



Sauk-Calumet Group

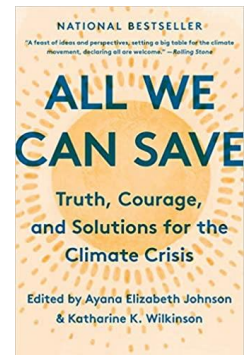
February 2022 Newsletter Volume 41, Issue 1

Climate Change.... Action and Hope

by Lois Lauer

Most of us don't like to be too cold, too hot, too wet, too dry.... However, extreme weather is becoming so common that we can now count on devastating hurricanes, horrific wildfires, violent tornadoes, and record-breaking temperatures every summer. **Yikes!**

Twenty years ago, climate change seemed like an academic concern. Not anymore...it becomes more real every day. In their bestselling book, *All We Can Save*, Ayana Johnson and Katharine Wilkinson have compiled an amazing collection of essays by women involved in the climate change movement. Some of the essayists are scientists; others are architects, lawyers, journalists, community organizers, and entrepreneurs. All write about the climate work in which they have been involved. The book is one of hope because all the authors are taking action. One of the writers is Mary Ann Hitt, who was the national director of Sierra Club's Beyond Coal Campaign, which has seen incredible progress in closing coal-burning power plants. Ten years ago, the U.S. got 50% of its power from coal. Now that number is 25%. In 2010 the goal of phasing out all coal was audacious. Now it seems both possible and probable!



The urgency of the climate crisis is best stated with authority by the [International Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\)](#), who tell us we have 8 more years to cut the global carbon emissions in half and that we need to reach zero emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050. Fortunately, we now have a President who has set these same goals for this country. The Green New Deal proposed in Congress, and which the Sierra Club has enthusiastically endorsed, sets an even more ambitious goal of zero power plant emissions by 2030, along with huge socio-economic justice and equity proposals. Unfortunately, the Biden Administration's Build Back Better Plan which would carry out many of these ideas is now stalled in Congress but will hopefully be revised and reactivated in the coming months. We in Illinois can be proud of our newly enacted clean energy bill which sets short-range and long-range emission goals and contains provisions for making the transition to clean energy just and equitable.

The *All We Can Save* book is hopeful because its contributing authors are taking action. If we act now, we will find hope too. What can we do?

1. Read, listen, learn, and talk. UN climate champion Kathrine Hayhoe says we need to discuss climate change with everyone we can and talk about why it matters to us.
2. Respond to the pleas for action from Sierra Club and other environmental advocates. Sign petitions, write letters, make phone calls, attend rallies.
3. Help elect environmental champions with our votes and by volunteering to help with campaigns, for local, state, and federal candidates.
4. Forgive me for preaching to the choir here, but I want to include the importance of adopting environmentally responsible practices in our lifestyles. That might mean changing to community solar for our electricity, driving less, wasting less food, eating less meat, not using as much AC, buying less, buying locally, etc. etc. All actions that reduce our personal carbon footprint.
5. We collaborate with a local climate advocacy group, Pachamama CoHearts to bring sustainable practices to our local communities. They believe as do I, that together we can do more, and local communities are where our voices can be heard. Contact them (pachamamacohearts@gmail.com) to learn more.

The future of our planet, of our lives, and those of the next generations, depend on confronting climate change on all these levels. We need to become activists in our country, our state, our communities, and our homes. I encourage you to join the fight on all levels and find hope!

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Lt. Governor Stratton's Statement on Senate Bill 2408

Today, Sept 13, 2021, Illinois confirmed its commitment to climate justice with the passage of Senate Bill 2408, which Gov. Pritzker has pledged to sign. Three years in the making, this historic legislation includes numerous provisions to end Illinois' reliance on fossil fuels and transition to 100% clean energy by 2050. I commend my friends and former colleagues in the General Assembly for passing these reforms, as well as the advocates from across the state who championed this bill, because the time to act against climate change is long overdue. Recently, we have seen the devastating effects of rising temperatures through wildfires, hurricanes, and droughts. Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities bear the brunt of this global emergency. This law ensures they will have a voice in our efforts to slow climate change through expanded job opportunities and entrepreneurial inclusion in the clean energy sector.

We need to embrace bold measures that are based on science and uplift all of us. Senate Bill 2408 is an essential tool in our fight for justice, equity, and opportunity in what should be a much healthier, greener future.

Martin Luther King's Day of Service

January 17, 2022

by Dorelle Ackermann



The blue garbage bag was no match for this young man determined to retrieve it, while I chose to crawl under the thick branches to retrieve plastic bottles. We were both honoring Dr. King on his birthday, which became an official National Day of Service in 1994. We were among the dozen or so participants in a trail clean-up project with the Will County Forest Preserve. I do believe Dr. King would feel honored that his day is celebrated by people coming together to perform simple acts of service.

We quickly honed our clean-up skills. The younger men made it a competition. “Who found the most unique piece of trash?” (a television). I and another woman chose cooperation over competition to lessen the challenge of entering the thickets. “Hand me your trash and I’ll empty it into the bag.” We were all determined to stretch and retrieve just a little bit more. In the end, I calculate that I retrieved about 50 gallons of trash. Did my efforts really impact the Pacific Garbage Patch, now approximated to be twice the size of Texas? Nope. Does my personal commitment to never purchase single-use plastic make a difference in this global problem? I doubt it. Yet isn’t the vast ocean made of single drops and relocating one earthworm to a safe location means the world to that earthworm? Each of us can just as easily pick up one piece of trash during our daily excursion as passing it by. Each of us can think twice before purchasing throwaways. In the end, I truly believe that our individual attitudes and actions do make a difference, and we can make Dr. King’s beloved community more than a dream.

Coyotes In Our Midst

by Kathleen VanKampen

I hadn't seen coyotes for a few years now in the Palos area where we have lived for the last 12 years. We were grateful for that because our small West Highland Terriers love to run about and patrol outside in the confines of their "Electric Fence" territory. There is no doubt in our minds that the coyotes would kill our girls.



However, one evening in early fall; and, for the first time in some years, we heard a coyote howl in our back yard. Even though this meant we would need to take the dogs out on leashes, I was glad to know the coyotes were back. Several weeks into the fall passed before I spotted two huge coyotes, in broad daylight, running through the wooded area between our house and our neighbor's house. Both coyotes were huge!! They looked more like wolves in size and coat.



But, of course, there are no wolves wandering in this area of the Cook County Forest Preserve. Coyotes do differ in size and coats. Some coyotes are tan and shorthaired. That is the type of coyote we have seen here in the 12 years we have lived in the Palos area.

The large coyotes I saw running between the houses were long-haired and the color of German Shepherds and huge! Even larger than the animal shown below.



I have not seen the pair of coyotes since that day. I so wish I had been able to take a photo, but they were moving fast, and I didn't have my iPhone in hand. I asked myself whether they were someone's pets; but no, they were just too big, and I can't imagine an owner of such large animals would let them roam free. You'll just have to take my word that I saw these beasts. I researched humane ways to keep coyotes out of our yard. [“The Five Scents That Coyotes Hate \(And How to Use Them\)”](#). I learned that there are things one can do to keep coyotes at a distance, such as, keeping your property clean, keep trash covered, and about scents that coyotes dislike. Coyotes do not like the scent of white vinegar. So, we bought large jugs of vinegar, placed them around the property, and took off the caps. We haven't seen or heard any coyotes since then. Were they ghosts??

Reducing Confusion - Caps on or Caps Off?

Plastic bottle caps are often made of a different plastic than the bottle and for years this required them to be trashed but this changed a decade ago! The processors can now recover the caps if you put them back on the bottles. They cut the plastic, some floats, some sinks and they identify the type, allowing it to be recovered. Caps, by themselves, will fall through the sorting facility conveyors, so please put them back on the bottle and recycle together!



From our friends at WillCountyGreen.com

If you missed our Hidden Gems presentation last year, here are some of the many places suggested by the Sauk Calumet Sierra Club members.

[The Homewood Izaak Walton Preserve](#)



Photo by Gerry Funk

[Bearskin State Trail](#)



Photo by Carolyn Funk

[Marinette County Waterfall Trail](#)



Photo by Mike Rzepka

[Messenger Woods](#)

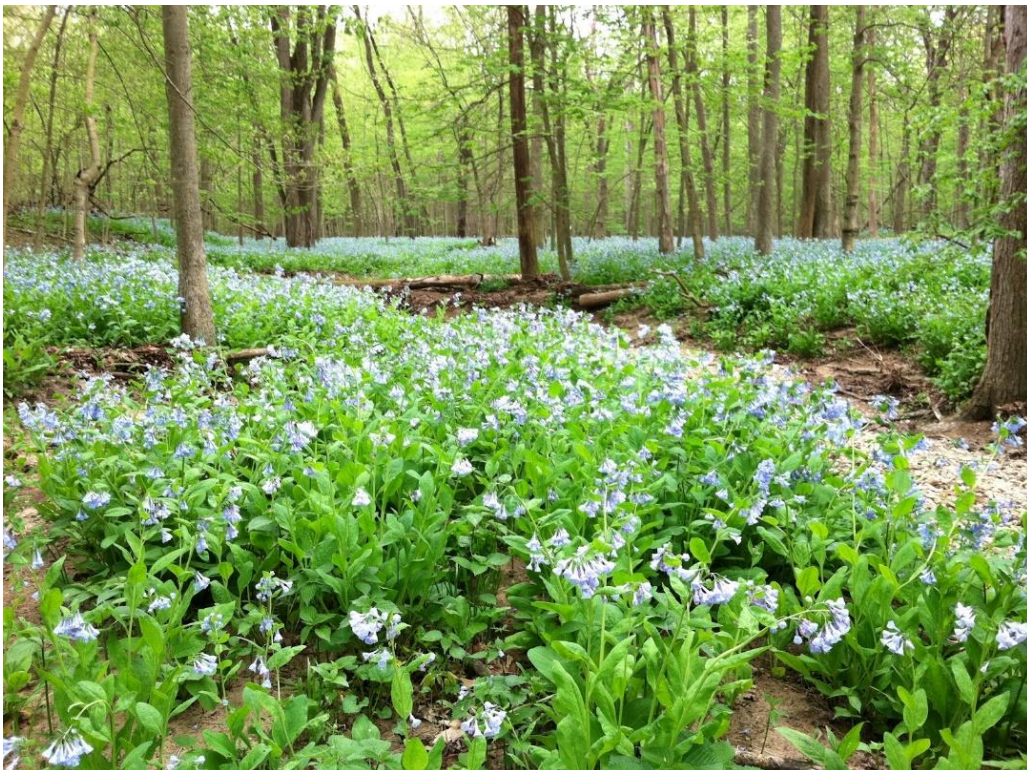


Photo by Lois Lauer

[Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie](#)



Photo by Gregory Ott

[Paul H. Douglas Trail Indiana Dunes National Park](#)



Photo by Gregory Ott

Something Positive Learned During the Pandemic

by Gregory Ott

Recently I was with a group of friends lamenting all the things we have missed over the past two years due to Covid-19. This made me wonder if anything positive can be attributed to Covid disrupting our lives. The only thing that occurred to me was I spent more time outdoors. At first, this seemed inconsequential to me because I have loved being outdoors since I was a kid. Almost every job I have ever had has been an outdoor job. Upon further contemplation I realized it was not just spending more time outdoors, it was how I spent that time outdoors. My wife and I have been taking our dogs hiking since we got our first Great Pyrenees back in 1994. When the pandemic started, most public places were recommended to be avoided. But one place was deemed safer than the rest...being outdoors. So, we started taking the dogs hiking more often. It was during these hikes that I found more time to just sit and relax for a while. I



was never one to rush through a hike. I love taking photos while hiking. I started taking more pictures. If we were in the woods, I would find a fallen tree trunk to use as a bench and enjoy the sounds of the forest. The birds chirping, the breeze rustling the leaves and sometimes the silence and solitude were all I needed. If we were hiking along the beaches of Lake Michigan, a large piece of driftwood would make a perfect place to relax and listen to the waves breaking on the shore and watch the shorebirds go about their day. During the first six months of

Covid, whenever we had some free time, we took the dogs for a hike. We took the dogs hiking nearby on our usual trails at local Cook and Will County Forest Preserves, the Indiana Dunes National Park, Calumet Park in Chicago, Marquette Park and Lake Etta in Gary. When we had to cancel several planned vacation trips, we decided to use the time off to take day trips with the dogs. In early September of 2020, we visited Sunset Hill Farm, Potato Creek State Park, Spicer Lake Nature Preserve, Des Plaines State Fish & Wildlife Area, Goose Lake Prairie State



Natural Area, Heidecke Lake, Seidner Dune & Swale, Kankakee Sands, Shades State Park, Turkey Run State Park, Portage Lakefront, Porter Beach and Mississippi Palisades State Park. Some days we were gone for over 12 hours. The dogs loved these day long trips and so did I. When you spend all day hiking in nature, there is nothing to distract you from the beautiful places you are visiting at that time. The rest of the world does not exist for a few hours, and I didn't miss it at all. The dogs were so good we

decided to take them to Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore in Michigan for three days in late September. This was the first time we took our dogs on vacation with us. We rented a pet-friendly house near the park and went hiking each day in Michigan State Parks and at Sleeping Bear Dunes. Once again, this trip provided another great escape from the pandemic. Sleeping Bear Dunes was crowded on a couple of the more popular hikes, but everyone we met was very friendly and seemed to love being outdoors as much as we did. The dogs loved being with us

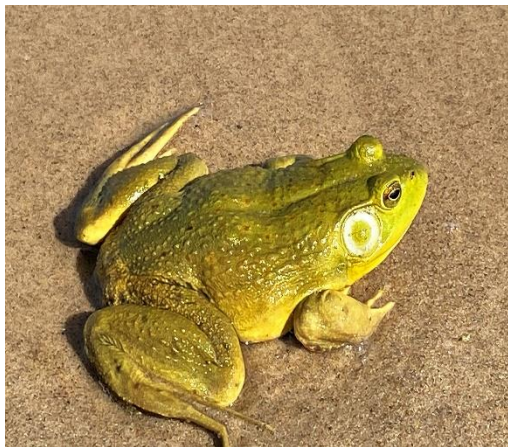


24 hours a day. They seemed to figure things out too. When the car stops, get out and hike. Get back into the car, go to sleep. Car stops get out and hike. Repeat as necessary. As Covid dragged on into 2021, the increase in going hiking continued. I loved every minute of every hike and so did the dogs. In early May we took the dogs on a six-day trip to northern Michigan. This time we rented a cabin on a dirt road just south of Wilderness State Park. Once again, we went hiking every day of this trip. We hiked in Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, Seney National Wildlife Refuge, eleven Michigan State Parks, and three Little Traverse Conservancy Land Trust properties. Looking back on these trips now, I am sure that my time spent outdoors hiking with my dogs was a bright spot during the dark times of the pandemic.



Sauk Calumet Sierra Club Group Meetings Schedule

Meetings are held at 7:15 pm on the second Monday of every month except for June, July and August. All meetings are free and open both to Sierra Club members and to the public. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, **the Spring programs will be online using Zoom instead of meeting in the Frankfort library.** An email will be sent the week before each meeting, asking you to RSVP. A second email will be sent to those who plan to come, with the instructions and connection information for our Zoom conference, which you can access from a computer, tablet, or smartphone. We are meeting online through May 2022 and hope to return to the Frankfort Library in September 2022. We will send details by email about those programs when the programs are confirmed, and they will also be listed on the [Sauk Calumet Sierra Club website](#).



March 14, 7:15 pm - "Learn More about our Local Frogs and Toads - from Calls to Spots". Don Arnold is a longtime amphibian monitor in the DuPage County area and knows a great deal about our local frogs and toads. He is currently volunteering as a steward and docent for Juricha-Suchy Nature Museum/Benedictine University in Lisle and an amphibian (frog) monitor and woodland steward for DuPage County Forest Preserves. The presentation should help us all to recognize which species are singing at our local ponds and forest preserves, and what we can do to help our local

amphibians thrive.

When the speakers are confirmed for our April and May Group Meetings the information will be posted on the [Sauk Calumet Group Facebook page](#) and the [Sauk Calumet Group website](#).



Photo by Gregory Ott

<p style="text-align: center;">EARTH DAY 2022 INFORMATION April 22, 2022</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Earth Day 2022 Invest In Our Planet</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>The History Of Earth Day</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Take Action on Earth Day</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Test Your Knowledge With Quizzes</u></p>

Letters to the Editor:

Letters on content within the Sauk-Calumet newsletter should be sent to the editor at:

sc-editor@illinois.sierraclub.org

Please include your full name and address and reference the article on which you are commenting.

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The Sierra Club from the national level down to the local groups does so many positive things to help protect our planet. So, let's get outdoors and enjoy our beautiful world together. Click below for Sierra Club Illinois outings.



Remember to check our Sauk-Calumet Group website for current information and news updates on issues relevant to Illinois.

[Click here for our website.](#)

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