SIERRA CLUB
WISCONSIN CHAPTER

OCTOBER 2026 - DECEMBER 2026

WISCONSIN Sierran

NEWS OF THE WISCONSIN CHAPTER OF THE SIERRA CLUB

SIERRACLUB.ORG/WISCONSIN

TOXIC TOM TIFFANY

Gubernatorial candidate Tom Tiffany is well-known to most environmentalists. **In the Assembly, he was so harmful to the environment that he earned the nickname "Toxic Tom."** He then went to Congress, and his deep, extreme conservatism was on full display.

Tom Tiffany has been in the Wisconsin legislature or Congress since 2012. In his 10 years in the legislature, he scored a 0% on environmental issues in all but one session. Since joining Congress in 2020, he has received a 0% voting score every year, except for 2021, when he scored a 4%.

Here are some "lowlights" of Tom Tiffany's record for the past decade:

TRACK RECORD

As the scorecards show, Tiffany supported virtually every bad environmental initiative in the state legislature during the Walker administration. He helped gut the Department of Natural Resources, wetland and groundwater protections, local control, mining protections and much more.

Tiffany's voting record in Congress is equally as dismal as it was in the Assembly (he has a lifetime League of Conservation Voters score of 1%). Tiffany also has allied himself with the far right-wing, anti-public lands organization American Stewards for Liberty (ASL). ASL has tried to insert pro-property rights language into county land use regulations in an effort to stall out land conservation purchases in northern Wisconsin, such as the recent Pelican River Forest purchase in Oneida County.

WISCONSIN OPEN FOR MINING

Tiffany supported the Bad River Watershed Destruction Act (2013 Act 1) that was drafted by Gogebic Taconite's attorneys and drastically de-regulated rules for iron mining. He then took the lead on the legislation

Continued on page 3

THE SIERRA CLUB WISCONSIN CHAPTER ENTHUSIASTICALLY ENDORSES CLIMATE CHAMPION DAVID CROWLEY



FOR GOVERNOR.

SEE PAGE 4 FOR THE FULL LIST OF ENDORSEMENTS.

FROM THE CHAIR 2
MORE ENDORSEMENTS 4-5
LINE 5 UPDATE 6-7
WOLF AWARENESS WEEK 10
GREEN REVIEW 11
THIRSTY POWER 12-13
EXEC COMMITTEE ELECTION 14-15
CALENDAR 16



VOTE SIERRA CLUB – FOR AFFORDABILITY AND HEALTH

While our name won't be on the ballot this fall, we play a critical role in issues that voters say are foremost on their minds. If things operated in accordance with Sierra Club priorities and values, we'd all be much better off. For example, consider:

LOWER UTILITY BILLS, CLEANER ENERGY

Affordability and the economy are top issues for voters in Wisconsin this election, according to polls. Is your utility bill too high? If more energy came from renewable energy rather than coal and gas, your bills would be lower – and you wouldn't receive exorbitant rate increases every year. You could also use far less energy if we had higher building efficiency standards – with far more support for upgrades to older, less efficient homes and appliances. Solar would be more affordable than our current dirty energy system – and more accessible, with community solar you could buy into, or third-party solar with no upfront system costs. This would again lower your energy bills (or perhaps even eliminate them?) and you could charge your EV via solar energy, avoiding buying and using gasoline. Since we wouldn't have so many pollutants entering the water that water utilities have to filter or treat, your water bills would be lower too.

STRONGER UTILITY REGULATION

Utility profits would be reduced, and the profits they do receive would be based on their performance on clean energy and having affordable and equitable rates for all customers, with support for those in need. We already convinced the Wisconsin PSC to rule that mega-scale data centers, not rate-payers, have to pay all their energy related costs.

CLEANER TRANSIT

EVs would be more widespread and affordable – with better charging networks. And the state fee you pay for owning a hybrid or EV – GONE! Better, more affordable and equitable mass transit systems would be the priority instead of sinking billions of dollars into more roads and parking spaces.

HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES

And health care and costs? We'd eliminate the chemicals in our food systems, cease polluting our waters with dangerous toxins, and stop discharging all those fumes and particles from power plants, industry and vehicles into the air. Imagine lowering health care costs by not poisoning ourselves with every breath, drink or bite!

Instead of funding mega corporate farms and subsidizing unhealthy foods in grocery stores and schools, we could be providing more local, nutritious and organic foods that nourish us rather than weaken our bodies – and minds. If we continue our current course, the specter of climate change with all its impacts – heat waves, severe storms, flooding and droughts, wildfire smoke, rising sea levels and altered ocean currents, and health vectors and diseases – will bring costs beyond imagination. Aside from the direct human tolls, the costs of health care and home insurance could also increase drastically.

WHEN YOU VOTE (OR CAMPAIGN) THIS FALL, consider who will really make your life more affordable and healthy. (And also protect nature and our public lands; being out in nature is vital for our physical and emotional health.)

Your Sierra Club membership, your donations, and your volunteering all go towards supporting the planet we all depend on – and the affordability, health and well-being we all wish for.

Don Ferber
Chapter Chair

THE WISCONSIN SIERRAN

754 Williamson St., Madison, WI 53703
A Publication of the Wisconsin Chapter of the Sierra Club

Wisconsin Sierran Committee
Chapter Co-Chairs: Gail Syverud and Don Ferber
Editor: Cassie Steiner
Layout: Catherine McKenzie

Advertising Coordinator:
Jacinda Tessmann
jacinda.tessmann@sierraclub.org

Advertising Rates:
Current advertising rates may be found on the Wisconsin Chapter website: *sierraclub.org/wisconsin*

Contributor Guidelines
Please submit articles by mail or email to:
754 Williamson St.
Madison, WI 53703-53703
wisconsin.chapter@sierraclub.org

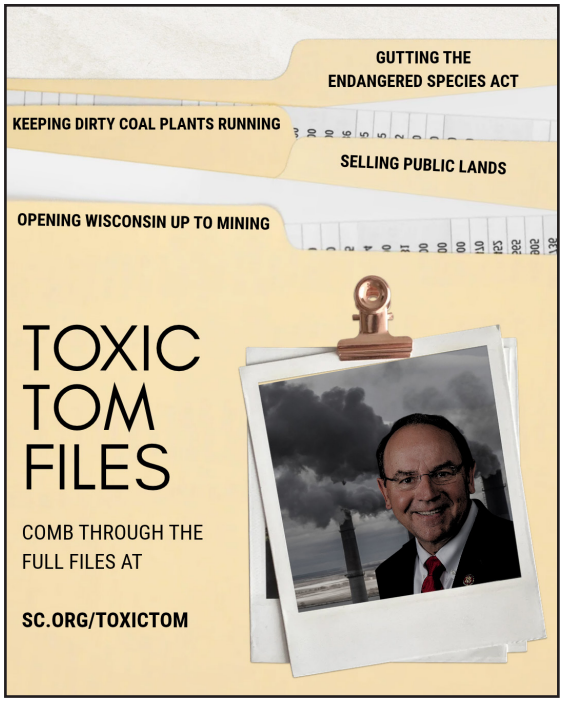
Please include the author's first and last names, and day and evening phone numbers at the top. Acceptance of submission contingent upon availability of space and must meet Sierra Club guidelines.

Deadline:
The deadline for submission of articles to the January 2027 issue is midnight on November 10, 2026.

Change of Address:
You can update your contact information online at *myaccount.sierraclub.org*.

Continued from page 1

that became 2017 Act 134 ("Mining for America" Act) that repealed the Prove It First law, gutted the permitting process for metallic mining to "streamline" it by adding artificial short deadlines for permit review and approvals, and made public participation in the process far more difficult.



WISCONSIN'S WOLVES

When in the Assembly, Tom Tiffany sponsored 2011 Act 169, the legislation that requires Wisconsin to host a wolf hunt if wolves are not on the Endangered Species List, regardless of the science, public input, and Tribal consultation. In Congress, Tiffany continuously sponsored legislation to gut the Endangered Species Act and exempt wolves from being listed. He prioritized this over anything else in Congress, so much so that his colleague, Haley Stevens, said he was "obsessed with changing the laws to hunt wolves" and that it was "all he ever talks about."

CLEAN ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Tom Tiffany has a strong anti-climate, pro-fossil-fuel voting record. Tiffany has repeatedly opposed climate legislation, clean-energy funding, efficiency standards and pollution protections. He has voted for measures supporting coal development and fossil-fuel power, including reversing protections in order to promote coal development and the fast-tracking of fossil-fuel power over clean energy. He even wrote a letter to the Public Service Commission demanding they keep Wisconsin's coal plants online.

On oil and gas, he has backed expanded drilling, Liquified Natural Gas infrastructure, pipelines and other fossil-fuel development while opposing measures that restrict or regulate those activities.

According to a Journal Sentinel article, "Tiffany also told the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel that he was not supportive of the bureau doing research related to climate change because the science behind global warming is still "theoretical."

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Tom Tiffany voted for a bill that "included a 10-year ban preventing state and local governments from enforcing laws or regulations that restrict or oversee AI models, systems, and related digital infrastructure"

This is just the tip of the iceberg for Tiffany's record. He's also put up barriers to clean water and sponsored legislation to sell off parts of the Chequamegon Nicolet National Forest for commercial logging with no new resources to restore forests. Read all about Tiffany's track record at *sc.org/ToxicTom*

HELP ELECT CLIMATE CHAMPIONS IN 2026

When it comes to clean drinking water, clean energy solutions, accessible public land and protecting Wisconsin's wildlife - our work plays a critical role in many of the issues voters care about. With the governor's race being of major importance in Wisconsin this year, we can't emphasize enough how much the outcome of this election will impact the future of Wisconsin.

Prior to the election, the Wisconsin Chapter will be launching efforts to keep environmental issues at the forefront of the conversation and inform our members and the public about which candidates support chapter conservation policy goals. We urge you, as Sierra Club members, to vote for, and help elect environmental leaders.

As part of our commitment to helping elect strong independent environmental leaders who will work hard for Wisconsin's environment, **we have also identified a number of districts where Sierra Club members and volunteers can make a BIG difference - but we need your help.** If you are interested in joining Sierra Club's team of volunteers to help elect environmental champions this November, email *heather.wittrock@sierraclub.org* and get signed up today. Let's keep pushing forward and together, we'll make sure Wisconsin's future is clean and sustainable!

THE SIERRA CLUB IS PROUD TO ANNOUNCE OUR ENDORSEMENTS FOR THE 2026 ELECTIONS

The staff and volunteers of the Wisconsin Chapter are very proud to announce these endorsements. These candidates are committed to maintaining clean air, clean water and all the lands that make Wisconsin unique. **We urge you, as Sierra Club members, to vote for and help elect new environmental leaders and re-elect proven elected leaders.**

THE SIERRA CLUB WISCONSIN CHAPTER ENTHUSIASTICALLY ENDORSES DAVID CROWLEY FOR GOVERNOR. During his time in the legislature, **David Crowley, scored a 100% for his environmental voting record.** As Milwaukee County Executive, he oversaw the adoption and implementation of the County's Climate Action Plan.

THE SIERRA CLUB HAS ENDORSED THE FOLLOWING CANDIDATES FOR CONGRESS:

CD-2: Mark Pocan
CD-3: Rebecca Cooke
CD-4: Gwen Moore
CD-6: Brad Smith
CD-7: Fred Clark
CD-8: Mark Scheffler

At the state level, our goal of creating pro-environment majorities in both houses of the Legislature is reflected in our endorsements of 10 State Senate and 56 Assembly candidates so far. Incumbent officials were judged based on their overall environmental voting record, public statements, and activities while in office. Challengers were evaluated based on their responses to questionnaires and interviews, environmental platforms, public service, and public statements.

Environmental Champions are in bold. They are incumbents who scored 100% on our scorecard for the last session.



STATE SENATE

Sen. Tim Carpenter, D-Milwaukee (3)
Rep. Robin Vining, D-Wauwatosa (5)*
Sen. Chris Larson, D-Milwaukee (7)
Sen. Mark Spreitzer, D-Beloit (15)
Rep. Jenna Jacobsen, D-Oregon (17)*
Jeff Foster, D-Colfax (23)
Sen. Dianne Hesselbein, D-Middleton (27)
Gillian Battinno, D-Wausau (29)
Sen. Jeff Smith. D-Eau Claire (31)
Mike Van Someren, D-Pewaukee (33)

STATE ASSEMBLY

Alexia Unertl, D- Suamico (4)
Rep. Karen Kirsh, D-Greenfield (7)
Ismael Luna, D-Milwaukee (8)
Rep. Priscilla Prado, D-Milwaukee (9)
Rep. Darrin Madison, D-Milwaukee (10)
Rep. Sequana Taylor, D-Milwaukee (11)
Rep Russell Goodwin, D-Milwaukee (12)
Rep. Angelito Tenorio, D-West Allis (14)
Rep. Kalan Haywood, D-Milwaukee (16)
Rep. Supreme Moore Omokunde, D-Milwaukee (17)
Rep. Margaret Arney, D-Wauwatosa (18)
Rep. Ryan Clancy, D-Milwaukee (19)
Rep. Christine Sinicki, D-Milwaukee (20)
Dan Bukiewicz, D-Oak Creek (21)
Dana Glasstein, D-Mequon (22)
Rep. Deb Adraca, D-Whitefish Bay (23)
Rep. Joe Sheehan, D-Sheboygan (26)
Kevin Knoke, D-Hudson (30)
John Perryman, D-Williams Bay (31)
Merlin Van Buren, D-Rhinelander (34)
Rep. Karen DeSanto, D-Baraboo (40)
Rep. Maureen McCarville, D-De Forest (42)
Rep. Brienne Brown, D-Whitewater (43)
Rep. Ann Roe, D-Janesville (44)
Rep. Clinton Anderson, D-Beloit (45)
Rep. Joan Fitzgerald, D-Fort Atkinson (46)
Rep. Randy Udell, D-Fitchburg (47)

Continued on page 5

Continued from page 4

John Rindy, D-Potosi (49)
Rep. Andrew Hysell, D-Sun Prairie (48)
Rep. Lee Snodgrass, D-Appleton (52)
Rep. Lori Palmeri, D-Oshkosh (54)
Dennis Degennartdt, D-West Bend (58)
Jack Holzman, D-Belgium (59)
Ben Brist, D-Greendale (61)
Rep. Angelina Cruz, D-Racine (62)
Rep. Tip McGuire, D-Kenosha (64)
Rep. Ben DeSmidt, D-Kenosha (65)
Rep. Greta Neubauer, D-Racine (66)
Roger Halls, D-Stanley (69)
Rep. Vinnie Miresse, D-Stevens Point (71)
Christine Maltese, D-Wisconsin Rapids (72)
Rep. Angela Stroud, D-Ashland (73)
Dina Mina Martinez Ruthorford, D-Madison (76)
Rep. Renuka Mayadev, D-Madison (77)
Rep. Shelia Stubbs, D-Madison (78)
Rep. Lisa Subeck, D-Madison (79)
Rep. Mike Bare, D-Verona (80)
Rep. Alex Joers, D-Middleton (81)
Rep. Ryan Spaude, D-Green Bay (89)
Rep. Amaad Rivera-Wagner, D-Green Bay (90)
Rep. Jodi Emerson, D-Eau Claire (91)
Rep. Christian Phelps, D-Eau Claire (93)
Rep. Steve Doyle, D-Onalaska (94)
Rep. Jill Billings, D- La Crosse (95)
Rep. Tara Johnson, D-La Crosse (96)
Matt Philbert, D-Colgate (98)

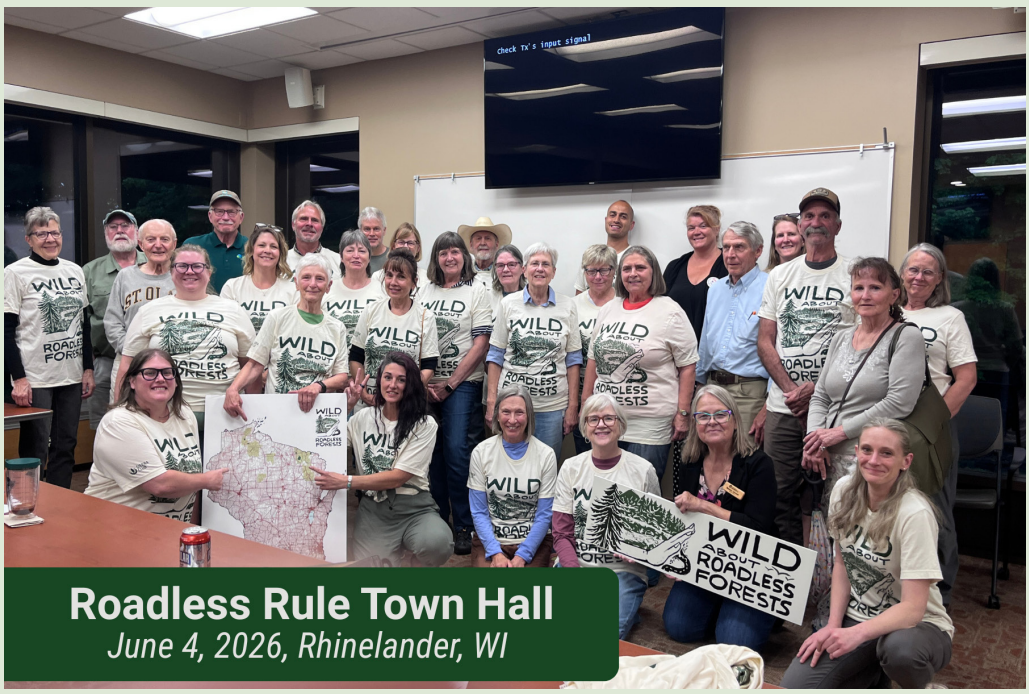
If you're unsure who your state Senator or Representative is, go to *legis.state.wi.us* and click on "Who represents me?" Use your favorite search engine to find their campaigns.

Additional endorsements will have been made since the Sierran was sent to the printer– please go to ***sc.org/WiVote2026*** to view the most up-to-date list of endorsements.

* Scored 100% as Assembly Representative

PROTECTING OUR WILDEST FORESTS

In September, the **Trump Administration rescinded the Roadless Conservation Rule**. This rule protected some of the wildest places in the United States, **including parts of the Chequamegon Nicolet National Forest**. Sierra Club hosted town halls and collected thousands of written comments about the harms that this will cause to water, wildlife, plants and people. The Chapter's Lands Team hosted a documentary screening and comment writing party prior to the comment deadline.



Roadless Rule Town Hall
June 4, 2026, Rhinelander, WI

LINE 5 UPDATE: ENBRIDGE'S DESTRUCTION AND INTIMIDATION



PHOTO CREDIT: JOE BATES

Enbridge's Line 5 pipeline is a dangerous, aging oil pipeline that runs through the heart of the Great Lakes and threatens countless waters, lands, communities, and our climate. Line 5 transports 22 million gallons of crude oil and natural gas liquids across 645 miles of countryside every day.

Line 5 currently runs through the Bad River Reservation, and when its easements expired, members of the Bad River Band passed a resolution to remove Line 5 from the reservation and Bad River watershed. Enbridge responded by proposing a 41-mile reroute of Line 5 that skirts the Reservation but crosses all major waterbodies that flow into the reservation. The proposed reroute threatens critical watersheds and has been broadly opposed by the Bad River Band, environmental groups and many members of the public.

In April, a Bayfield County Judge allowed Enbridge to move forward with construction, despite challenges to their permits. Midway through construction, Enbridge already had permit violations, was responsible for multiple frac-outs, and disturbed the community. Here are some lowlights from Enbridge's ongoing Line 5 construction.

MASSIVE SPILL CAUSES RESPONSE FROM GOVERNOR EVERS

On August 25, as the crew was working on the reroute, Enbridge's aging Line 5 pipeline ruptured after an unoccupied semi-truck rolled into an exposed section of the pipeline in northern Wisconsin, releasing natural gas liquids into the environment. Thankfully, no injuries were reported, but nearby homes and families were evacuated. Over a million gallons of propane and butane spewed out.

In response, Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Secretary Karen Hyun sent a letter to Enbridge, stating,

> *"the agency is deeply concerned about this spill and immensely frustrated by other recent noncompliance events and has several outstanding questions of Enbridge and would appreciate written responses as expeditiously as possible. The department requests that you halt work on the pipeline re-routing project until this event on the existing pipeline is sufficiently resolved and Enbridge has demonstrated that measures are in place to prevent future spill events related to all pipeline work."*

Enbridge agreed to shut down the pipeline for two days for a "safety check". This massive spill follows multiple frac-outs

and permit violations. The full impacts of the spill and the rest of Enbridge's construction won't be known for years.

FELONY TRESPASS LAW

Passed and signed into law by Governor Evers in 2019, Wisconsin's Felony Trespass Law makes it a felony to trespass or damage property on land "owned, operated, or leased" by energy companies, including pipelines. Industry groups like the American Petroleum Institute and Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce supported this bill, while the Bad River Band, landowners with pipelines, and organizations like the ACLU opposed the bill.

In April, the Bad River Band raised concerns about the chilling effect of this law. Ojibwe tribes in the region reserve the right to hunt, fish, and gather – the usual rights of occupancy – on the land ceded in the 1842 Treaty with the U.S. Government, and the Felony Trespass Law acts as a deterrent to those rights, infringing on them.

> "On August 25, as the crew was working on the reroute, **Enbridge's aging Line 5 pipeline ruptured after an unoccupied semi-truck rolled into an exposed section of the pipeline in northern Wisconsin,** releasing natural gas liquids into the environment."

While construction is ongoing, it remains to be seen if anyone will be charged with felony trespass and what the long-term impacts will be on the ability of people to exercise their First Amendment rights.

STORIES FROM THE COMMUNITY

Volunteers have been monitoring Enbridge's efforts in the region. These monitors discovered spills, frac-outs, and other violations. The monitors' work has been essential to protecting the area's resources. However, many monitors have reported threats and intimidation as they were taking pictures or watching what was happening.

As the courts consider permit challenges, we should all be aware of Enbridge's activity and what it says about their intentions. Why do they push forward with construction despite the opposition of the Bad River Band and hundreds of thousands of others? Enbridge prioritizes their profit over all else: tribal sovereignty, health and safety, the environment, and our climate. Meanwhile, we'll continue the fight for the lands, waters and communities that are most important.

This article was written as construction occurs; this provides an update as of August 2026. To get full updates, visit sc.org/shutdownline5

Support Your Passion for a Just and Sustainable World

Create a legacy that protects and restores the natural world for future generations by naming Sierra Club's Wisconsin Chapter in your will or trust. Or, name Sierra Club Foundation as the beneficiary of your retirement plan for the benefit of your local chapter and leave less highly taxed assets to your loved ones.

To learn more about the advantages of making a planned gift and to become a member of the Rachel Carson Society, please contact us.

SIERRA CLUB
WISCONSIN CHAPTER

Julia Curtis • (800) 932-4270 • giftplanning@sierraclub.org • myplan.sierraclub.org

SAVE THE DATE TO CELEBRATE OUR AWARD WINNERS!

Save the date for the 2026 Sierra Club Wisconsin Awards Celebration! **We hope to see you on November 17** for this event. Each year our 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 come together and celebrate these environmental leaders from across the state. Look out for information on regional, in-person watch parties! You can RSVP for the event on our calendar at *sierraclub.org/wisconsin/calendar.*

ISSUES AT A GLANCE



GET THE LEAD OUT!

Eagles, loons, swans, and other species will pick up pieces of the toxic metal left behind from bullets or fishing gear, some pieces as small as a grain of rice. Wildlife will scavenge on gut piles, discarded carcasses, and unrecovered game, ingesting these tiny lead fragments. And just like humans, they face dire health consequences from lead exposure. Lead bioaccumulates, or collects over time in animal tissues and bone. This bioaccumulation causes lead-poisoned animals and birds to succumb to starvation and disease, and renders them more prone to trauma or predation. Lead has been called a "silent killer" for this reason. Even a single lead split shot can be lethal to a twelve-pound loon, highlighting how deadly lead fishing sinkers and jigs can be to wildlife that mistake them for food or grit. **According to Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine, each year in the US, 10-20 million animals die from lead poisoning.**

The transition away from lead fishing tackle and hunting ammunition will take time. In the meantime, here is how you can start reducing lead pollution today:

1. Switch to non-lead tackle and ammunition - By making informed choices while enjoying the natural resources, hunters and anglers can reduce lead poisoning by opting for lead-free fishing tackle and purchasing ammunition alternatives like tungsten, steel, bismuth, glass, ceramic, and tin.
2. Properly dispose of lead tackle - You can recycle it at many tackle shops or hazardous waste facilities. There are often tackle exchange programs and events where you can bring your lead tackle for an easy switch.
3. Encourage retailers to stock non-lead options - Ask local stores to carry lead alternatives so they're easy to find.
4. Pick up lost tackle and other litter - Walk shorelines, waters, and other natural spaces and pick up litter and stranded tackle that wildlife could consume.

LAWSUIT FILED AFTER REQUIRED ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW FOR PORT WASHINGTON DATA CENTER ABANDONED

The Midwest Environmental Advocates filed a lawsuit on behalf of the Sierra Club challenging a Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) decision to issue permits for a massive data center campus in Port Washington without fully evaluating the project's environmental consequences.

The lawsuit comes after emails obtained through a public records request revealed that DNR staff initially informed data center representatives that a detailed Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) would be required due to the scope and scale of the project. After data center representatives complained that an EIS would "kill the project," the DNR reversed course and decided to conduct a more limited "environmental analysis summary." The agency has never publicly explained that decision.

Vantage Data Centers, Oracle, and OpenAI are building the Port Washington data center as part of a broader effort to expand computing infrastructure for artificial intelligence. The $15 billion project is one of the first hyperscale data centers under construction in Wisconsin. The first phase alone will require an unprecedented 1.3 gigawatts of power—an amount that could power more than half a million households. The data center itself will cover 672 acres, and its energy demand will spur the construction of new gas plants, substations and high-voltage transmission lines that will spread over six counties.

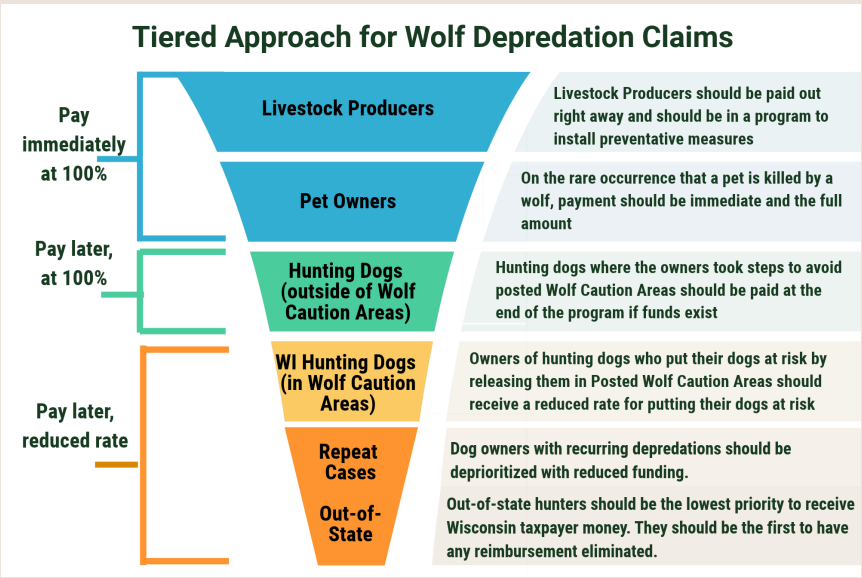


ONE MILLION KIDS OUTDOORS

The One Million Kids Outdoors (1MKO) Initiative is a national movement that aims to get kids outdoors over the next year to transform their health and well-being. Driven by excessive screen time, modern stressors, and systemic inequalities in park access, today's youth face an unprecedented disconnection from nature, alongside an escalating mental and physical health crisis. Despite the proven therapeutic benefits of the outdoors, federal investments remain scarce – threatening both the well-being of a generation and the future of conservation. Sierra Club launched the initiative with our partners at the Outdoor Kids Alliance. In Wisconsin, our Lands Team is working with our outings leaders and local groups to get kids outside. If you'd like to learn more or get involved with helping kids get outside in Wisconsin, contact Heather at *heather.wittrock@sierraclub.org.*

WOLF DEPREDATION PAYMENTS

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has announced new rulemaking about reimbursement for animal (livestock, pets, and hunting dogs) deaths from wolves. The Wildlife Team supports a tiered approach that prioritizes farmers and pays them in full right away, while deprioritizing out-of-state repeat hounders and eliminating their funding.



Hound-training claims arise when bear hunters voluntarily release unleashed, often GPS-collared hunting dogs in pursuit of bears—often in posted "wolf caution" areas—fully aware of the risks and danger involved. In contrast to unavoidable agricultural conflicts, these incidents are the result of a chosen recreational activity practiced by a very small minority of Wisconsin residents and a substantial number of non-residents.

Wisconsin taxpayers should not subsidize repeated losses for individuals who do not live here, do not purchase a license to train dogs here, and do not contribute revenue to the DNR. The highest-paid claimant is from Minnesota and received $17,624.20 for eight dogs. Among the top ten claimants, three are from Minnesota, Colorado, and Texas, totaling $36,654.44. (All financial data and reimbursement totals are pulled from a WDNR open records request from September 2025.) These claims should be the lowest priority, if not denied entirely when funds are insufficient.

There will be a public comment period and hearing when DNR releases their draft rule. Follow *sc.org/wiwildlife* for updates and more information.

WOLF AWARENESS WEEK 2026 TAKES PLACE OCTOBER 18-24

Please plan to join us for this exciting week focusing on wolf ecology, dispelling persistent myths, and promoting coexistence with this keystone species.

New for 2026: Our theme this year will be ***"Wolf families"*** using a different lens each day to examine Wisconsin wolf families - how wolf families survive together and the challenges our Wisconsin wolf families face today.

How it works: By signing up for our educational week, you will receive a daily email with fun content, an opt-in activity you can do on your own, as well as invitations to join us for virtual evening events throughout the week.

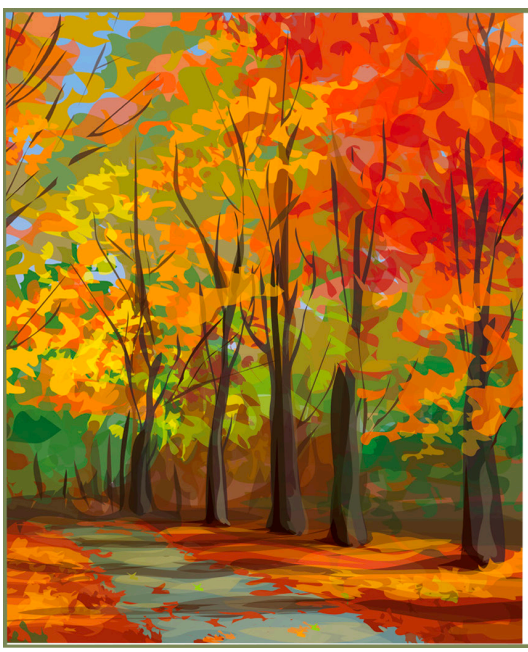
Perks of the Pack: By signing up, you will automatically receive a special 2026 custom Wolf Awareness Week sticker in the mail and also be entered to win a 1,000-piece wolf jigsaw puzzle by Sam Zimmerman / Zhaawanoogiizhik, an Ojibwe artist whose work we featured during Wolf Awareness Week last year!

Howl Yeah: Hope you can join our wolf family for a fun-filled week!

Learn more and RSVP at *sc.org/2026WAW*



"The strength of the wolf is the pack."
— Rudyard Kipling



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. *Your contributions, above and beyond membership dues, are an important part of the Chapter's budget.*

❑ $50 ❑ $100 ❑ $250 ❑ $500 ❑ other _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

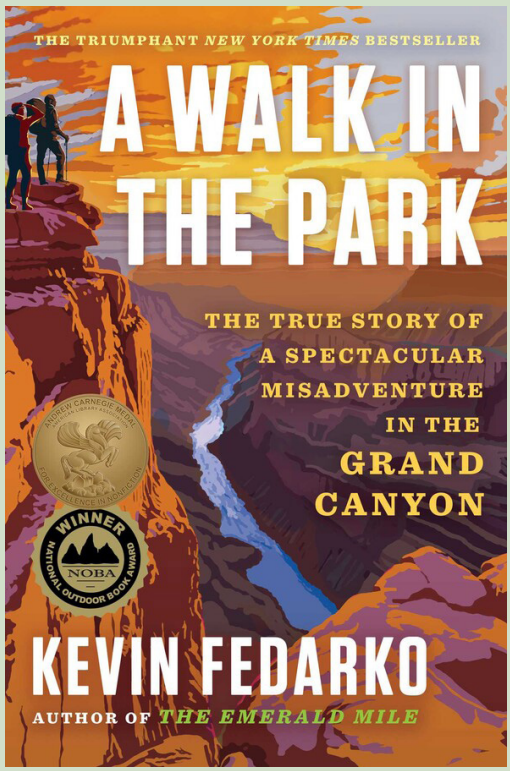
Phone: _____ email _____

Mail to: Sierra Club-Wisconsin Chapter,
754 Williamson St., Madison, WI 53703
To donate by credit card visit: sierraclub.org/Wisconsin

A Walk in the Park:

The True Story of a Spectacular Misadventure in the Grand Canyon by Kevin Fedarko, Scribner, 2024, 560 pages.

Kevin Fedarko's misadventure does not woo readers to festoon themselves with backpacks and boots and become Grand Canyon hikers. No. This cautionary tale describes the suffering so vividly that the armchair journey feels like a gift.



When Fedarko and his companion, National Geographic photographer Pete McBride, set out to traverse 750 miles of the Grand Canyon, they expected to learn and get fit on the trail. Instead, they slip, stumble, dehydrate, blister and exhaust themselves.Sometimes they even endanger the expert hikers who are generous enough to guide them. Keeping up and meeting daily mileage goals consume their attention. The canyon itself does not captivate them during those early days. It nearly kills them.

Mile after mile of suffering accumulates. Their disastrous first attempt gives way to preparation, humility and a willingness to listen. The dangers continue, but the book expands beyond the ordeal. Fedarko explores the canyon's geological and human history, including the harrowing journeys of those who traversed it before him. He also confronts a national park history that treated the canyon as empty wilderness while displacing people who had lived there for generations. These layers of exploration feel like a complex action film with multiple simultaneous adventures. Fedarko highlights Havasupai ceremonial leader, elder and medicine woman Dianna Sue White Dove Uqualla and the displacement of her people, one of eleven tribes historically connected to the canyon.

Later, "Helicopter Alley" forces another reckoning. Fedarko laments the tourist flights disturbing the canyon's silence, but the helicopters operate on Hualapai land and provide income to a nation left with limited economic choices after losing much of its homeland. Should only people physically capable of crossing this dangerous terrain experience it? What access should exist for older people and people with disabilities? Who has the right to determine how Indigenous land is used?

The desire to walk the entire canyon also raises the specter of another attempt to conquer nature. Fedarko anticipates that objection and treats it with inspiring insight.

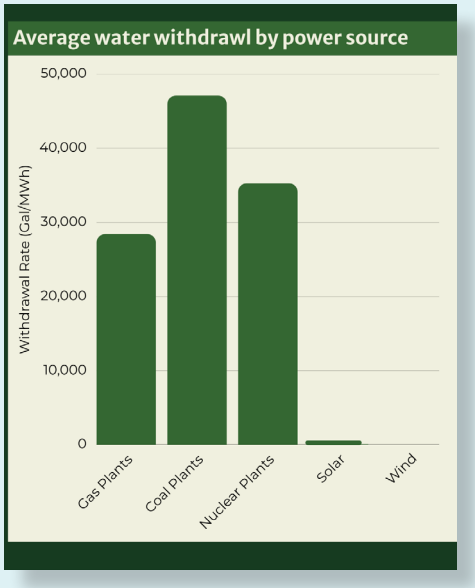
Late in the book, Fedarko finishes a missing stretch of the hike through the park with his brother. This slower-paced hike allows more reflection and deepens the connections possible between wilderness and the human soul.

The details of the hike, remembered and turned over, transform steps into a relationship that travels through Fedarko to the reader.

Amy Lou Jenkins is the award-winning author of Every Natural Fact. Contact her at *AmyLouJenkins.com* to forward review copies for consideration.

THIRSTY POWER

A new report from the Sierra Club, ***Thirsty Power: Coal and gas will leave us high and dry***, analyzes Wisconsin's current power generation, the water needed for that power, and the potential impacts on Wisconsin's water as Big Tech tries to build more data centers across the state. These data centers require enormous amounts of power– and in some cases are prompting entirely new gas plants that will compound water and energy use at peak times.



SUMMARY

The report found:

- **Wisconsin's current dirty energy power fleet**–coal, gas, and nuclear plants–withdraws 1.35 trillion gallons of water annually.
  - This is more than seven times all of Wisconsin's municipalities combined, and 18 times more than agricultural irrigation.
  - **In comparison, solar and wind use so little water that the EIA doesn't even track their usage.**
- **Five new gas plants, known or assumed to be proposed to supply power for data centers, would use 142 million gallons of water a year on average**– the equivalent of the annual drinking water for 778,082 people–and the majority of which would be needed during summer months when energy and water use has been strained by drought and heat.
  - The proposed Red Oak Ridge gas plant in Kenosha would consume an estimated maximum of 266,400 gallons of water from the Great Lakes per day–the equivalent daily consumption of nearly 3,248 average Americans. Since the **plant owner Invenergy seeks to use Lake Michigan water, special approval under the Great Lakes Compact will be required.**
  - The proposed Foundry Ridge plant would use an estimated maximum of 55,152 gallons of groundwater from local wells per day.
- **The five new proposed gas plants confirmed or suspected of being proposed solely to power data centers in Wisconsin would generate almost 4 gigawatts of power**–or enough electricity to power approx. 3 million average homes. Wisconsin has only 2.84 million homes.
- The proposed Red Oak Ridge gas plant will become the second-largest gas plant in the state and use 266,400 gallons of water per day at full capacity. **In 2024, Wisconsin's thermal power plants (coal, gas and nuclear) made up 73% of our state's water withdrawal.**

HYPERSCALE DATA CENTERS & WATER

Data centers themselves can use enormous amounts of water to keep cool. To prevent their servers from overheating, many use evaporative cooling, which cools air the same way a human sweats on a hot day. Evaporative cooling consumes water as it evaporates into the ambient air. Under peak demand conditions, data centers employing evaporative cooling can directly use 1 - 5 million gallons of water per day alone, or as much as a town of 30,000 - 50,000 people. (The City of Wausau uses about 4.2 million gallons of water per day.) If these data centers are powered by fossil fuels, the combined water use can be massive.

In response to concerns about water use, some data center companies have said they will use "closed-loop," or air-cooled, systems that recycle water and use very little. For example, the Vantage and Mt. Pleasant data center websites describe their planned Wisconsin facilities as having "near-zero" water use. Is this true?

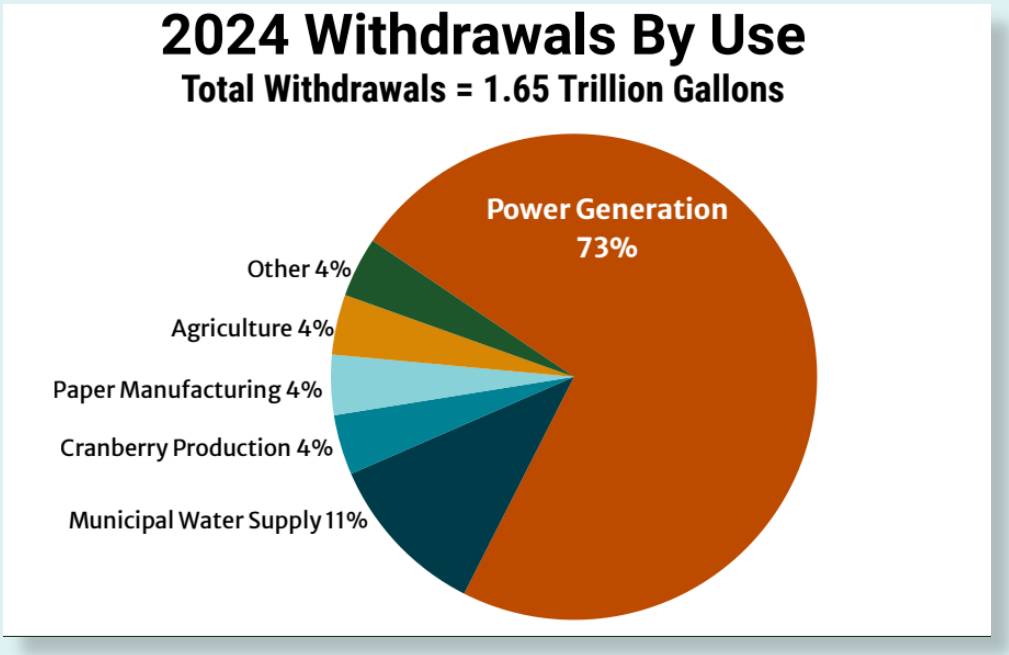
The real secret is that these closed-loop cooling systems in data centers trade water consumption for higher electricity usage. By eliminating evaporative towers, these systems require more energy-intensive mechanical chillers and fans to continuously transfer heat to the outside air, making cooling more power-heavy, particularly in the peak summer months. (In addition, they add heat to the surrounding area.) If these data centers are powered by fossil fuel power plants, they will still indirectly result in huge amounts of water consumption. That's why data center electricity growth must be paired with clean energy generation to mitigate impacts. So the dirty, thirsty secret of closed-loop systems is that they use more electricity.

HYPERSCALE DATA CENTERS BRING A RUSH OF NEW GAS PLANTS

Unfortunately, Wisconsin electric utilities are currently planning to build five new gas plants to help power data centers. Of the five proposed gas plants, there's a range of information available from publicly available documents– companies' applications and agency environmental reviews– from which we've pulled out the relevant pieces. Where information was unavailable or unspecified in the

environmental reviews, we assumed that the plants would operate similarly to one of the other planned plants of comparable size. **These five proposals would produce almost 4 GW of power.** In addition to these new plants, 4 coal plants in Wisconsin (two that were scheduled to be shut down) are converting to gas.

Taken together, at their peak and when operating at all times, these plants could collectively use 852,546 gallons of water in a single day. While these plants are not like traditional gas plants that use water-intensive steam power, they use water to cool the air for efficiency. This means that while they withdraw less than their counterparts, all of the water they withdraw is consumed and taken out of the local water system. **Currently, We Energies and Invenergy anticipate using 142 million gallons a year, expressly for data centers.**



Were you ever told to turn off the water while you brush your teeth? Using 142 million gallons a year will offset the savings from turning off the water for 40.6 million toothbrushings.

BAD TIMING

One key question is when this water use will peak. Peak energy demand usually occurs in summer, when air conditioners are operating on hot days. When you look at water use, peak energy demand, and hot summers together, the impact is doubly concerning.

According to the Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts (WICCI), Wisconsin is already experiencing more frequent and intense heat waves, hotter, wetter days, and droughts. WICCI predicts "an annual increase of 20-30 days with 90-plus degrees Fahrenheit over the next 50 years." Summer heat impacts not only our communities, but also the agricultural sector.

The concerns raised here are critical for communities across Wisconsin, and decision-makers across the state must address them, as Wisconsinites call on them to do their duty and protect the state's climate, water, and air.

All of this and more, including a closer look at the closed-loop water cooling systems data centers are proposing and features on the proposed Red Oak Ridge and Foundry Ridge gas plants, are covered in *Thirsty Power: Coal and gas will leave us high and dry.* **You can check out the report at *sc.org/ThirstyPower*.**

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

COMMUNITY SHARES OF WISCONSIN

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ELECTION:
VOTE FOR OUR ORGANIZATIONS LEADERSHIP

Leadership of the Wisconsin Chapter 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 (you) 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 2027 and ending in December 2029. Winning candidates will be announced in the January 2027 Wisconsin Sierran.

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 2, 2026.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CANDIDATE STATEMENTS:

LELAND PAN, DANE COUNTY



It has been a privilege to serve on the Wisconsin Sierra Club Executive Committee and it would be an honor to serve another term. In this past term, I have served on our state chapter's equity committee and transportation team. One project I have been focused on is laying the groundwork to push our state government to allow Regional Transit Authorities, an important step in moving away from car-centric urban planning. Moving away from car dependency is critical for people's health and to reduce socioeconomic and racial disparities.

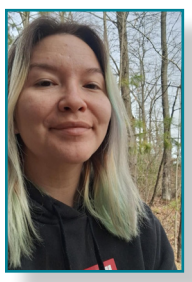
I'm well-versed in both the Madison and Milwaukee area; in Milwaukee, my neighbors and I started a Parks People group in our neighborhood to support our local park – Friends of Valley Park. In addition to community building, park beautification, Menomonee River cleanup, and promotion of gardening, we 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 is what 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 a school social worker in Madison schools and a leader in the educator union, Madison Teachers, Inc., and I want to ensure a positive relationship with Sierra Club Wisconsin's staff.

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; continuing to build these relationships is a personal focus of mine.

JENEVIEVE PHETTEPLACE, MARATHON COUNTY

I became a member in 2019 and an Outings Leader last year.



My first outing was a Spring Ephemeral ID at Powers Bluff with the Chippewa Valley Group. I contribute/volunteer with: Wild Ones Central WI, Wisconsin Women in Conservation, American Farmland Trust, Michael Fields Agricultural Institute, Bat Conservation International, and Earth Justice. I advocate for the environment daily, since childhood, and started a regenerative garden design business this year.

Descended from a tribal member, it's my responsibility to steward the land, guided by the seven generations teachings. Mother, welder, artist, helping connect people to the land and the relationships we lack in it. The nomination to be a part of the Executive Committee would help further the change for the betterment of all our relations.

I believe that the Wisconsin chapter needs to expand into rural areas with education, outreach programs, membership increases, and policy changes. As someone that lives in Central Wisconsin, these items would help drive enrollment. Wisconsin is known for its conservation roots, and I believe the Wisconsin Chapter can continue to lead and collaborate with other organizations to achieve this.

Protecting water would be what I am most passionate about. I think shutting down line 5 also falls under Protecting Our Water. Water is life. Water holds memories. We are mostly water. We must protect its sacredness. All beings rely on it for survival. Fracking, Mining, AI Data centers, CAFOs, Industrial Agriculture, and Municipality run off all need to be eradicated and replaced with better systems that value water and life. Wisconsin closed many fisheries, diverted funding from the DNR, allowed the Knowles-Nelson stewardship program to lapse, and other national policies have made water

Wisconsin Chapter Executive Committee

ELECTION BALLOT 2026

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:

- ❑ Leland Pan
- ❑ Jenevieve Phetteplace
- ❑ Peter Skopec

SIERRA CLUB
WISCONSIN CHAPTER

Voter #2:

- ❑ Leland Pan
- ❑ Jenevieve Phetteplace
- ❑ Peter Skopec

Online: https://www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/2026-wi-chapter-executive-committee-election

Mailed ballots must be postmarked by November 2, 2026
Mail to: Linda Frank, 1845 N Farwell Ave. #202, Milwaukee WI 53202

rights imperative to protect. I enjoy having clean water and want my son and his future children to enjoy clean water. Life demands it.

PETER SKOPEC, DANE COUNTY



I am currently the secretary of the Sierra Club Executive Committee and a volunteer on the Transportation Team and would be thrilled to continue supporting the Chapter's impactful work in these roles. 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 hope to bring my more than 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 in demonstrating how grassroots-driven, inclusive organizing can produce lasting change and more just outcomes for all Wisconsinites. In particular, the Wisconsin Chapter's advocacy should play a vital role in shaping our state's environmental policy agenda as a new governor and legislature enter into office in 2027. Finally, I believe the Executive Committee should continue to ensure that the Wisconsin Chapter is 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.

SIERRA CLUB
WISCONSIN CHAPTER
754 Williamson Street
Madison, WI 53703

Our newsletter is printed on recycled paper

Volume 64 / Number 3 OCTOBER 2026 - DECEMBER 2026

CALENDAR

OCTOBER 1-8
Week Without Driving
weekwithoutdriving.org

OCTOBER 12
Indigenous Peoples' Day
Office Closed

OCTOBER 18-24
Wolf Awareness Week
sierraclub.org/wisconsin

OCTOBER 20
Book Club, part of Wolf Awareness Week - *Wolfish* by Erica Berry
6:30 PM - 8:00 PM
sierraclub.org/wisconsin

OCTOBER 22
Madison Volunteer Night
754 Williamson St, Madison WI
5:00 PM - 8:00 PM
sierraclub.org/wisconsin

OCTOBER 27
Monthly Action Hour
5:30 PM - 6:30 PM

NOVEMBER 3
Midterm General Election
Find where to vote and what's on your ballot
myvote.wi.gov

NOVEMBER 11
Veterans Day
Office closed

NOVEMBER 17
Chapter Awards Celebration, virtual
sierraclub.org/wisconsin

NOVEMBER 24
Monthly Action Hour
5:30 PM - 6:30 PM

NOVEMBER 26-27
Fall Break
Office closed

DECEMBER 1
Book Club, hosted by the Lands Team - *Finding the Mother Tree* by Suzanne Simard
6:30 PM - 8:00 PM
sierraclub.org/wisconsin

DECEMBER 14-18
Sierra Club Wisconsin Chapter Volunteer Appreciation Week

DECEMBER 21
Winter Solstice

DECEMBER 24-JANUARY 1
Winter Break
Office closed

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

This summer there was a flurry of events and local organizing in opposition to new gas plant proposals that are specifically for new hyperscale data centers. Communities pushed back against the Foundry Ridge and Red Oak Ridge gas plants, raising a range of concerns from local air quality impacts to threats to local waters. Hearings on these projects lasted for hours, making it clear that across Wisconsin communities are opposed to Big Tech's proposals.



PHOTO CREDIT: JULIA ALBERTH, HEALTHY CLIMATE WISCONSIN