



News of the  
Southeast Gateway Group  
of the Sierra Club  
JUNE/JULY 2013  
VOLUME 32, NO. 3

# SOUTHEAST SIERRAN

## CELEBRATING THE SIERRA CLUB - JOHN MUIR CHAPTER'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY!

From the Chair, Melissa Warner

Recently Jay and I, along with other SEGG members, traveled to Madison to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the John Muir Chapter. We attended an elegant luncheon with Michael Brune, Executive Director of the Sierra Club. Delicious dishes had been provided by the JMC staff and Executive Committee members, and it was fun to see so many members we had met at the Autumn Assembly. The venue was near the capitol, and the lovely day meant the balcony doors were open, allowing a view of the dome, where many environmental battles have been, are being, and will be fought.

The main address was later in the day at the Wisconsin Institutes of Discovery, on the UW campus. A public/private partnership between the University and the Morgridge Institute for Research, the building has a public Town Center on the main floor, and research labs on the floors above. The Town Center is intended to promote discourse and interaction between the scientists and the public. One feature I particularly liked was the Mesozoic Garden, a collection of plants that are descendents of species that were alive in the Mesozoic Era. While they were not identified, I thought I recognized cycads, tree ferns and horsetails. And it was great fun to find trilobite fossils in the floor tiles. John Berge enjoyed setting off the Fibonacci Chimes, slate water walls that respond to visitors' steps with chimes and lights in the Fibonacci sequence. There was a state-of-the-art teleconference room, arranged with seating in a semi-circle against the screen, so that the group you were conversing with would appear to be just on the other side. Interactive media walls, a coffee shop (Aldo's Café), a restaurant, and lots of comfortable seating and wi-fi access made a welcoming atmosphere.

After hors d'oeuvres and a Badger State brew, we gathered in the H. F. DeLuca Forum (within the Town Center) for proclamations and presentations. Both Dane County and

the State of Wisconsin proclaimed April 20 as John Muir Chapter Day, in honor of our work on behalf of air, water, and wild places. Among the JMC accomplishments Spencer Black highlighted were designation of the St. Croix as a wild and scenic river, helping to scuttle the proposed copper-zinc mine on the Wolf River, shutting down several old and dirty coal-fired power plants, and establishing (or helping to establish) renewable energy standards, Focus on Energy, and the Great Lakes Compact.

Michael Brune's keynote address stressed that it is easy to be discouraged as we see daunting tasks in front of us. So it is critical to look back, and see what we have accomplished, in order to know that we will continue to make gains, though perhaps only a little at a time. He stated that climate change is the defining issue of our time, and we must continue to oppose the XL pipeline and push for clean, renewable energy sources.

I read the handout on Sierra Club's History of Accomplishments, and noted the club's commitment to preserving land from Yosemite and the Grand Canyon to Glacier Park and Point Reyes Seashore. There were lots of references to the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts, to the Endangered Species Act, and an Environmental Bill of Rights. And I thought of our current campaigns to go Beyond Coal to clean, renewable energy. I returned to Racine feeling proud to be associated with a club that has such a distinguished and proud history that fights not for its own prestige, but for the health of people and the preservation of the planet's ecosystems. I hope you are proud, too!

### Breaking News!

SEGG Chair, Melissa Warner is being honored with a 2013 Invader Crusader Award, presented by the Wisconsin Invasive Species Council. The Council recognizes a small number of people every year based on their commitment to stopping the spread of invasives through education of others, on-the-ground management or research. She will receive the award June 11 at the Olbrich Botanical Gardens in Madison. More information next issue.

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## June

**June 6th**, Thursday 7:00p.m- Conservation Committee Meeting at Laura Feider's home at The Concord Apartments, 4305 Erie Street, Apt #530 (second floor), Racine, WI 53402. Email Laura at Lmflowerpower@hotmail.com.

**June 8th**, Saturday- Bike the Badger Trail with Al Sommer. Call or email him to get details and to express interest at sommerallan4@gmail.com, 262-716-6955.

**June 22th**, Saturday 9:00 to noon- (Weather dependent )Work days in Colonial Park West at High Street, Racine and Pringle nature center at 9800 160th Avenue Bristol. Check the website or contact melissa.warner3@sbcglobal.net for more information.

**June 27th**, Thursday 5:30pm-Join us at Petrifying Springs Park, 761 Green Bay Road and highway A in Kenosha for our June picnic. Enjoy the trails and learn about the dam removal and fish passage project, as well as Kenosha's extensive efforts to control buckthorn and honeysuckle along the river.

**June**, ExCom Meeting- Time and place to be determined. If you have issues for the ExCom to discuss, contact melissa.warner3@sbcglobal.net or any ExCom member.

## July

**July 18th** Thursday 6:30p.m- Want to raise your own monarch butterflies? Then join us to build a rearing cage and find monarch eggs and milkweed to put inside. Contact Melissa Warner at melissa.warner3@sbcglobal.net for advance registration so that materials will be ready for you.

**July 20th**, Saturday 8:30a.m- Highway 38 cleanup and potluck lunch. Meet at 8:30 a.m. in the parking lot of the little church on the corner of Highway 38 and Four Mile Road for assignments and equipment. Potluck lunch afterwards at Melissa and Jay Warners' house, 4444 N. Green Bay Road, Racine. Call John Berge at 262-633-8455 if you can help on this service project.

**July 27th**, Saturday 9:00 to noon- (Weather dependent )Work days in Colonial Park West at High Street, Racine and Pringle Nature Center at 9800 160th Avenue Bristol. Check the website or contact melissa.warner3@sbcglobal.net for more information.

### Nominations Needed for 2014 Executive Committee

Executive Committee is currently seeking candidates for the upcoming elections. If you, or another Sierran you know, would be a good candidate, please email Laura Feider at LMFLOWERPOWER@hotmail.com. Subject, 'Nominations/Elections' so it doesn't accidentally end up in the junk folder."

### Bike the Badger Trail

By Allan Sommer

I want to try for the bike ride on the Badger State Trail again on Sat., June 08. We will meet at the Burlington Library parking lot at 8:00 am and carpool to the New Glarus area from where we have access to both the Sugar River Trail and to the Badger State Trail. This is beautiful, hilly country, there are long, dark tunnels on the Badger State Trail. The trails are old abandoned railroad tracks so there are no hills to climb, unless you want to. People that want to join the ride should be comfortable riding 30 - 50 miles or they can return early to New Glarus where they can visit a brewery, restaurants, or shops. We will meet to carpool back to Burlington. The trails connect several small towns where we will be able to get lunch. Call or email Allan Sommer for more details and to express interest at 262-716-6955, sommerallan4@gmail.com.



**YES!** I want to be a member of the Sierra Club and help preserve the beauty of the Earth. **FREE GIFT**  
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Contributions, gifts, and other to the Sierra Club are not tax-deductible. They support our efforts to reduce global warming and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to SIERRA magazine and \$1 for your Chapter newsletter.

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### SEGG Summer Picnic

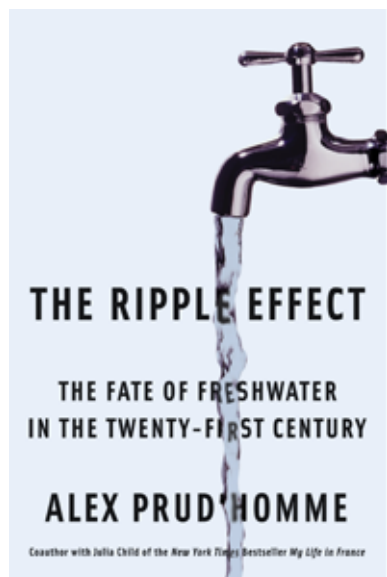
Join us at Petrifying Springs Park, 761 Green Bay Road and highway A in Kenosha for our June picnic. Bring your own entrée to grill (or not) and a dish to pass. Start to gather about 5:30, we'll enjoy a social time while the burgers (or whatever) are grilling.

Enjoy the trails! we can learn about the dam removal and fish passage project, as well as Kenosha's extensive efforts to control buckthorn and honeysuckle along the river. Find out who wins the Green Award – recognizing the work of a student or student group that is protecting the environment.



# THE FATE OF FRESH WATER

By John Berge



The most recent book discussed by the SEGG Book Club was "The Ripple Effect; The Fate of Freshwater in the Twenty-First Century" by Alex Prud'homme. Since this book had such important messages, but we want to share it with more of our members. I was asked to provide summaries of the four parts of this book in the next four newsletters.

Part I is labeled "Quality: What is in our water?" and that is enough to scare anyone. The common assumption

ingrained in most of us is that the United States has an abundance of clean water available at the turn of a tap. And yet, in Passaic, New Jersey, there was a boil order a few years ago because of a dead body in a million-gallon tank. Private wells in Wisconsin are polluted with the coliform bacteria from manure at almost three times the levels which would close a beach, or with heavy metal contamination. PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls) pollute the Housatonic River in New England and the Hudson River in New York, both sources of drinking water. Anti-bacterial soaps contain triclocarban, an endocrine disrupter which may be flushed into and through virtually every sewage treatment plant in the country or absorbed onto the solids in sludge spread on farm fields and lawns. The Anaconda Mining Company in Butte, Montana, dumped tons of tailings into Silver Bow Creek creating a 150-mile poisonous plume down the Upper Clark Fork River. They also produced a huge water-filled pit in which the water is so contaminated that 342 snow geese landed in it and then all died. The Environmental Working Group found tap water in 45 states was contaminated by 316 different contaminants, more than half of which are not regulated by the EPA. We all know about the Cuyahoga River catching fire, the Love Canal area becoming uninhabitable and the sewers in Greenpoint, Brooklyn blew up from contamination with petroleum products dumped into wetlands.

Some contaminants are natural products dissolved in the ground or surface waters; others and probably most come from carelessness, ignorance or standing operating procedures of industries, agriculture, mining and people's homes. The greatest source is now considered to be "non-point sources". That is, storm water runoff from lawns, roads, parking lots, poultry farms, etc. According to EPA estimates, in 1970, 85% of water pollution came from obvious point sources such as factories or wastewater treatment plants and 15% from non-point sources. In 2010, the percentages are reversed due in large part to the Clean Water Act of 1972. But EPA regulations have not kept up with these changes. Over sixty thousand different chemicals are used in America each year. By 2000, the EPA regulated 91 and that list stopped growing then.

Cities such as New York and Milwaukee have combined sewer systems, mixing storm water and sewage from all the toilets, showers, tubs, household laundries and car washes. A big rain occurs (that can be as little as one inch) and the wastewater treatment facilities are overwhelmed. Untreated waste goes out into the lake, river or ocean, whichever is the receptor waterway. Prud'homme gives a very graphic and educational description of such an event in New York City, one of the first large American cities to install a sewer system back in 1847. Those pipes are now too old, too small and too leaky. The capacity for treatment without overflow is exceeded more and more because of the increasing number of large snows or rainfalls.

There is some good news. The Clean Water Act (as amended in 1977 and 1987) and the Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974 have made major improvements in water quality, at least for the better known contaminants. Back in the 1960's, Lake Erie was declared to be "dead". Now due to CWA and SDWA, Lake Erie, the fourth largest of the Great Lakes, leads all the rest in production of commercial fish. Most treatment plants do not remove pharmaceuticals which have been improperly disposed of or have passed through the human or animal which has been treated with them, nor do they measure them in either the effluent or the sludge. The AP estimated that the pharmaceutical industry sends 250 million pounds down the drain each year. Since many bottled water companies use "purified tap water", one cannot avoid these drugs even in the plastic bottles.

Most of us are revolted by the thought of drinking sewage, but the effluent of one city may be present in the drinking water of the next. St. Paul derives their water from the Mississippi River and dumps their effluent a bit down stream. By the time the river reaches the Gulf of Mexico, it has made its way through over a dozen cities' water and wastewater treatment plants. Fortunately, there is dilution and sunlight along the way. Orange County, California, has tried reverse osmosis to purify household wastewater to higher standards, but they aren't drinking it directly, just injecting it into wells to keep the salt water from infiltrating their lowered aquifers from which they pump their drinking water or to "recharge basins" north of town.

Part two, Drought: A Creeping Disaster, will be in the next issue of this newsletter.

## Raising Monarchs

Want to raise your own monarch butterflies? Join us on July 18th to build a rearing cage and find monarch eggs and milkweed to put inside. Jeff Sytsma will provide materials and instructions for building the rearing boxes, and Nancy Carlson will help us find the eggs and teach us how to care for them. We'll meet at the Warner house about 6:30. \$10 box will cover all materials and help support our monarch projects. Advance registration is essential so that materials are ready for you. E-mail Melissa for more information at [melissa.warner@sbcglobal.net](mailto:melissa.warner@sbcglobal.net).





# CONSERVATION CORNER

## Leaving It Better For Our Kids

By Laura Feider

I have not had my own children yet, but I see the wonder in my students' eyes. It is so essential that we instill the love of nature in our children at an early age, whether they are our students, children, grandchildren, or friends. I work with the Head Start program and some of my kids may not have the opportunity to go out to the woods. Our playgrounds are pavement and turf, so we don't have much opportunity to explore nature on a regular basis at school; however, my students and I recently reared ladybugs and painted lady butterflies. They also got to experience worms and composting, and we are still waiting for that praying mantis egg sac to hatch. I would guess that most of my students may have stepped on a bug that they saw, as seems to be a natural reflex for many, before their experience. They took ownership in the rearing of the bugs and watched them from larva to adult. When we let the butterflies go, there was one that was not able to fly, as its wing did not fully form. We all cheered it on, hoping it would fly out of my hand, but he didn't. We set him free in the grass by the fence that fences in our playground. Two of my boys stood by the fence like guardians making sure our butterfly was ok. When we went inside to get ready for lunch, my kids said, "We can't leave him!" Most of them started crying because they said he wouldn't be able to join his family. I reassured him that the butterfly ambulance would be coming, and even had to call the butterfly ambulance so they would be able to rest assured that he was going to be ok.

Now, when I take my children out to the playground and they see an insect crawling on the ground, they might want to pick it up, examine and respect it. It is essential that we teach our children to respect and care for nature. They are our future, and we need to protect this environment for them and their children. This is a reminder that, with this wonderful weather changing, we need to get kids outside to explore nature so that they can learn about it and later protect it. It seems that too many kids are hooked on electronics, when we need to get them hooked on nature. Take your child, grandchild, or your friend out to the woods and explore a little every week this summer. As Sierra Club says, "Explore, enjoy and protect the planet."



Laura Feider releasing the butterflies.



Dian Sorenson

## GETTING TO KNOW YOU

By Lila Berge

Meet Dian Sorenson ... a quiet woman who truly cares about the environment. Dian grew up in South Dakota and loved reading books about the National Parks further west. She promised herself she would travel to see the Redwood and Sequoia trees, the Grand Canyon, the California Coastal Highway and the Sierra Mountains. But first she had to finish her education and raise her young son.

After moving to Racine, she enrolled at the Racine/Kenosha County Teacher Training College in Union Grove, then finished earning her BS degree at Alverno College in Milwaukee. She taught special needs children at Waterford middle and grade schools.

Finally, in 1989 Dian realized her childhood dream, setting out for a three-week trip alone in her car with maps and a small tent. She camped in small campgrounds where she cooked frugal meals, treating herself only once or twice to a meal and motel in town.

It was the Sierra Outings that led Dian to join our local SEGG. She attended meetings and served three terms on the Executive Committee. Sierra speakers and writers gave her an education about the need for protection of the natural world that she loved. Attending SEGG Conservation Committee meetings and John Muir Chapter Autumn Assemblies she learned how to write more effective letters to elected officials, urging passage of legislation to protect our forests, streams, air and wildlife. Dian helped our Group raise money by serving as calendar salesperson for two decades, lugging the heavy boxes to meetings. She also helped to get our newsletter mailed.

Dian enjoyed SEGG skiing, hiking and camping outings. In 1991 she married Bob Sorenson and soon taught him to enjoy camping. In 1996 they rafted the Salmon River in Idaho with the Gericke family and Sierra friends. They had such a great time they did it again another summer.

Dian retired from teaching in 2001. She and Bob looked forward to retirement years shared with grandkids (her two and his twelve) and friends. However, in 2007 Dian was diagnosed at the Mayo Clinic with ALS (commonly referred to as Lou Gehrig's disease). As her disabilities have increased, she is no longer able to leave their condo. She does enjoy receiving cards and letters (7136 Parkside Lane, #121, Racine).

## Hackmatack News Report

By L.D. Rockwell

Hackmatack is now officially a Wildlife Refuge! A parcel of land in Illinois has been donated to U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) marking the completion of refuge & wildlife status.

This is very good news and we can all now make it our second home. There is more good news. The Wisconsin chapter of Ducks Unlimited will be adding to that status with the completion of the purchase they are making, which will also be donated to USFWS.

We can all be very grateful that there are individuals and NGO's that will step up and contribute to saving nature. We must however work to ensure any land that becomes available be purchased and donated to USFWS.

I have made inquiries into locating individuals or other entities that would supply funding to purchase those parcels that become available for purchase. I am also putting together a report for Senator Baldwin asking for her assistance in securing federal funds for USFWS to purchase properties that are placed on the market.

This will be an on-going project and will be updated with each development. I am sure like me you look forward to the day when all 11,000 plus acres are in the control of USFWS. We can certainly anticipate that date.



Photo by Dan Deters- Illinois and Wisconsin Sierra Club activists celebrated last month when Interior Secretary Ken Salazar visited Illinois to announce the establishment of the new 11,200-acre Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge.

## SEGG Welcomes New Members

Bristol	Susan Page
Burlington	Elena Spiegelhoff, Barbara Kacka
Caledonia	Mary Kimmel
Delavan	Sarah Ollerich
East Troy	Reginald Shepherd
Elkhorn	J. Bownsen, Diane Hanson, Robert Svoboda
Fontana	Bette Popik
Genoa City	K. Anderson
Kenosha	Jeff Palmer, Heather Bothe, April Ericson, Vesne Socava-Lile, Tamara Guthrie, Siana Hasley, Tim Hansen, Susan Suchy, Maryjo Sanchez, Amy Cundari, Shelley Meyer, Debra Nicolo
Lake Geneva	Edward Jaros
Mount Pleasant	Kate Potter-Barrow, Pam Mross, Sue Beard, Patricia Ontko, Alan Bronenkant
Pleasant Prairie	Margaret Smithers, Kendall Demoulin
Racine	Becky Maller, Sever Antonescu, Joel Sys, James Hansen, Jacob Rhodes, Lawrence Cura, Kathy Yankeck
Salem	Judith Dancing
Sturtevant	David Spaulding
Trevor	Karen Carder, Ken Winkley
Twin Lakes	Toni Ferguson
Walworth	Terry Schaid
Waterford	George Foras
Williams Bay	Dianne Trush
Wind Lake	Marcia Bringardner



## Explore, Enjoy And Protect The Planet

### SEGG Leadership

#### SEGG Executive Committee

Melissa Warner (Chair).....melissa.warner3@sbcglobal.net

Kari Olesen (Vice Chair).....(262) 995-4455

Laura Feider (Sec/Con).....Lmflowerpower@hotmail.com

Wendi Schneider.....wendianne@yaho.com

LD (Red) Rockwell (JMC ExCom).....Ld.jarockwell@elknet.net

#### Other Group Leaders

Jeff Sytsma (Treasurer)..... Jeff12759@aol.com

Betsy Georg (Political Liaison).....bgeorg@hotmail.com

Dana Huck (Hospitality).....dhuck1105@wi.rr.com

MaryAnn Ortmyer (Book Group)....maortmyer@gmail.com

Rebecca Eisel (Webmaster).....treehugr2000@yahoo.com

<http://wisconsin.sierraclub.org/segg>

The newsletter of the Southeast Gateway Group of the Sierra Club is published six times each year by the Group newsletter staff. Please send articles, photographs of group activities, letters, calendar items and/or corrections and comments to the newsletter editor Himani Gupta at:

himanigupta262@gmail.com

Check out the newsletter in color, calendar updates and much more at <http://wisconsin.sierraclub.org/segg/>

**SIERRA CLUB - SOUTHEAST GATEWAY GROUP  
STAY CURRENT WITH EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES**

**DEADLINE FOR**

**AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2013 ISSUE IS**

**JULY 1<sup>ST</sup> 2013**

JUNE/JULY 2013-VOLUME 32, NO. 3

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Read more about the John Muir  
Chapter's 50th Anniversary  
Celebration on page 1.

Michael Brune, Lila Berge and John Berge at Wisconsin Institute for Discovery Celebrating  
John Muir Chapter's 50th Anniversary.