



News of the
Southeast Gateway Group
of the Sierra Club
FEBRUARY / MARCH 2014
VOLUME 33, NO. 1

SOUTHEAST SIERRAN

Wisconsin Wildlife Topic for February 20

Wisconsin is fortunate to have a wide variety of wildlife, including about 400 species of birds, 70 species of mammals, 36 reptile species, and 19 amphibian species. David Drake's talk on February 20th at 6:30 pm at Gateway Technical College, Kenosha, will highlight a number of these wildlife species, as well as some of the hot and emerging wildlife topics that are of interest to Wisconsin outdoor enthusiasts. Plenty of time will be available for questions.

David Drake is an extension wildlife specialist and associate professor in the Department of Forest and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He graduated with a bachelor's degree in Biology from Macalester College in St. Paul, MN, earned a master's degree in Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences from Texas A&M University, and completed his Ph.D. in Forestry at North Carolina State University. David's research interests include urban/suburban wildlife management and impacts on birds and bats from wind energy turbines.

Join us for supper at the Gateway Cafe, 3619 30th Ave, Kenosha, WI 53144 (on your own) about 5:00 pm to chat informally with David and other members.



THE "DO CALL" LIST

Just about everybody knows about the state and federal "Do Not Call" lists. But do you know about the Southeast Gateway Group's "Do Call" lists? John and Lila Berge have two of them – the highway cleanup list and the newsletter folding list. When it comes time to get at least a dozen volunteers to cleanup our section of Highway 38 on three Saturdays per year, they need to have a list of people who have agreed to be called to do this public service. When it comes time to fold the Southeast Sierran, they need a list of Sierrans they can call to do this job six times per year usually on short notice during the week. Contact them at 262-633-8455 or jberge35@wi.rr.com.

Others in the Group have "Do Call" (or e-mail) lists such as Barry Thomas (262-859-2960 or bthomas6@wi.rr.com) for work days at Bristol Woods County Park in Kenosha County and Melissa Warner (262-639-0918 or melissa.warner3@sbcglobal.net) for work days in Colonial Park in Racine. There probably are, or should be, other lists for various activities of the Sierra Club that need volunteers. If you are willing to volunteer on any of these "Do Call" lists, contact the people listed above or any member of the Executive Committee listed on page 7. After all, the Sierra Club is a grass-roots organization that depends upon volunteers to get things done locally and nationally. So give of your time, a little or a lot, by having your name put on one or more "Do Call" lists.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

FEBRUARY

February 6th*, Thursday 6:30pm: ExCom meeting at UW-Parkside, Tallent Hall, vending room. Meetings are open. If you have items for the agenda, contact melissa.warner3@sbcglobal.net or any ExCom member (See p. 7.)

February 20th, Thursday 6:30pm: Program meeting, Dr. David Drake, Issues in Wisconsin Wildlife at Gateway Technical College, Bioscience Building, Room 120, 3520 30th Ave., Kenosha. For more information, see pg. 1.

MARCH

March 6th*, Thursday 6:30pm: ExCom meeting at UW-Parkside, Tallent Hall, vending room. Meetings are open. If you have items for the agenda, contact melissa.warner3@sbcglobal.net or any ExCom member (See p. 7.)

March 20th, Thursday 6:30pm: Program meeting, Randy Hetzel, Amphibians and Reptiles of SE WI (tentative title), at Gateway Technical College, Bioscience Building, Room 120, 3520 30th Ave., Kenosha. For more information, see pg. 5.

March 22nd, Saturday 9:00am **Possible** work day at Bristol Woods (Kenosha) and Colonial Park (Racine). Dress for the weather with sturdy shoes and long pants, bring your own drinking water, and be prepared to pull garlic mustard and/or cut woody invasives. Contact Barry Thomas, bthomas6@wi.rr.com, (Bristol Woods) or Melissa Warner, melissa.warner3@sbcglobal.net, (Colonial Park) **BEFORE** you go.

*Excom meetings may be canceled or postponed depending on weather conditions or the business on the agenda. For confirmation of ExCom meetings, contact melissa.warner3@sbcglobal.net



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Contributions, gifts and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax-deductible. They support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$2 for a subscription to SIERRA magazine and \$1 for your Chapter Newsletter.

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Looking ahead:

- Reserve April 17th for the Program Meeting featuring author and outdoorsman, Eric Hansen
- Reserve May 15 for the Annual Dinner.

Enjoy wintertime outdoor activities! Need ideas? See:

- Pringle Nature Center <http://www.pringlenc.org>
- River Bend Nature Center <http://riverbendnaturecenterracine.org>
- Bong Recreation Area <http://www.bongnaturalistassociation.org>
- Candlelight Ski/Hike events <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/parks/getoutdoors/candlelight.html>
- or check out outings with the John Muir Chapter <http://wisconsin.sierraclub.org/Events/outings.asp>

Longing for warm weather?

- Plan for a Boundary Waters canoe trip! See <http://wisconsin.sierraclub.org/segg/BoundaryTrips.htm>

FROM THE CHAIR



Update on Wisconsin Bats

By Melissa Warner

Bats are among my favorite animals. Being the only flying mammal would make them interesting enough, but their unique method of hunting using echolocation is fascinating, especially when you get to hear them do it!

Jay and I have been monitoring bats in our area for four summers as part of the Wisconsin DNR's Citizen Science Program. There are six or seven bat species that appear at different times and locations through the summer. We have a device that hears the ultra-high frequency bat call and translates it into a lower frequency that we can hear. We walk with the device shortly after sunset, and when we hear the characteristic "chirps" we know a bat is above us, even when we can't see it. When the bat is homing in on prey, the chirps come closer together until it is a "zzZZZT!" followed by quiet, indicating a successful hunt.

Monitoring includes more than listening to "chirps." The device also allows us to save the sonogram, or time-frequency chart, of the bat calls, while the attached GPS records the exact time and location of the encounter. The data is uploaded to the batty folks at the DNR, and in a few days we have a Google map-type picture of the



area, with the route drawn in and the bats identified. The DNR uses the data to assess bat populations in each area, and to infer the health of those populations.

With the arrival of White-Nose Syndrome (WNS) in the USA (Schoharie County, NY, in 2006) the future of our bats is uncertain. Some of our native bats migrate in the fall, while others hibernate in caves, mines, and other secure places. Killing up to 95% of infected bats, WNS appears as a fungal growth on the face that seems to awaken the hibernating bats prematurely. They fly out in search of food, but it's still winter and there are no insects. This search depletes their fat storage, and the bats freeze or starve. If you see bats at this time of year, they are not healthy; please notify the bat crew at the WI DNR (John.White@wisconsin.gov). We have watched the maps that show the WNS's relentless spread west. (Refer to p. 8) Cases have been confirmed in Missouri, Iowa and Illinois, but not in Wisconsin or Michigan. Having data before it arrives here will help us understand its dreadful impact when it does.

Four of Wisconsin's bat species (big brown, little brown, eastern pipistrelle, and northern myotis) have been *From the Chair, continue on p. 6*

SEGG WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Burlington | Terri Engberg, Leona Morris, Scott Radmann, John Krismer |
| Delavan | Nancy Golubski |
| Elkhorn | Phillip Jones, Mark Sostarich, Samantha Wobig, Lilly Schaefer, Douglas Stewart |
| Franksville | Pamela J Rehberg |
| Kenosha | Haven Eigenberger, John Bilotti, Doreen Wolf, James Dower, Evelyn Pizzala |
| Lake Geneva | Theodora T Lottig-Kasch |
| Mt Pleasant | Howie Travis |
| Pleasant Prairie | Shelley Bergman, Marlene Quinn, Eduardo Dos Reis |
| Racine | Rodney Fields, Jody Belden, Laurie Kobor, Anna Stadick, Joseph Kezman, John Williams, Martha Palmer, Patrick Martell, Elizabet Halberstadt, Thomas Jensen |
| Twin Lakes | Joe Anselmo |
| Waterford | Ms Arlene Larkin |
| Wind Lake | Carly Fitzgerald |

CONSERVATION CORNER

Does ALEC Oppose Solar Panels?

By John Berge

If you have been reading your Muir View lately, you are aware that the John Muir Chapter has launched a Solar Homes campaign in conjunction with the H & H Solar company, which offers Sierrans free estimates and evaluations for installation of solar panels on participants' homes and rebates based on participation by Sierrans. What you may not know is that ALEC, the ultra-conservative American Legislative Exchange Council of which many Wisconsin legislators are members, is promoting legislation which would penalize individual homeowners who install solar panels and weaken state clean energy regulations.

At their recent policy summit in Washington attended by Wisconsin's Representative Paul Ryan and Senator Ron Johnson, ALEC outlined its plans in 2014 to promote model bills aimed at blocking or penalizing the expansion of wind and solar power. John Eick, the legislative analyst for ALEC's energy, environment and agriculture program, was cited in the Guardian as saying that "ALEC wanted to lower the rate electricity companies pay homeowners for direct power generation – and maybe even charge homeowners for feeding power into the grid." To further quote the Guardian article, "In November, Arizona became the first state to charge customers for installing solar panels. The fee, which works out to about \$5 a month for the average homeowner, was far lower than that sought by the main electricity company, which was seeking to add up to \$100 a month to customers' bills."

Gabe Elsner, director of the Energy and Policy Institute, was quoted as saying, "They [ALEC] are trying to eliminate pro-solar policies in the states to protect utility industry profits." In 2013, ALEC tried to get states to repeal Renewable Portfolio Standards (RPS), which require electricity companies to source a share of their power from wind, solar, biomass, or other clean energy, but every vote failed, so in 2014 their plans are to weaken RPS when- and where-ever possible and to allow

utilities to import clean energy from other states rather than to invest in new, greener generation.

This Conservation Corner article is based on a Guardian article dated December 4, recently referred to me, and I confess to my plagiarism. It is disappointing that I had to find out about these ALEC programs and plans from a British newspaper, but I don't remember seeing this particular information in any of the local newspapers. Like many Southeast Gateway Sierrans, I am well aware of ALEC's very strong influence with Wisconsin lawmakers and its success in some recent legislation. I am also well aware that ALEC is an alliance of corporations and conservative activists that convert (or subvert) our elected representatives into lobbyists for their causes. ALEC is reported to be having some financial difficulties because public pressure has caused a number of corporations to withdraw their support. Keep up the pressure!

NOTE: For more information regarding the Wisconsin Sierra Club Solar Homes campaign see <http://wisconsin.sierraclub.org/solarhomes.asp>.

PRINGLE FUNDRAISER:

100 Years After the Passenger Pigeon

Pringle Nature Center will hold a fundraising chili supper and educational program on Saturday, February 22nd at 5:00pm. Supper will be followed by a presentation by Stanley Temple, Senior Fellow at the Aldo Leopold Foundation who will speak about the 100 years since the Passenger Pigeon became extinct.

Stan's presentation explores the ecology and life history of the passenger pigeon and other extinct and endangered birds, current extinction crises, endangered species recovery, human relationship with wildlife, and sustainable use of biological resources.

Pringle Nature Center is located at, 9800 160th Ave., Bristol, WI. Admission is \$10.00. Please pre-register by February 21st by phone (262-857-8008) or e-mail (naturalist@pringlenc.org).

Climate's Goings-On:

Help Build a National Movement and Climate Ride

By Ross Astoria

I'm the father of two daughters and recently made the following calculation: In 2013, the average atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide was about 395 parts per million (ppm) and increasing at roughly 2.5 ppm per year. If humanity continues to burn fossil fuels at this rate, then when my children are about my age (in 34 years or 2048) concentrations of CO₂ will be 480 ppm.

This is scary. Pre-industrial concentrations of CO₂ were around 280 ppm. A world of 480 ppm will be filled with failed states, drought, flooding, rising oceans, wildfires, famine, and massive human migration and dislocation. Since CO₂ stays in the atmosphere for a long time, by the time we reach 480 ppm, it will be much too late to turn back the clock. Indeed, the timer for commencing aggressive reduction of CO₂ emissions ticks and tocks in years, not decades.

The challenge of global warming is so daunting that it is easy to forget that we can overcome it and bequeath to our children a stable and habitable climate. We need big changes and so seek one big, mighty solution all at once, perhaps one that comes from the top and requires of us nothing but that we vote the right way. But what is needed is billions and billions of little acts, aggregated all over the place until we cross our own tipping point and flip the course of humanity towards a stable climate. Confronting climate change is a long haul. It happens one conversation at a time. What we plant now will come to fruition in five years, five decades, maybe even a century, but we have to do it

now. We cannot wait until then. Then will be too late.

The changes we need will not come about if we stay in our comfort zones; nor is it enough to click on emails that sends some form message to some Decision Maker in Some Far Off Place; nor will it do to toil alone. Collaborative, creative, fun and effective action is the order of the day. To help us along (hopefully), over the course of the next couple of months, I will endeavor to keep everyone apprised of the goings-on in climate. I shall also share action ideas with you. I don't know all that's going on, so if you have ideas, please let the Executive Committee know. Here's the first salvo.

- One, the Sierra Club is building a climate movement and has asked for input from the local chapters and groups. The Executive Committee is organizing this and is looking forward to hearing your ideas. Please contact me by email (rossastoria@yahoo.com) and stay tuned for further announcements.
- Two, Climate Ride is holding its first bike ride in the Midwest this September 6-9th, 2014. The route goes from Grand Rapids, MI to Chicago, IL. I've been on the California ride. The organizers deliver a great trip and the riders are talented, fun, and dedicated to bringing about a stable climate and healthy environment. Drop me an email if you want to ride or have idea you want sent to the Sierra Club Headquarters..

Ross Astoria is a Sierra Club member, newly elected SEGG ExCom member and local chair of Citizens Climate Lobby.

Meet Wisconsin's Amphibians and Reptiles at the March 20 Program Meeting

Join us on March 20th at 6:30pm at Gateway Technical College to meet some of Wisconsin's most interesting amphibians and reptiles (herptiles) up close and personal. Randy Hetzel, wildlife biologist, will share his extensive knowledge and collection of these fascinating critters.

Randy is a career wildlife biologist and naturalist with "experience from songbirds to grizzly bears." Often referred to as "RandyMan" by friends and colleagues, Hetzel's work and travels encompass a wide range of species and habitats. His presentations entertain and educate people about nature.

"I've never really focused on just one part of ecosystems,

realizing the importance of how all of the pieces fit together and play on each other" says Randy. "While it was very exciting to work with grizzlies and black bears, the truth is that other topics interest me just as much. ...small mammals, songbirds, and plants are just as interesting and important as bears, maybe with a little less adrenaline".

The list of species RandyMan has worked with is enormous, in addition to decades of habitat work, spanning the continent from Alaska and the Rocky Mountains to Wisconsin. His projects and experiences
March 20 Program, Continued on p. 6

WPR's Quirmbach Honored by JMC

Wisconsin Public Radio listeners will recognize Chuck Quirmbach's voice. As a reporter, he presents stories from around the state, and often these stories are environmental. In honor of his reporting over many years, the John Muir Chapter awarded him its Good Citizen Award at October's Autumn Assembly. Because Chuck was unable to attend, the award was presented in Racine in November. (see picture)

Why was Quirmbach selected for this award? As a reporter for WPR, Chuck brings state environmental issues to Badger residents in a lively and engaging way. He captures the essence of a story with facts and feelings usually in three minutes or less. His stories are well-researched, often presenting opposing views, and they are accompanied with appropriate sound, effective interview excerpts, and descriptive language.

Chuck's stories have run from mining and water quality issues to wolf hunting and alternative energy. He has dealt with the impacts of frac-sand mining, taconite mining in the Penokees, high-capacity wells, and excess phosphorus on our lakes, rivers and beaches. He has detailed the plight of Wisconsin wolves, bats, and cranes with sensitivity and compassion. He has made us more aware of fish consumption advisories and Waukesha's water diversion request. Wisconsin citizens are better stewards of our environmental treasures because of Chuck Quirmbach's reporting

From the Chair, continued from p. 3

declared endangered so that protective regulations may be enacted. The regulations largely concern protecting their hibernacula from disturbance, and creating rules for spelunkers about cleanliness of equipment, for example, to avoid spreading any fungus that may be present.

The loss of Wisconsin bats will be noticed in the increase of mosquitoes and other pesky insects, many of which chow down on important food crops. Others of us will just miss these interesting creatures as part of our healthy ecosystem.

For more information contact Wisconsin Bat Program

PHONE: (608) 266-5216

EMAIL: dnrbats@wisconsin.gov

ONLINE: wiatri.net/inventory/bats

See WNS Map on p. 8.



Melissa Warner presents the John Muir Chapter's Good Citizen Award to Chuck Quirmbach
Photo by Jay Warner

March 20 Program, Continued from p. 5

include research, cover typing, controlled burns, habitat improvement and invasive plant control.

In a world of immense environmental changes and challenges Hetzel sees more than ever the importance of conservation. "We really owe it to future generations and the long-term well-being of our planet to conserve the components of the natural world," said Randy; "to me these remaining gems of natural heritage are more important than any amount of wealth."

Join us for supper at the Gateway Cafe, 3619 30th Ave, Kenosha, WI 53144 (on your own) about 5:00 pm to chat informally with Randy and other members.



BY-LAWS CHANGE PROPOSED

When the November ExCom meeting was cancelled because of a conflict with the Waukesha Great Lakes Diversion request meeting, someone asked, "What do the By-Laws say about how often we need to meet?" We discovered that the By-Laws require ExCom meetings "at least eight (8) times per year."

The ExCom proposes a change to the By-Laws to require at least six (6) meetings per year based on the following: Meetings would not be held when there is no business to discuss nor items to vote on; ExCom members come from three counties, so the time and mileage for them is significant. We expect this would not compromise the efficiency of the group since meeting would be held when business requires.

BALLOT

Section 3.10 of the By-Laws of the Southeast Gateway Group shall be amended to read

3.10 ExCom Meetings. The ExCom shall hold regularly scheduled meetings at least six (6) times per year at times and places communicated in advance to all group members.

Membership No.: _____

_____ I approve the change _____ I approve the change (joint member)
_____ I do not approve the change _____ I do not approve the change (joint member)

Any change in the By-Laws requires approval first by two-thirds of the ExCom, then by the Chapter ExCom, then by two-thirds of the members who vote. This change was approved unanimously by the ExCom at the December meeting and by the JMC ExCom on January 11, 2014.

A ballot is above. Please check the appropriate selection and mail to Kari Olesen, 3211 Conrad Drive, Racine, WI 53404, or scan your completed ballot and email to Kari at scatteredgoods@yahoo.com. **YOUR BALLOT MUST INCLUDE EITHER YOUR MEMBERSHIP NUMBER** (on your membership card or digits 8-15 in the line above your name on your "Sierra" magazine label) **OR THE BAR CODE AND ADDRESS ON THE REVERSE SIDE OF THE BALLOT** (cross out your name). Please respond by MARCH 10th.



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
Wendi Schneider (Secretary).....wendianne@yahoo.com
LD (Red) Rockwell (JMC ExCom).....Ld.jarockwell@elknet.net
Ross Astoria.....rossastoria@yahoo.com

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).....SeggWebAdmin@gmail.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 Himani Gupta at:

himanigupta262@gmail.com

Check out the newsletter in color, calendar updates and much more at <http://wisconsin.sierraclub.org/segg/>. Visit our facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/sierraclubsoutheastgatewaygroup>.

**DEADLINE FOR
APRIL-MAY 2014 ISSUE IS
MARCH 1ST 2014**

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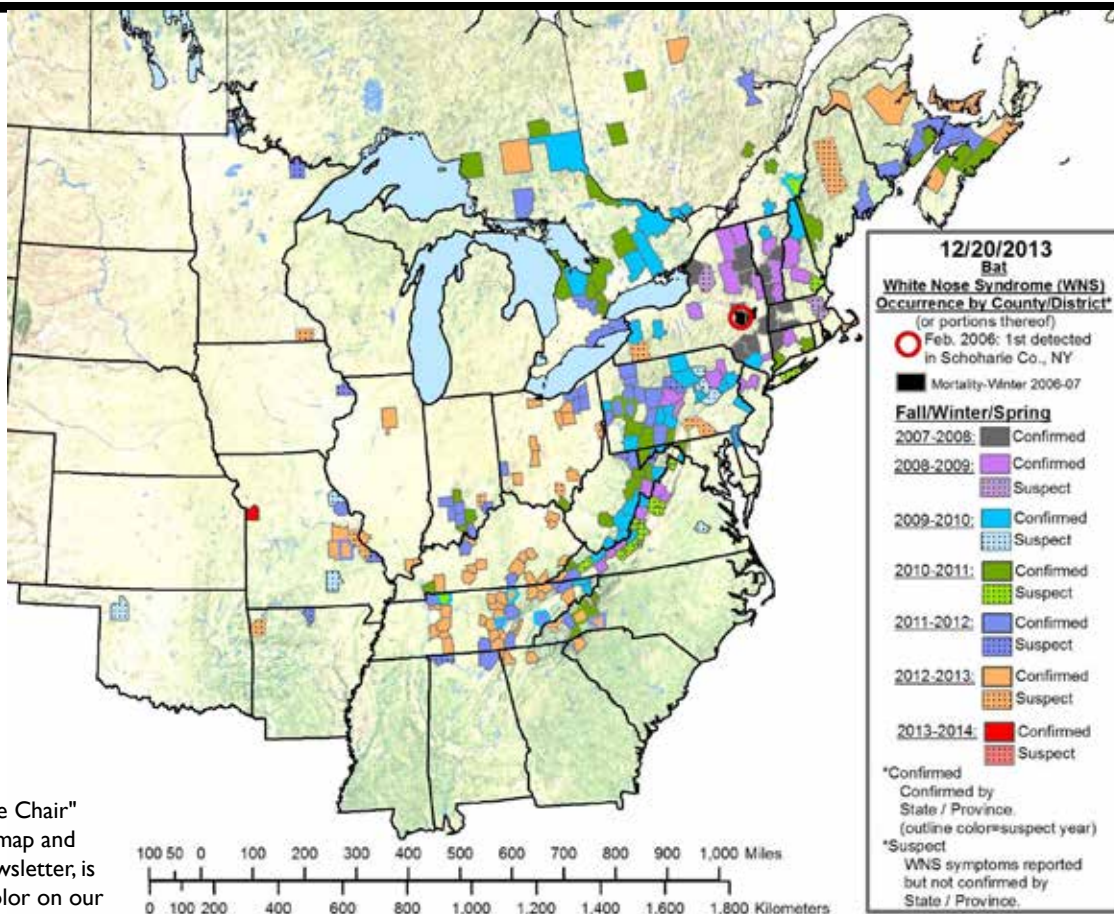
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See "From the Chair" on p. 3. This map and the entire newsletter, is available in color on our website.

Map by: Cal Butchkoski, PA Game Commission

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