



News of the
Southeast Gateway Group
of the Sierra Club
DECEMBER 2014/JANUARY 2015
VOLUME 33, NO. 6

SOUTHEAST SIERRAN

CELEBRATE THE SEASON WITH SEGG



As we approach the solstice, we notice shorter days and chillier nights. We anticipate (or dread) the snow, and wonder what 2015 will bring. It's the time for Sierra friends and members to share good times and good food. So please join us as we celebrate the season with our annual potluck on Thursday, December 18th, at the Bradford Community UU Church, 5810 8th Avenue, Kenosha.

Arrive at 5:30 p.m. for appetizers and conviviality, about 6:00 - 6:15 for dinner. Bradford permits wine and beer, but not hard liquor. If possible, please RSVP to our hostess with the mostest, Donna Peterson at originaldonna@att.net or (262)637-3141, so that we may plan accordingly. If you can come earlier for set-up, your help will be most welcome. Parking is available on the north side of the church.

We will also have potluck decorations! In addition to your own place settings, those who can are asked to bring a tablecloth, a candle, or a bit of table décor. We will create a festive atmosphere!

For your not-so-last-minute holiday shopping, we will be having a small silent auction as a fundraiser for the group. You may have received a gift that just doesn't fit your lifestyle...perhaps you create handcrafted or home-baked items...maybe there's a coffee-table book that's practically new... Please contact Melissa to let us know if you can donate an item that might bring in \$5 to \$25. And come prepared to bid on a treasure you didn't know existed, but now can't live without.



JANUARY PROGRAM EXPLORES NET ZERO ENERGY HOMES

Residential energy usage accounts for over 20% our nation's energy usage and is an area with which we all have daily direct interaction. A net zero home requires no net energy input from outside sources on an annual basis. There are many examples emerging in today's market using different design strategies offering a range of price tags.

James Chambers, AIA, LEED AP, will share examples and explore the science behind the design and some of the latest technologies, including the German Passivhaus program and a luxury Green Prototype in a PowerPoint presentation. Important lessons in the pursuit of net zero since the oil crisis of the 70's have made us consider the broader environmental goals beyond energy performance. The LEED rating system

identifies these considerations and has organized them into a workable system of green building, which we will investigate.

Join us on Thursday, January 15, 2015 at 6:30 pm at the Kenosha Northside Library, 1500 27th Ave., for this timely discussion.

Mr. Chambers is an Architect, Licensed in Wisconsin and Illinois. He has been involved in energy performance home design since 1980. He is a partner in FWC Architects, and has been a Presenter at the Better Buildings Better Business Conference Madison, Wisconsin and at MSOE. He received his BS in Architectural Engineering Technology from Purdue University.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

DECEMBER

December 11th, Thursday, 6:30 - 8:30 pm: ExCom meeting at UW-Parkside, Tallent Hall, vending room. Meetings are open to all members. If you have items for the agenda, contact melissa.warner3@sbcglobal.net or any ExCom member (See p. 7).

December 18th, Thursday, 5:30 pm: Annual Holiday Potluck at the Bradford Community UU Church, 5810 8th Avenue, Kenosha. (See p. 1)

JANUARY

January 8th, Thursday, 6:30 - 8:30 pm: ExCom meeting at UW-Parkside, Tallent Hall, vending room. Meetings are open to all members. If you have items for the agenda, contact melissa.warner3@sbcglobal.net or any ExCom member (See p. 7).

January 15th, Thursday, 6:30 pm. Program Meeting: Net-Zero Energy Homes at the Kenosha Northside Library, 1500 27th Ave. (See p. 1)

January 17th, Saturday, Planning Retreat. All members needed! 9:00 am. to 3:00 pm. at Gateway Technical Institute, Racine campus. (See p. 3)

January 22nd, Thursday, SEGG Book Club at 4033 Wickford Pl., Racine. Potluck supper at 5:30 pm, book discussion at 7:00 pm. RSVP to Mary Ann Ortmyer at (262)554-5058. (See p. 8).

DIAN SORENSON – 1973 - 2014

By Lila Berge

Dian Sorenson was a regular visitor at my Canyon Falls cabin in Grant County Wisconsin. She loved to hike in the woods along the stream. In September 2006, while eating the delicious supper she had cooked for us, we saw five deer and fawns crossing the driveway. Dian loved the birds and would stand quietly until they came where she could watch them. I showed her where a pileated woodpecker had pulled off long strips of bark from a tree by a hillside trail, but we were never lucky enough to see that bird.



I treasure memories like these of time spent with Dian. Her quiet appreciation of nature enriched my life. Dian was featured in a "Getting to Know You..." column in the June-July, 2013 issue of the Southeast Sierran, which can be found on the Group webpage.

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

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

FREE GIFT WITH MEMBERSHIP!
(new members only)

NEW MEMBER NAME(S)

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP

TELEPHONE (optional)

EMAIL (optional)

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.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES (check one)

INDIVIDUAL

JOINT

SPECIAL OFFER

\$15

Regular

\$39

\$49

Supporting

\$75

\$100

Contributing

\$150

\$175

Life

\$1000

\$1250

Senior

\$25

\$35

Student

\$25

\$35

Limited Income

\$25

\$35

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 \$7.50 for a subscription to SIERRA magazine and \$1 for your Chapter newsletter.

PAYMENT METHOD (check one) CHECK VISA MASTERCARD AMEX

CARD HOLDER NAME

CARD NUMBER

EXPIRATION

SIGNATURE

GIFT MEMBERSHIP A giftcard will be sent for your use. Enter your name and address below and the name and address of the gift recipient above.

YOUR NAME(S)

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP

TELEPHONE (optional)

EMAIL (optional)

Enclose payment information and mail to:



P.O. Box 421041, Palm Coast, FL 32142-1041

To join Sierra Club Canada, visit www.sierraclub.ca

Cover image ©Tim Fitzharris.com



F94QB | 608

www.sierraclub.org

Until December 31, SEGG receives all the new and gift membership payments instead of only a portion. If there's someone you've thought about giving a membership to, there's no better time than now!"

FROM THE CHAIR

Moving toward less CO₂

A "From the Chair" guest column by Jay Warner



Insulated as most of us are from industrial shop doings, we often miss little shifts that impact our environment. I don't mean green washing, but technical improvements that impact the famous bottom line, and put less CO₂ in the air, which is

our long term bottom line. The driver is "good old-fashioned" cost savings. For evidence, a few items I ran across lately.

Portland cement requires roasting limestone at 2,400°F to form calcium silicate. Research in Switzerland found a way to mix clay & limestone so it can replace nearly half of the roasted material, yet keep the strength. The new cement reduces the carbon footprint by 40%.

Time Magazine had an article this week about Nucor's new DRI (direct reduction iron) plant for extracting iron from ore without a blast furnace or coke. The mill went on line last January using a process that has been technically feasible for over 50 years. Time thinks the economics depend on the low price of natural gas,

but there are more fundamental factors. The DRI process uses no coke, thus no coal and pollutants from that source, and hence far less pollution control cost. Coke is made by heating coal in the absence of air, and driving off the volatile parts. Some of the volatiles will dissolve gold, and they aren't healthy to living things. The high purity iron output is needed for Nucor's other steel plants, that use scrap steel. The smaller capital investment helps, too. We get steel with less CO₂ and less pollution.

In western Massachussets I saw a large field covered with solar panels (see photo below). Commercial electricity with almost zero CO₂ from a field that once grazed cows.

In the last 25 years companies smelting sulfide metal ores adopted a process to capture the SO₂ produced. They sell the sulfuric acid byproduct and use less fuel. Lower carbon footprint and less SO₂ (think acid rain) in the air.

Applied research is reported every month for LION (lithium-ion) batteries. In October there was an announcement for a new method for nano-size particles, improving the negative electrode. Details few of us care about, but each improvement makes a better battery. These improvements come when there are steady product sales supporting the research. Each EV (electric vehicle) is that much less CO₂.

None of these improvements, alone, will save the planet. But as long as companies think forward, and come up with small improvements frequently, there's hope for us who live here.

January Planning Meeting...

Attention SEGGers! It's time for our annual January Planning Meeting...

What? A relaxed time to share the trials and triumphs of 2014, and set plans for 2015, and brainstorm ideas for programs, conservation priorities, political agenda and outings.

Who? YOU! are invited, especially if you would like to be more involved. Newcomers have great ideas and are welcome to express them at this annual brainstorming meeting.

Where ? Gateway Technical College, Racine Campus; check with melissa.warner3@sbcglobal.com for room location after 12/10/2014.

When? Saturday, January 17. We meet at 9:00 for a light brunch, share pizza for lunch, and adjourn by 3:00.

Why should you come? Because we need your thoughts and ideas, and because it will be fun! RSVP (useful but not required) to melissa.warner3@sbcglobal.net so we can plan refreshments and lunch.



Sierrans Travel to Lake Superior

Article and photos by Jeff Sytsma

On the beautiful weekend of October 3-5, I took the opportunity to finally travel all the way to the Bayfield Peninsula to experience the wonderful Lake Superior shoreline.

On Friday night I arrived at Northland College in Ashland to take in a viewing of “Wisconsin's Mining Standoff.” Dave Blouin, John Muir Chapter Mining Committee Chair, introduced panelists from the Milwaukee production company, the Bad River Tribe of Ojibwe, a Northland College student whose family farm was featured in the program, and other local experts and advocates. We learned about the destruction that the proposed mine in the Pennoke Hills formation would have on the watershed, landscape, culture and residents of the area. Mike Wiggins, Chairman of the Bad River Ojibwe, was especially passionate about the impacts that the proposed taconite mine would have on the region and the Native culture including the wild rice harvest in the waterways downstream from the proposed mine (which will be filling in stream valleys and wetlands near the mine with waste material). The Bad River wetlands and the Kakagon Sloughs were named a “Wetland of International Importance” in 2012 (www.ramsar.org).

I drove to my motel on the harbor in Bayfield and walked this delightful little city. With its rich history, great views of the lake and islands, fresh whitefish and a great mariner museum, I highly recommend a visit!

The highlight on Saturday was a Sierra Club boat tour of the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore. Eighty percent of this area is designated as the Gaylord Nelson Wilderness, and we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act. Tia Nelson, Gaylord's daughter, joined us and told us many stories of her father's work and struggles to protect our environment and wild areas. A park ranger described the history and landscape of the islands and waterways. Did you know that brown sandstone from these islands was cut into large cubes and shipped east for building homes? My impression is that if you live in Boston or Philadelphia and you live in a “Brownstone,” it is prestigious. Mike Wiggins was also on board and reminded us that mining these stones did not create the wide-spread damage that the proposed iron mine would.



Apostle Islands National Lakeshore Boat Tour

Lake Superior is the cleanest, deepest, coldest and largest of our Great Lakes and holds more fresh water than all of the other Great Lakes combined. After spending a weekend on her shore, I am even more convinced that the watersheds that feed her need protection from destruction.



Madeline Island Sunrise



Tia Nelson and Caryl Terrell

2014 AUTUMN ASSEMBLY

Oops, you missed it!

And we missed you, too, at the John Muir Chapter's 2014 Autumn Assembly held at the Phantom Lake YMCA Camp near Mukwonago in October. A dozen members of the Southeast Gateway Group joined other Sierrans from around the state to renew old acquaintances and meet new friends. Friday night started off with a number of optional field trips including hiking at the Engel Conservation Area and canoeing on beautiful Phantom Lake. There was also a showing of a film and slide show on the potential iron strip mine in the Penokees, but more of that later.

On Saturday morning, **Cheryl Nenn of the Milwaukee River Riverkeepers** spoke on the implications of Waukesha's request to divert water from Lake Michigan to meet their perceived need for more water than their current wells permit. This will require permission of all the Great Lakes governors and two Canadian Provinces because of the Great Lakes Compact. The water would be returned to the Lake one way or another, but there are serious questions about this which were discussed.



Carl Seigrist is a renewable energy strategist with more than three decades of experience in the field. A board member of The Solar Electric Power Association (SEPA) for nearly 10 years, he authored the Utility Community Solar Design Handbook for SEPA. He predicted the continuing growth of energy produced by the sun as prices for solar panels continue to fall. Unfortunately, a majority of those who would choose solar power discover that



their rooftops are unsuitable for solar panels because they are either not south-facing or are too shaded. The answer to this problem? Community Solar Gardens.

A solar garden is a solar electric array with multiple subscribers connected to the utility grid. The subscribers may purchase a portion of the power produced by the array and receive a credit on their electric bill. Unlike big power plants, a solar garden is a distributed generation project. Distributing power production provides benefits to communities beyond local, clean, and more affordable energy. It also creates jobs locally, avoids destroying delicate habitats, and bypasses the need for inefficient transmission lines, which lose power during transmission and can take many years to put in place. And it helps ensure that the benefits of renewable energy go to the people who need the power—that's all of us. Laws allowing the establishment of solar gardens have been established in Colorado, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, Vermont, and Washington, and are pending in California, the District of Columbia, and Maryland. It doesn't look like Wisconsin will be moving in this direction anytime soon but according to Seigrist, solar gardens are in our future.

Heather Kaarakka, a WDNR biologist, spoke on the fungal White-nose bat syndrome. This subject will be discussed much more thoroughly, based on several WDNR articles, in the next issue of the Southeast Sierran.



This was followed by one of the best talks, by **Ron Seely, on The Necessity of Environmental Journalism**. With all the electronic sources of news and other information, or misinformation, now available, we sometimes forget the importance of good, print, investigative reporting. Ron gave several examples, including the excessive dumping of waste on fields in the Waukesha area by a contractor that was a major contributor to the Walker campaign. WDNR specialists were over-ridden by political appointees to reduce the fines and consequences of this pollution. Ron used this investigation to help mentor the interns at the Wisconsin Center for Investigative Journalism. Thirty-five years of investigative journalism cannot be adequately summarized in an article such as this.

After lunch we had the opportunity to learn about the geology of the Pennokee Hills, the area of a proposed

mine to extract taconite iron ore. **Marcia Bjornrud, Professor of Geology and Environmental Studies at Lawrence University**

explained that the rock formation in this area has been tilted 60 degrees from horizontal by ancient volcanic activity and the narrow layer that contains recoverable iron deposits follows this angle deep into the earth. This is the reason that the company proposing to mine the deposits needs to move a triangle of many thousands of cubic yards of other material to get to what they are after. Most of that waste would be dumped into adjacent stream valleys and wetlands to acquire a small amount of what is valuable. Professor Bjornrud presented scientific data that the mine would produce a hole in the earth equal to the height of Rib Mountain, the highest place in Wisconsin when measured from base to summit.



Bjornrud also presented information on what happens when mineral deposits are exposed to oxygen (they change into more dangerous compounds) and reported on findings of asbestos-like fibers being present in sampled rocks in the proposed mine area. Bjornrud explained that asbestos is a general term for long, thin mineral fibers that can be of different mineral compositions. They are fine where they are, contained in rock, but when pulverized during mining operations they can be released into the air, posing serious health hazards to people.

The next speaker was **Beth Wallace, an outreach consultant for Great Lakes pipeline safety issues.** She formerly lived in Michigan along the Kalamazoo River and was greatly involved in educating the public about the tar sand (diluted bitumen) spill and how badly this was handled by the Enbridge Pipeline Company. She knew well Liz McGowan, a former SEGG member who won a Pulitzer Prize for reporting on this spill. Beth also reported on the slow response to an exercise modeling a break in the pipeline that goes under the Straits of Mackinaw and the horrible conditions of the iron straps holding that pipeline in place. The Enbridge pipeline 61 that cuts across the state from Superior to Darien in Walworth County and on into Illinois has already been transporting diluted bitumen from the tar sands in Alberta for several years, the same stuff that

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

spilled in the Kalamazoo River. Enbridge is petitioning the WDNR for permission to double the capacity by increasing the pumping pressure.

Bruce Speight, Executive Director of WISPIRG

spoke on wasteful highway spending. His point: highway spending is for more highways, yet highway use is dropping. From 1946 to 2004 annual vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in the US increased some 2.5% per year. This stable, steady growth allowed highway planners to confidently



anticipate highway needs. Highways take 10 years to plan and last about 35 years. Highway planners must commit large budgets for needs 20 to 40 years in future.

Then in 2004 the 2.5% annual growth stopped. The first explanation for the cessation of growth has been, well, it's a recession. The sharp dip in 2009 supports this assessment. But VMT per capita flatlined about 1999, and total VMT peaked in 2004, well before the Great Recession. One can argue that the 2.5% growth rate has been dropping for some time.

Buying new highways is a poor investment of limited funds. It does seem that maintaining the highways we have should get higher priority. Since we currently face a shortage of highway funds, let's maintain the roads we already have.

If you haven't figured out how to give away your money, **Melinda Gustafson Gervasi, an attorney with Gustafson Legal,** told us how we all can be middle class philanthropists. She has recently written a how-to-book on this subject and read portions of it to those in attendance. It really is quite simple to give away money, but the tough job may be picking which organizations to support. Despite the setting at which she was speaking and her membership in the Sierra Club, she did not push any specific donee.

In the evening, there was an excellent dinner (the food all weekend was good and plentiful), the completion of the silent auction raising money for the chapter, and the awards ceremony honoring several members of the Chapter and outside organizations in Milwaukee, followed by a jam session around the fireplace.

Sunday morning included a presentation by Barb Flom on Frac Sand Mining and how local communities have joined to defeat efforts to strip them of local control of sand mining.

Afterwards, the local groups reported on successful events and activities that they have used in the past year and what they are doing to bring in new members. Melissa Warner spoke for the SEGG.

There was only one field trip on Sunday afternoon that several members of our group attended, a trip to the Nature Conservancy's area on Lulu Lake. This presented an opportunity for our Group and the Great Waters Group to propose a joint work project there.

John Berge, Nancy Hennessy, Jeff Sytsma and Jay Warner contributed to this report. All photos by Melissa Warner.

FREE CLIMATE CHANGE COURSE AT THE LIBRARY

By Barb Brattin

As a 26 year member of the Sierra Club, and the newly appointed Director of the Kenosha Public Library, I couldn't be more excited about an educational opportunity we'll be bringing to the public courtesy of the University of Wisconsin Madison. Starting February 22, 2015, and continuing through March 28, 2015, you are invited to join us in a MOOC (massive, open, online course) on climate change right in our own backyard. "Changing Weather and Climate in the Great Lakes Region" will be taught by Steven Ackerman, professor of atmospheric and oceanic sciences, and Margaret Mooney, senior outreach specialist for the Space Science and Engineering Center. Steve and Margaret are interested in engaging Wisconsin citizens in their MOOC as a way to further the "Wisconsin Idea." You will be provided with access to their online course free of charge to view at your own pace on your own time. By hosting weekly moderated discussions and public lectures, Kenosha Public Library will serve as the facilitator for public education on a critical subject.

Join us at KPL's Northside Library on Sunday, February 8th from 1-3pm, or at the Southwest Library on Thursday, February 12th from 6-8pm, for an introduction and signup session. The course is free, interactive, and sure to be enlightening. For more information, contact Jill Miatech, KPL's Programs Librarian, by calling 564-6137, or sign up for our electronic newsletter by sending your request to inside@mykpl.info

Hope to see you at the MOOC!

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Burlington	Jean August
Kenosha	Orville Hassinger, Kathlenn Rogers
Lake Geneva	Steven Kyle
Salem	Ms Stella Carlson
Racine	Caroll Welch
Mt Pleasant	Virginia Carlson
Union Grove	Lyle Fox
Waterford	Barbara Vail
Racine	Betty Jensen



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@yaho.com
 LD (Red) Rockwell (JMC ExCom).....Ld.jarockwell@elknet.net
 Tom Rutkowski.....natom@wi.rr.com
 Judy Rockwell.....jjrockwell@gmail.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 Ortmayer (Book Group).....maortmayer@gmail.com
 Rebecca Eisel (Webmaster).....SeggWebAdmin@gmail.com

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 Dana Huck at:

dhuck1105@wi.rr.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
FEBRUARY-MARCH 2015 ISSUE IS
JANUARY 1ST 2015**

Southeast Gateway Group
of the Sierra Club
1529 Crabapple Dr.
Racine, WI 53405-1705

Non-Profit
Organization
US Postage
PAID
Racine, WI
Permit No. 1261



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

<https://www.Facebook.com/SierraClubSoutheastGatewayGroup>



SEGG Autumn Assembly Attendees: Front row: Donna Peterson, Mary Schroeder; Second Row: Nancy Hennessey, Judy Rockwell, Kari Olesen, Melissa Warner, Dana Huck; Back Row: Jay Warner, John Berge, Jeff Sytsma, LD Rockwell. *Photo by Lila Berge* (See article on p. 5)



Photo by Lila Berge

SEGG BOOK CLUB

The book selection for January Studying Wisconsin: The Life of Increase Lapham by Martha Bergland and Paul Hayes: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2014. Lapham was an early chronicler of plants, rocks, rivers, mounds and all things Wisconsin. The book is available to local bookstores or online. See the calendar (p.2) for meeting details..