



News of the
Southeast Gateway Group
Of the Sierra Club
June/July 2014
Volume 33, No. 3

SOUTHEAST SIERRAN

Join Us for the Annual Picnic! June 19th
Center for Sustainable Living
Gateway Technical College!
3520 30th Ave., Kenosha WI

Potluck! Bring food to share! Kitchen and grill available for use! Arrive at 5:30, eat at 6:00.
Bring your own beverage; beer and wine ok!

By Kallie Chittenden, Director

The Center for Sustainable Living at Gateway Technical College is an environmentally driven setting for the college and community to engage in sustainability learning for business and life. It is a living laboratory for demonstrating sustainable practices as well as a space for earth-friendly interaction, teaching and learning. The Center encompasses a residential building and two outbuildings on 5 acres of land; its mission is to create and feed an interest in sustainability so that a better informed population can make more sustainable decisions now and for the future. This is achieved by inviting students and community members to the Center for Sustainable Living for programs, as well as taking the knowledge and passion of sustainability into the community.

Key components include hands-on training opportunities for Gateway students, a place for environmental and green education for K-12 students and a collection of technologies and exhibits that demonstrate and explain best practices in sustainability. Current programs available for school groups include "Green Citizen: consuming and contributing sustainably"; "Following Food: discovering the energy use and environmental impacts of our food"; and "Birds and Beasts: how sustainability impacts the creatures around us". The interior design room is redesigned each year by the Gateway interior design class, and provides an opportunity for the students to consider sustainability as a part of their career choice. The energy knowledge center is under construction, with new displays in progress that will focus on saving energy in your home.

The Center provides the community and college with a wide range of resources to learn about sustainability. Renewable energy systems like geothermal heating and cooling, solar hot water, a photovoltaic solar array, and the wind turbine are great examples of sustainability in action. The materials that have been used in the design of the home spotlight the sustainable options available to consumers today. From the sustainably harvested wood floors to the dual-flush toilets, visitors will find some sort of inspiration to take sustainability back to their homes and work places.

Getting visitors outside and into the environment we are meant to be protecting is also an important component of the Center. The land includes an orchard, small patches of forest, a creek, and a walking path through a forest/prairie area. There are benches, a gazebo, porch, and outdoor classroom available for outdoor activities, and we hope to add several picnic tables to the yard in the future. Recently installed bluebird houses will add to our growing bird population on the grounds, creating an attraction for those already interested in wildlife.

Whether you are with a class field trip exploring the use of renewable energy, or with a community organization enjoying the outdoor resources, we welcome you to the Center for Sustainable Living, and hope you will spread the word about us. Gateway Technical College is an incredible local resource for education, and sustainability is a driving passion. Come see why sustainability should be your passion too!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JUNE

June 19th, Thursday 6:30 pm: Annual picnic. For more information, see p. 1. Link to map: <http://www.gtc.edu/sites/default/files/files/maps/KenoshaCOMbinedNEW.pdf>. Contact Melissa Warner, melissa.warner3@sbcglobal.net.

June 21st, Saturday 9:11-11:00 am: Work day at Big Foot Beach State Park. Meet at the pavilion in the picnic area. Contact Shane Jones BIO565@CLCILLINOIS.EDU for details.

June 26th, Thursday 6:30 pm: 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)

June 28th, Saturday 9:00 am: 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) for more information.

JULY

July 19th, Saturday 9:00-11:00 am. Work day at Big Foot Beach State Park. Meet at the pavilion in the picnic area. Contact Shane Jones BIO565@CLCILLINOIS.EDU for details.

July 19th, Saturday 8:30 am: Highway 38 Cleanup. Meet in the parking lot of the little church on the corner of Highway 38 and Four Mile Road for assignments, safety vests, bags, etc. Wear good walking shoes and weather-appropriate clothing. You may also want to wear gloves. There will be a pot-luck brunch afterwards at Warners, 4444 N. Green Bay Road, Caledonia.

July 26th, Saturday 9:00 am: Work days at Pringle and Colonial Park (Racine). Dress for the weather with sturdy shoes and long pants, bring your own drinking water, and be prepared to dig burdock and/or cut woody invasives. Contact Barry Thomas, bthomas6@wi.rr.com (Bristol Woods) or Melissa Warner, melissa.warner3@sbcglobal.net (Colonial Park) for more information.



Why Use Rain Barrels?

Rain barrels conserve water and help lower costs (a rain barrel can save approximately 1,300 gallons of water during peak summer months), AND they reduce water pollution by reducing storm water runoff which can contain pollutants like sediment, oil, grease, bacteria and nutrients (<http://www.uri.edu/ce/healthylandscapes/rainsources.html>). Not only are rain barrels great for the environment, but their sales help support our group. Contact Jeff Sytsma at Jeff12759@aol.com to purchase one for yourself or as a gift.

YES! I want to be a member of the Sierra Club and help preserve the beauty of the Earth.

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WITH MEMBERSHIP
(new members only)

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From time to time, we make our mailing list available to other worthy organizations. If you prefer your name not be included, please check here.

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Contributing	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150	<input type="checkbox"/> \$175
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FROM THE CHAIR



Galapagos Islands “Once-in-a-lifetime” Trip Summary

Jay and I recently returned from the “trip-of-a-lifetime” to the Galápagos Islands, officially called the Archipiélago de Colón. As a former high school biology teacher who taught about evolution, it was especially thrilling to see (up close and personal) the celebrated

tortoises, finches and mockingbirds. I was impressed, as others have been, by how unafraid, perhaps even oblivious, the birds and reptiles are to the presence of humans. We had to be careful at times to avoid stepping on a land iguana, or a nesting Nazca boobie. The sea lions are quite curious about humans, swimming beside us while we snorkeled as if to encourage us to swim faster and do flips. I was surprised how quickly I went from, “Oh look! A frigate bird!” to “there’s another frigate bird.”

It was amazing to see such a variety of species, not only of “Darwin’s” finches, but also of the lava lizards (*Microlophus* spp.), giant prickly pear cactus (*Opuntia* spp.) and scalesia trees (*Scalesia* spp.). We saw waved albatross beginning their nesting season, great frigate birds, and all three kinds of boobies. We watched the short-eared owl waiting to ambush the storm petrels. Pink flamingos, brilliant orange crabs, green and yellow land iguanas, brown pelicans, and red and blue-footed boobies made a rainbow of color amid the browns and greys that camouflage the inhabitants so well against the volcanic landscape. I think we added at least thirty-five birds to our life list (if I were actually keeping a life list).

I was also impressed with how efficiently our tour was run. We were on a small boat with sixteen passengers, ten crew, and a well-trained and licensed guide. We navigated at night, so that daytimes were spent on land or in the ocean. The trails were well-marked, but hiking was sometimes difficult on the lava-strewn landscape. We managed our wildlife books, binoculars, and/or cameras more or less well, in order to make the most of every minute. We snorkeled almost daily, spotting colorful fish and invertebrates, and at various times, sharks, rays, sea lions, a green turtle or two, and – one time – the ever-so-cute Galapagos penguin. Our tour took us to twelve

different sites, on at least eight islands, a scheduling marvel for seven days. The food was abundant and tasty, the cabin rooms were comfy if not sumptuous (this was not a “cruise” in the usual sense), and our guide seemed to know everything, and was enthusiastic about sharing his knowledge.

UNESCO declared the Galápagos a World Heritage Site in 1959; it includes 95% of the land area, and an extended marine reserve. The Charles Darwin Research Station (CDRS) was established in Puerto Ayora, Santa Cruz Island, shortly thereafter. The CDRS initiated programs such as captive breeding of the tortoises and iguanas, and removal of feral animals including goats, pigs, cats, dogs and rats, all with considerable success. Plants, plant diseases, and insects have been more difficult to control. The Ecuadorian Navy now strictly controls fishing limits for the benefit of local fishermen and the wildlife that depends on the ocean for food. When the tanker *Jessica* ran aground on San Cristóbal in 2001, it leaked over 150,000 gallons of diesel fuel. Slicks reached nearby beaches and sunk to the ocean floor, affecting many aspects of the marine food chain from algae to sea lions. Conservationists and residents alike realized in a new way how dependent they were on the island’s ecosystem for their livelihood. This realization led to a determination to be using 100% renewable energy by 2017.

Ecuador takes other precautions to safeguard this national treasure. Incoming planes are routinely sprayed to prevent importation of insects and diseases. Tour boats like ours have a “quarantine” area, where returning hikers and snorkelers, as well as their shoes, boots and snorkeling gear, are thoroughly rinsed, so all sand stays at or near the island it came from. Visitors are not permitted to collect anything, not a feather or bone, neither sand nor stone. As a teacher who enjoys hands-on samples, that was hard for me!

Our experience in the Galapagos gives me hope that if enough of us earth citizens also finally realize how totally dependent we are on the planetary ecosystem, we will also turn to renewable energy and sustainable agricultural and industrial practices.

Did You Know:

It can take a plastic beverage bottle up to 450 years to degrade in the environment?

Source:

U.S. National Park Service, Mote Marine Lab
http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wmb/coastal/trash/documents/marine_debris.pdf

News from ExCom—

We want to keep you informed of the changes in the ExCom membership since Planning Day in January. You may recall that ExCom member and Conservation Chair Laura Feider moved to the Bay Area, mid-way through a two-year term. The SEGG By-Laws give ExCom the power to fill unexpired terms, and in February we asked Tom Rutkowski to complete Laura's term, and he graciously agreed. Then Ross Astoria, who had recently been elected to a full two-year term by the membership, resigned, stating that the demands of professorship at UW-Parkside, his family, and the local Citizen's Climate Lobby would not allow enough time for SEGG duties. Your ExCom after due consideration asked Judy Rockwell, currently SEGG delegate to JMC, to complete Ross's unexpired term, and she agreed. Please note the short bios of each of the new ExCom members that follow.

In December, your ExComm voted unanimously to amend the ByLaws to read *"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."* This change was approved by JMC and the Sierra Club National Board, and a ballot was placed in the February/March newsletter, due to Kari Olsen by February 28th. Kari reports that the measure passed 11 to 3, or 79% in favor.



Tom Rutkowski taught English in Racine high schools for thirty years, most recently at Walden III. At Walden he worked with students and teachers to enhance the sustainability of the campus and raise awareness of climate change. Tom is also an active member of the local Citizen's Climate Lobby. Tom has camped and hiked in many parts of the world and favors the Porcupine Mountains of the Upper Peninsula and Southern Utah.

Judy Rockwell grew up on a farm near Sturgis, South Dakota where her dad was an environmentalist although it wasn't called that then. Soil conservation was especially important to him. Living near the Black Hills made her aware of the necessity of preserving the wilderness and she's been more or less active since Earth Day 1972. Now that she has retired from the Burlington Public Library, she looks forward to being more involved with Sierra Club activities, particularly the climate change issues.





What exactly is the Wisconsin Conservation Congress, and what do they do?

By Elizabeth Huntley

Established in the 1940's, the Wisconsin Conservation Congress (WCC) acts as the "liaison" between citizens, the Natural Resources Board, and the Department of Natural Resources (www.dnr.wi.gov/About/WCC/). The WCC has a *major influence* on DNR rule-making, as well as the passage of state legislation related to land use, waterways, hunting, trapping, and fishing,

Every year in the spring (April), an election and spring ballot is held where citizens have the opportunity to vote on environmental and wildlife-related issues, and run as a county delegate to help manage Wisconsin's greatest asset, its natural resources. Five delegates are elected per county, and they serve either a 2 or 3 year term. All delegates have the opportunity to nominate a Chair and Vice-Chair to represent their county, and they serve a one-year term.

In order to attend the election and vote on issues, you must be *physically present* at the polling place and must show your driver's license or state ID indicating you're a resident of the county.

This spring ballot and "election" is **not** announced to the general public in the same manner as political elections are – so unless you subscribe to and follow the WI DNR announcements or purchase items from sporting goods establishments, you'd never know about this annual WCC-sponsored event.

Hunters and trappers *overwhelmingly dominate* the WCC. Currently, only 6 or 7 women out of 360 delegates statewide serve on the WCC. I will let you draw your own conclusions.

This year some counties had questions posed on the ballot related to mining issues. Other questions posed this year involved the hunting of tundra swans and killing of albino deer.

Those pursuing a position as a delegate must give up to a 3-minute speech about why they feel they should be elected (or if running again as an incumbent, why they should be re-elected) as a delegate.

An example of one speech I heard was this:

"If it has gills, I've fished it. If it's got feathers or fur, I've hunted it". Very creative.

If you're running as a delegate, be prepared to answer questions from the attendees after your speech (some of whom can be rather hostile) regarding whether or not you hunt or trap, or believe in gun control. In short, you will be seriously questioned about your attitudes regarding hunting and trapping.

Be prepared to give a speech that focuses on the preservation of our state's wetlands, habitat restoration, invasive species management, and giving a *voice* to the non-consumptive users of our state's parks and forests who vastly outnumber hunters.

If non-consumptive users in Wisconsin don't achieve greater parity on the WCC, little, if anything, is going to change regarding the sustainability of our wildlife populations and ecosystems for future generations to enjoy!

Voting for Pro-Environment and Wildlife Candidates Key To Stopping Damage

By Betsy Georg, SEGG Political Liason

Wisconsin's upcoming fall elections are immensely important. We Wisconsinites have seen the damage that has been done to our state over the past four years. As environmentalists we remember Wisconsin's rejection of federal funds that would have brought high speed rail to our state, connecting Milwaukee to Madison, Chicago and the Twin Cities. Today we see northern Wisconsin threatened with enormous damage to its land and water in order to accommodate the mining industry. This fall we have a chance to turn things around.

You can and should, of course, vote for candidates who care about the environment and who will, if elected, use their power to protect it. There are, however, many other ways in which you can help elect environmentalists to public office. We have different skills and resources, but we can all help in some way.

For example, you can help a candidate collect signatures to get his or her name on the ballot. You can also canvas door-to-door, distribute literature, make phone calls, find yard sign locations, put up yard signs, donate money, volunteer as a poll observer. If we all do what we can, then we will have a pro-environment Governor and legislature next January.

Be an informed voter!

Check out this website to learn more about your elected official, as well as about your government:

<http://votesmart.org/>

Were you aware that

there is a movement initiated by the Wisconsin Conservation Congress to eliminate trapping hour restrictions inside Wisconsin state parks and on all public lands and expand trapping from the current 3 months to 7 months out of the year?

Galápagos photos!



Galápagos penguin



male great frigate bird

WHICH “WILD LIFE” WILL IT BE ON LULU LAKE?

by John Berge

That choice was in a headline over an excellent article by environmental writer Don Behm in the March 2 Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, pointing out how people with up to 80 or 90 power boats were partying on Lulu Lake in the summer. The article was brought to our attention too late for us to attend a public hearing on March 6 in front of the Troy Town Board, so I wrote a letter to them shortly thereafter outlining our opposition to these disruptions of this small, sensitive lake, urging limitations to the gasoline-powered motors permitted on Lulu Lake. The Southeast Gateway Group has had canoe trips on this lake and we believe that canoes and electric trolling motors are best suited to protect it. Members of the SEGG have been care-takers living on The Nature Conservancy land for years. Natural wild life vs. wild parties seems to be an issue about which Sierrans should speak up.

Lulu Lake (84 to 95 acres, depending on the source) in northeastern Walworth County is surrounded by mostly DNR and Nature Conservancy land with only two private properties on it, but it is connected to Eagle Spring Lake (279 to 310 acres) by the Mukwonago River channel. There are no public restrooms on Lulu Lake, so beer parties can mean people trampling the local wetlands, fens, bogs and sedge meadows that ring the Lake. Portions of the Lake are shallow so that large motors on pontoon and other partying boats can be quite disruptive to the lake bottom. According to the DNR, the Lake is home to the rare long-ear sunfish, pugnose shiner and several other species of fish. Loud music has already driven one resident away on weekends.

The Town of Troy public hearing, was called “to hear from interested persons regarding boating on Lulu Lake, and impacts on the lake and its natural environment, in light of recommendations received from the Nature Conservancy to restrict or prohibit motorized boats.” Ninety-seven people signed in and 43 spoke. According to the minutes, 21 persons who spoke were “opposed” and 20 persons who spoke were “in favor”. In addition, letters/emails on file were in favor 29 to 20. Many Eagle Spring Lake residents, who regularly party on Lulu Lake, have signed a petition opposing the conservancy proposal of electric-motors-only.

At the April 9 Town of Troy Board Meeting attended by several of us from the SEGG, Lulu Lake was listed as a “Sensitive Issue” and any decision was put off until at least October. This means that the disruption of the Lake will continue for at least one more summer. An “advisory committee” was authorized to report back by the October Board Meeting. The nine-member committee consists of all three Town Board members (advising themselves), one from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, one from The Nature Conservancy, one Lulu Lake resident, one Eagle Spring Lake resident and two “citizens” from the Town of Troy, all to be named by the May Town Board Meeting.

Protecting a small lake in southeastern Wisconsin from the inroads of people more interested in partying with beer, boats and loud music than the environment and rare or threatened species may seem like a small thing compared to global climate change or mining of fracking sand. But local actions taken on local issues have long been one of the strengths of the Sierra Club. This issue is in our territory and we can have an effect through local action and local government.



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
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Other Group Leaders

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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 Elizabeth Huntley at:

wiwolfyone@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

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2014 ISSUE IS

JULY 1ST 2014

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