to include renewable energy in its future plans and create its own climate action plan.

La Crosse Public Schools nominated SOLS for the Wisconsin Association of School Boards' 2026 Business Honor Roll program for their support of the school district. SOLS will be officially recognized at the School Board's November 2 regular meeting.

Here is the district's award submission:

SOLS has played a pivotal role in helping the School District of La Crosse embrace renewable energy. Through community fundraising, advocacy, education, and collaboration, SOLS helped bring six solar projects to life, leveraged nearly $1 million in project funding, and demonstrated that solar is both financially and environmentally beneficial for schools. Perhaps most importantly, SOLS helped shift the district's long-term approach to facilities planning, making solar energy and sustainability a standard consideration for future school construction and renovations.

The School District of La Crosse cannot thank the SOLS group enough for its dedication, vision, and unwavering support. The impact of SOLS will be felt for decades to come, and the district is committed to carrying this momentum forward until every school has the opportunity to generate clean, renewable solar energy.

SOLS
SOLAR ON LA CROSSE SCHOOLS

SolarShare Wisconsin Cooperative provides an opportunity for regular people to invest in local, community-scale solar farms. Member contractors develop, build, and maintain solar projects, returning dividends to investor members and keeping our energy dollars in the state. Lear more at solarshare.coop

SOLARSHARE
WISCONSIN CO-OP
solarshare.coop

Youth Action

Saanvi Muduganti is a student at Onalaska High School who is very interested and active in local youth climate action and environmental initiatives. We're delighted that she will help inform us about local student environmental events and actions through monthly columns!

Voices for Plant-Powered School Meals

Saanvi Muduganti, a member of the Plant Powered Meals Coalition, is working to expand access to nutritious, delicious plant-based meals in schools. At her school, she has advocated for options such as the Impossible Burger, encouraging students to explore plant-based alternatives and promoting greater choice in school cafeterias.

Through YouthGenHealth, her initiative to empower young people through health education, Muduganti also promotes informed food choices that support personal well-being and environmental sustainability. Plant-based meals can provide essential nutrients and, when thoughtfully planned, may help reduce the environmental impact of food production.

Policy changes are creating new opportunities for schools to offer more diverse meals. In April 2024, the U.S. Department of Agriculture finalized updated school nutrition standards that give schools more flexibility to accommodate students' dietary preferences, including vegetarian and vegan diets.

How can students help bring more plant-powered meals to their schools?

- Start a conversation. Students can contact their school's food service director to discuss adding appealing plant-based options to cafeteria menus.
- Share resources. Climate-Friendly Plant-Based Recipes for Schools, published by Friends of the Earth, offers ideas that school nutrition teams can explore.
- Advocate for policy change. Students can contact their representatives or senators to ask them to support the Plant Powered School Meals Pilot Act, which proposes a pilot program to expand plant-based meal options in schools.

Veganuary

Every January, Veganuary, a global campaign that encourages people to try a vegan diet, invites people worldwide to try eating vegan for the month by exploring plant-based foods and recipes. The initiative encourages people to discover new meals while learning about the potential benefits of plant-based eating for animal welfare, personal health, and the environment.

For students, Veganuary can be an opportunity to explore nutritious, delicious alternatives in everyday meals and encourage schools to offer more plant-based options. Small steps, such as trying a new plant-based lunch or sharing a favorite recipe, can help build awareness and make sustainable food choices more accessible to everyone.

Muduganti's work highlights how young people can help shape school food systems through education, advocacy, and collaboration. By working with school nutrition teams and advocating for more diverse meal options, students can make nutritious, plant-powered meals more accessible while contributing to a healthier, more sustainable future.

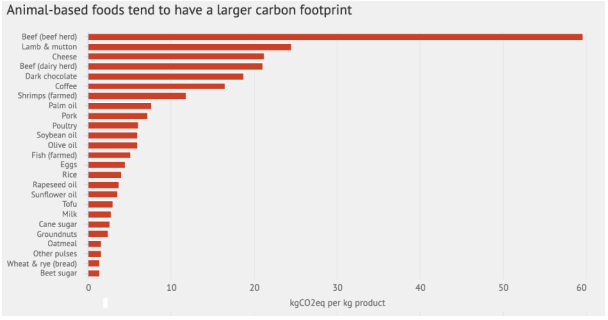
Impossible Burger Recipe
from Mandy Applegate

Ingredients

- *2 cups portabella mushrooms thinly sliced*
- *1 tablespoon olive oil*
- *Salt and pepper to taste*
- *1 cup cooked brown rice*
- *8 ounces tempeh coarsely chopped*
- *¼ cup quick-cooking oats*
- *1 small beet grated*
- *1 tablespoon nutritional yeast*
- *1 tablespoon steak sauce*
- *1 teaspoon garlic powder*
- *1 teaspoon onion powder*
- *½ teaspoon liquid smoke optional*
- *2 tablespoons canola oil*
- *2 burger buns, lettuce, condiments for serving*

Instructions

1. *Add the sliced mushrooms, olive oil, salt, and pepper to a large sauté pan over medium-high heat. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the mushrooms have browned and softened, 10 to 13 minutes.*
2. *Add the mushrooms to a food processor with the rice, tempeh, oats, beet, nutritional yeast, steak sauce, garlic powder, onion powder, vegetable bouillon, and liquid smoke, if using. Process until completely ground with mostly small pieces. Continue to pulse until there are no large pieces. It should look like ground beef.*
3. *Form the "meat" into 2 balls and form each of those balls into a patty. Place them on parchment paper.*
4. *Heat a large nonstick skillet on medium-high heat. Add the canola oil. When the oil shimmers, add the patties. Cook for 2 to 3 minutes per side or until golden brown on both sides and heated through. Alternatively, use a grill pan brushed lightly with oil.*
5. *Remove the patties from the heat, Serve on buns with lettuce, ketchup, and other favorite toppings.*



View entire chart at https://tinyurl.com/carbonbrief-foodcarbonchart

October Action Gatherings *from p. 2*

We discussed the Sierra Club's endorsed candidates. View the list at https://www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/sierra-club-wisconsin-chapter-s-2026-endorsements.

Finally, we sent postcards to Governor Evers to ask him to take a stronger stance against Line 5 - revoke Enbridge's Line 5 permits, halt construction on the line, shut down the pipeline, hold Enbridge responsible for the multiple spills, and conduct independent investigations.

We gathered around pizza to sign our cards. We were very inspired by the age range of participants - from over 90 all the way to the two students from UWL. We were inspired by the questions and the enthusiasm.

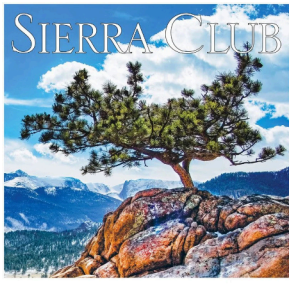
Thank you to all who showed up to facilitate GETTING OUT THE VOTE.

We will report on our October 29 Viroqua Action Gathering in the December newsletter.

There will be no Action Gathering in November, but please consider attending our Chapter Awards Watch Party described on page 1!

Order 2027 Calendars!

It's calendar time! Wall calendars are $19, engagement calendars are $20. *Calendar sales help pay for our Environmental Education grants and High School Environmental Stewardship awards*. Contact us at CRSierraClub@gmail.com or call 608-315-2693 to order yours.





Great Environmental News!

The state chapter reports this great news:

- The Wisconsin Natural Resources Board, the policy-setting body for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) approved regulations on PFAS in groundwater. This is a big win for all of us who drink water in Wisconsin!
- Dairyland Power Co-op announced the final cancellation of the NTEC gas plant. Read more here.
- The state chapter's settlement with the DNR has led to a statewide comprehensive environmental review of data centers. This could create a 'pause' on permitting, depending on how the future DNR Secretary sees it.

More November Events

11/ 1- 8: Free rides with Drift Cycles Bike Share. Check for code: https://www.driftlax.org/

11/ 3 & 7: Friends of the Blufflands work party at Marowski Bluff Prairie. 8-noon. Get details: jonatjhanrigden@me.com

11/ 4, 11, 18, 25: Weekly Wanders. 8-9 am. The Nature Place, Myrick Park. https://natureplacelacrosse.org/calendar/weekly-wanders-2026-11-04/

11/ 4: Enviro Wednesday - Beavers! 7 pm. The Nature Place, Myrick Park. https://tinyurl.com/tnp-enviroweds

11/ 5: Friends of the Blufflands work party at Juniper Tract Prairie. 8-noon. Get details: jonatjhanrigden@me.com

11/ 5: Mississippi Valley Conservancy Fundraiser. 5:30 pm. Radisson, La Crosse. tinyurl.com/mvc-110526

11/ 7, 8, 14, 15, 21, 22: Naturalist at the Brownsville Overlook. 10 am-2 pm. https://tinyurl.com/BrnsvlNat

11/7: Free electronic recycling. 8 am-1 pm., Dynamic Building B, N5550 Dynamic Way, Brice Prairie, Onalaska. thinkdynamic.com/event/dynamic-extravaganza-onalaska-wi-3/

11/ 9: Driftless Dialogs - Ho-Chunk Agriculture. 5:30 pm. Kickapoo Valley Reserve. kvr.state.wi.us/Events/Calendar/

11/11: Firebreak Construction. 9 am to noon. Tunnellville Cliffs. https://tinyurl.com/mvc-111126

11/13: La Crosse Science Cafe - https://www.facebook.com/LaCrosseScienceCafe/

11:14: Second Saturday Nature Hike - Tree ID. 9-11 am. Lower Hixon Trailhead, 2600 Old Quarry Rd, La Crosse https://www.facebook.com/friendsoftheblufflands/

11/16: An Evening with Robin Greenfield – Foraging for Freedom. 6 pm. UWL Student Union. https://community.robingreenfield.org/events/gratitude/2447789

11/18: Citizens Climate Lobby meeting. 6:30 pm. 401 West Ave S, La Crosse. https://tinyurl.com/laxcclarchive

11/18: Coulee Audubon meeting. 7-8:30 pm. The Nature Place, Myrick Park. www.couleeaudubon.org/html/events.html

11/21: Driftless Folk School - Willow Round Basket Making. 9 am to 4:30 pm. La Crosse People's Food Co-op https://tinyurl.com/dfs-willowbasketnov26

11/23: Coulee Region Humane Society Wildlife Ambassadors. 10 am. La Crosse Public Library. tinyurl.com/lpl-crhs-wild

11/30: Youth Intro to Wildlife Tracking. 5:30 pm. McIntosh LIbrary, Viroqua. https://mcintoshmemoriallibrary.events.mylibrary.digital/event?id=386000

