



# SOUTHEAST SIERRAN

News of the  
Southeast Gateway Group  
of the Sierra Club

AUG / SEPT 2016  
VOLUME 35, No. 4

## Battle of the AGs

From the Chair  
by Tom Rutkowski

Most people accept that free speech comes with responsibility, that it is more than a license to say anything. We wouldn't yell "Fire" in a crowded theater because that would present a "clear and present danger" because someone could get hurt in the rush to escape. It would be just as dangerous to mislead others, saying there isn't a fire when you know that there is.

You're in a crowded theater and the movie has begun. There's a group of people in the front, dressed in suits, fancy suits, acting like they own the place. When others start smelling smoke, this group tells everyone to stay calm and stay in their seats. They've paid their admission and they want the film to continue. Some of them argue that it smells like burnt popcorn, others sound convinced that they don't smell anything at all. Some even ridicule audience members who begin to panic. About a third of the audience wants to believe them - that it's nothing but a false alarm, even as the smoke gets thicker. It's not too late to leave, but the conflicting opinions make it harder for many to get up out of their seats. How we judge the group for delaying the necessary action will depend largely on whether they've intentionally deceived others or whether they were really convinced by what they said.

Using a burning theater as an analogy for climate change might seem like a stretch if you're far removed from the fires that ravage the West every summer or the flooded cities in Texas. On the other hand, the comparison diminishes what is actually at stake on a global scale. New warning signs appear in the news almost daily. It's a critical moment in history, a time that demands action not further delay.

One fossil fuel company, part of that group telling everyone to sit tight and maintain business as usual, is now being investigated for the difference between what it really knew about climate change and what it told others to say was true. In a coalition called **AGs for Clean Power**, the offices of sixteen state attorneys general have joined Eric Schniederman, the attorney general of New York, in an investigation which challenges the notion that free speech can be used to mislead. Interestingly, what the suit rests on is financial fraud. Apparently you can say what you want to the public as part of the "debate"; you just can't lie to your shareholders because that is an act of securities fraud, business fraud, and consumer fraud. "The First Amendment, ladies and gentlemen, does not give you the right to commit fraud," said Schneiderman.

Recently released documents from Exxon's own in-house scientists show that Exxon knew thirty-five years ago that the climate was changing as a result of burning fossil fuels; yet they went on to spend millions of dollars in an effort to "manufacture doubt".

*Continued on page 3*

\*\*\* Registration Deadline September 13! \*\*\*

part retreat /  
part conference

## Autumn Assembly

camp / hike / relax  
reconnect with nature

October 7 - 9, 2016

Bethel Horizons Camp and Retreat Center, Dodgeville, WI

[www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/2016-autumn-assembly](http://www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/2016-autumn-assembly)

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## JULY

**Saturday, July 30:** SEGG/Weed Out! Racine, Colonial Park, 9:00-Noon. Working to remove honeysuckle, buckthorn, garlic mustard, dame's rocket and burdock. (page 5)

**Sunday, July 31:** SEGG Root River Cruise for Beginner Canoers and Kayakers, 1:00 PM (page 5)

## AUGUST

**Tuesday, Aug 9:** Get Out The Vote! Partisan Primary Election Day, 7:00 AM-8:00 PM

**Monday, Aug 15:** SEGG Executive Committee Meeting, 4:30 PM at the Olive Garden, corner of Highway 11 and Green Bay Road, Racine.

**Saturday, Aug 27:** SEGG/Weed Out! Racine, Colonial Park, 9:00-Noon. (page 5)

Invasive Species Workday, 9:00-Noon, Pringle Nature Center, 9800 160th Ave., Bristol. Please bring your own work gloves.

## SEPTEMBER

**Friday, Sept 9-Sunday, Sept 11:** Overnight Advanced Beginner Backpacking Outing in North Kettle Moraine (page 4)

**Tuesday, Sept 13:** Autumn Assembly Registration Deadline (page 1)

**Thursday, Sept 15:** SEGG Monthly Program featuring Tyler Huebner, Executive Director of RENEW Wisconsin, Gateway Technical College iMET Center, 6:30 PM (page 6)

**Saturday, Sept 17:** Highway 38 Cleanup, 9:00 AM, Meet in the parking lot of Blessed Hope Church, corner of Hwy. 38 and Four Mile Road for safety equipment and area assignments. (page 5)

**Saturday, Sept 24:** SEGG/Weed Out! Racine, Working in Colonial Park 9:00-Noon (page 5)

Invasive Species Workday, 9:00-Noon, Pringle Nature Center, 9800 160th Ave., Bristol. Please bring your own work gloves.

**Saturday, Sept 17:** Fall Fun Fest & International Migratory Bird Day, 11:00-3:00 PM, Pringle Nature Center, Bristol (page 3)

**Through September:** Weekly Hikes on the Ice Age Trail (page 3)



**Yes!** I want to make a difference.  
I want to be a member of the Sierra Club and help preserve the beauty of our Earth.

**FREE GIFT**  
with any new membership

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## Battle of the AGs

*Continued from page 1*

The effort is well documented in a book and a film called *Merchants of Doubt* (SEGG hosted a screening last fall) and many other sources. Following the earlier tactics of the tobacco companies, the effort of fossil fuel business was focused not on disproving the science, which they knew they could not do, instead, they helped others create a sense of doubt. By challenging Exxon on the difference between what it knew and what it led shareholders to believe, **AGs for Clean Power** intend to make it more risky for other companies to continue creating such doubt.

In what is shaping up to be a battle of the attorneys general twenty-four other states are suing the federal government, claiming that the Clean Power Plan's effort to set limits on carbon emissions oversteps the bounds of the EPA. Two of these AGs, from Texas and Alabama, have filed an intervention plea to protect Exxon, arguing that the investigation into the company's own scientific findings would inhibit the debate about climate change and unnecessarily limit the free speech of companies like Exxon.

In recent weeks, the House Committee on Science, Space and Technology has requested any information about the Exxon investigation from eight environmental groups including 350.org and Greenpeace, claiming, once again, the need to protect free speech. These targeted groups have denied this request. Clearly the goal of those who defend the fossil fuel industry is to sustain doubt and delay regulation as long as possible. In this battle, as in many others, that ninth Supreme Court justice will make a crucial difference.

You can guess where Wisconsin, or at least our attorney general stands on this. Brad Schimel has joined twenty-three other attorneys general in the effort to block the Clean Power Plan even though 68% of the people in Wisconsin support it. What will it take for Brad Schimel to represent the majority of his constituents? He'll do it when the people in those fancy suits, the ones who think the world is theirs to wreck, start yelling "Fire!".  
-Tom Rutkowski

## WEEKLY ICE AGE TRAIL HIKES

Tuesdays at 4:00 p.m. & Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m.



**All ages are welcome.** Meet at the Hwy 12 Ice Age National Scenic Trail crossing located about 4 miles east of Whitewater and about a quarter mile east of the intersection of Hwy 12 with Sweno Rd.

The parking lot is at the west end of Sherwood Forest Rd, a short road that intersects Hwy 12 at each end.

**Note: A current state park pass is required** to park at the Hwy 12 meeting place. You may also purchase passes at the forest headquarters between Palmyra and Eagle, on Hwy 59.

Contact Al Sommer for inquiries:  
Sommerallan4@gmail.com or 262-716-6955

## Fall Fun Fest: Birds & Butterflies

International Migratory Bird Day



*"Spread Your Wings for Bird Conservation"*

**Saturday, September 17, 11-3 PM**

Pringle Nature Center, 9800 160th Ave., Bristol, WI

Falconer Ed Foster, Hayrides, Monarch Tagging, Crafts, Food & Music  
Sponsored by: Kenosha County, Pringle Nature Center, & Hoy Audubon Society  
262-857-1869 or 262-857-8008 for more info.

## White River Canoe/Kayak Outing Recap



23 SEGG members and guests met on Father's Day for a 3-hour cruise on the White River. The first part of the river is shallow and when water levels are low it is a rocky obstacle course. More than a few of us got wet after tipping, or by helping others who have tipped. Eventually, the river deepened and the ride became more gentle.

There was considerable discussion about who was daring enough to run the rapids under the final bridge. In the end, most everyone decided to do it. One boater even did it twice, in a canoe, once backwards! (I think he will claim it was intentional.)

As group leader, I was moved by how everybody helped everybody else-putting boats in the water, taking boats out, helping people get back in boats, and at times chasing clothes, paddles, etc. down the river. Cold beers at The Olde Lyons Hotel made a great ending to the day. -Al Sommer

# Great Lakes Compact Fails to Protect Great Lakes, Root River

By State Representative Cory Mason, 66th Assembly District

On June 21, 2016, the eight Great Lakes Governors who comprise the Great Lakes Compact Council approved Waukesha's deeply flawed proposal. This plan diverts Lake Michigan water and dumps 8 million gallons of treated sewage down Racine's Root River every day. This means that the first real test of Great Lakes Compact resulted in failure, setting a disturbing precedent for future attempts to divert precious water resources from the Great Lakes Basin.

As a community in a county which straddles the Great Lakes Basin, Waukesha can ask for a diversion of Lake Michigan water, but only if there is no reasonable alternative to diverting water from the Great Lakes. Waukesha claims there is no such reasonable alternative to address the radium in their drinking water, yet more than 76 communities in Wisconsin are currently implementing successful approaches to address the radium in their drinking water. Waukesha assumes that its proposal to seize water from Lake Michigan will solve problems it could have more inexpensively and simply solved without depleting Lake Michigan water.

The EPA classifies the Root River as an impaired river. The Racine community has worked long and hard to restore the river, redevelop its brownfields, and earn a national reputation for improving North Beach, just north of the mouth of the Root River. Millions of gallons of treated sewage added to the Root everyday pose too great a threat to all the great work Racine has done to protect the Root. Environmental justice also demands that all of Wisconsin's citizens have equal access to our natural

resources. Waukesha County is one of the most affluent counties in the nation. Now Waukesha will be sending its treated sewage into one of the most impoverished and diverse parts of the City of Racine, which sets yet another troubling precedent.

A recent audit by Wisconsin's non-partisan Legislative Audit Bureau reveals that Wisconsin's Department of Natural Resources is failing to enforce its own rules with regard to many of Wisconsin's environmental laws. This is a serious problem as DNR is the main agency charged with ensuring Waukesha's diversion proposal complies with rigorous environmental standards. DNR fails to inspect wastewater facilities routinely, fails to enforce environmental protections in the permitting process, and suffers from high turnover due to Gov. Walker's massive budget cuts. DNR enforcement actions are down fifty-three percent during the Walker administration. The Great Lakes Compact should not be jeopardized by the possibility of the DNR failing to enforce the standards of the Great Lakes Compact.

The Compact Council's decision to approve Waukesha's inadequate proposal calls into question whether the Great Lakes Compact serves as a meaningful way to protect our water resources in the future. If Great Lakes Governors simply sign off on approving each other's inadequate proposals to divert water from the Great Lakes, then the Great Lakes Compact is mere window dressing that leaves our Great Lakes

vulnerable to misuse. Now that Waukesha's diversion proposal has been approved, communities in straddling counties will line up to put their straws into the Great Lakes.

It is my hope that legal action is taken to require real implementation of the Compact in its entirety and stop this dangerous diversion proposal before it starts. 💧

## Advanced Beginner's Backpack North Kettle Moraine, WI



Presented by NW Cook County Group

**Friday, September 9 through  
Sunday, September 11**

Ice Age National Scenic Trail, Kewaskum  
Level: Moderate-Beginner

Escape civilization without being too far from it with a moderate, 7 to 8-mile hike each day through rolling glacial moraine hills while reviewing backpacking skills, food and equipment needs.

Cost includes 2 breakfasts and 1 dinner with dessert on the trail, campsite reservations and other expenses.

\$35 for 8-10 participants, \$40 for 6-7  
DNR Vehicle fee \$10.

**Assistant-leader needed.**

To register, contact SCOTT ETIENNE:  
scottsdigs@gmail.com  
847-269-3143

**AUGUST 9**

**your VOTE  
is your VOICE**

# Root River Cruise



**Beginner Canoers & Kayakers:**

Join the Southeast Gateway Group of the Sierra Club for an afternoon of cruising the Root River.

**-- Sunday, July 31 at 1:00 PM --**

We'll go out and back--No car transfers necessary.

Meet at the Horlick Dam Boat Launch, Hwy 38 and Rapids Drive, in Beautiful Racine.

We'll go as far north as the majority wants to go. Afterwards, if desired and not too wet, we'll adjourn to a nearby restaurant.

**A PERSONAL FLOATION DEVICE IS REQUIRED FOR ALL ATTENDEES.**

For inquiries or to reserve your spot, please contact Allan Sommer  
**Sommerallan4@gmail.com**  
262-716-6955

## A Plea for Participation

*From The Chair, Tom Rutkowski*

Like a lot of other civic organizations and Sierra Club groups across the state, the Southeast Gateway Group needs some new volunteers and many more member participants. In particular, we need other members to serve on the Executive Committee that oversees the function of the group.

We also need an active Conservation Chair in Racine who would be ready to address environmental issues that arise within Racine County. If you have ideas about educational programs that could be offered, you could serve as the new Program Chair.

The goal of the Sierra Club is to "Explore, Enjoy and Protect the Planet". At a time when so much of the planet needs protection and fewer people seem to be enjoying and exploring the outdoors, we also need people to participate in outings and programs and actions.

Al Sommer began organizing outings for the group last Spring. Consider joining him for a hike or a paddle. Melissa Warner has consistently offered programs of local and national interest. We need a few more of the 750 members in our group to show up. Membership in the Sierra Club could mean more than a subscription to a magazine or newsletter.

**Volunteers Wanted!!** Garlic mustard and dame's rocket have both thrived this summer, and we have not made much progress in combatting them in Colonial Park. Your help is greatly appreciated!

On July 30th we will dig up the flowering burdock stalks, and on our fall work days, August 27th and

September 24th, we will return to removing swaths of honeysuckle and buckthorn.

Please dress for the weather with long trousers and sturdy shoes with socks. Bug repellent advisable. Bring your own drinking water. Meet across the bridge in the lower Colonial Park along the Root River Pathway. Enter from Lincoln Park (use the farthest lot past the Steelhead Facility) or from the Colonial parking lot at the end of West High Street. Be warned, traffic on Northwestern Ave. is one-way during construction.



John Berge battles the burdock stalks

## HIGHWAY 38 CLEANUP

This year marks the 26th that the Southeast Gateway Group has been cleaning up a three-mile stretch of State Highway 38, between County Highway K and Five Mile Road, in Racine County. The final cleanup for this year is **September 17**. Please mark the date on your calendar, either one of those beautiful Sierra Club calendars or your favorite electronic device.

Blessed Hope Church, at the corner of Highway 38 and Four Mile Road, has graciously allowed us the use of their parking lot to meet, assign people to half-mile stretches and pass out equipment, including bright colored safety vests, bags for trash and recyclables, and pointed sticks for pickup. There are also gloves for those who forgot to bring them. Weather-appropriate clothing, sturdy shoes, gloves and insect repellent are suggested.

It works out best to have twelve volunteers to cover the length of SEGG's assigned area in teams of two. On the first two cleanups we were short a couple people and that meant extra work for those who did show up.

**Please add your name to our call list by contacting John Berge: 262-633-8455 or jberge35@wi.rr.com.**

It is only a small commitment of two hours on up to three Saturdays a year, but it is a load of satisfaction!





*Have you been thinking about using less energy from fossil fuels and more from renewable sources? Wondering what the options are?*



Then you will want to hear Tyler Huebner, Executive Director of RENEW Wisconsin, at our group meeting on **Thursday, September 15.**

His talk will focus on the current status and opportunities for renewable energy, and how residents in Southeast Wisconsin can help increase the portion of electricity they are getting from clean, renewable sources. He will highlight solar installations and programs for homeowners, businesses, and nonprofits including faith communities and congregations. Renew Wisconsin is a state-based renewable energy advocacy nonprofit focused on advancing wind, solar, bioenergy, hydropower, and smart energy usage.

In 2015, Tyler was named among the Midwest Energy News' "40 Under 40" recognizing forty of the best clean energy leaders from throughout the entire Midwest under the age of 40. Prior to joining RENEW Wisconsin in 2013, he managed grants and grantees in the low-income weatherization program at both the U.S. Department of Energy and the State of Wisconsin Division of Energy Services, and was an energy efficiency consultant for ICF International. Tyler holds engineering degrees from the University of Iowa and Stanford University.

**We look forward to seeing you on Sept. 15 at the SCJohnson/Gateway Technical College iMET Center, 2320 Renaissance Boulevard, at 6:30 p.m.**

## A MEMORIAL

*by John Berge*



Bench on the Pike River Pathway reads, *In Memory of Past Sierra Club Members*

On a warm day in late spring, I took a walk on the new bike and hiking Pike River Pathway to the west and south of Case High School. I have often walked on the first section of the Pike River Pathway south of Old Spring Street, but this was the first time for me to hike the segment south of Highway 20 (Washington Avenue). When I reached the south end of the pond, I saw the new bench memorializing those Southeast Gateway Sierrans that have died over the years. I not only saw the bench, but rested on it for awhile before continuing on with my walk. What a beautiful view of the pond from that bench!

Thanks to those people who have contributed memorial money to the Group, but a special thanks to **Mary Ann Ortmayer** who spearheaded the efforts to purchase this bench, had it inscribed, and made all the necessary contacts with the officials of Mt. Pleasant that are in charge of the Pike River Park and Pathway.

To the east of the trail, it is mostly academic, athletic and industrial areas, so keep your eyes to the west for green fields, green plants and green energy (SCJ's wind turbines). Also there is a trail of bluebird houses along the pathway, but it seems most are occupied by tree swallows. I didn't see a single bluebird during my walks, but the swallows are fun to watch and seem to be checking out the hikers.

I have another connection with this segment of the pathway, which now reaches from Old Spring Street to Highway 11 (Durand Avenue) but I believe will eventually go to the Kenosha/Racine County line. Several years ago, I was one of the many volunteers who planted thousands of plugs of native grasses and forbs in the bare and greatly disturbed ground where the river had been moved and the ponds and pathway formed. There are a lot of grasses and other plants now — little bare ground any more — but there appears to be a lot of yellow sweet clover and other non-native species. *Anybody looking for a project?*

# SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATORS

Senate District	Assembly District	County	Name	edress
11		Walworth/Whitewater	Stephen L. Nass	Sen.Nass@legis.wisconsin.gov
11	31	Walworth/Clinton	Amy Loudenbeck	Rep.Loudenbeck@legis.wisconsin.gov
11	32	Walworth/Lake Geneva	Tyler August	Rep.August@legis.wisconsin.gov
11	33	Walworth/Mukwanago	Cody Horlacher	Rep.Horlacher@legis.wisconsin.gov
21		Racine/Racine	Van Wanggaard	Sen.Wanggaard@legis.wisconsin.gov
21	61	Kenosha/Salem	Samantha Kerkman	Rep.Kerkman@legis.wisconsin.gov
21	62	Racine/Caledonia	Tom Weatherston	Rep.Weatherston@legis.wisconsin.gov
21	63	Racine/Rochester	Robin Vos	Rep.Vos@legis.wisconsin.gov
22		Racine/Kenosha	Bob Wirch	Sen.Wirch@legis.wisconsin.gov
22	64	Kenosha/Kenosha	Peter Barca	Rep.Barca@legis.wisconsin.gov
22	65	Kenosha/Kenosha	Tod Ohnstad	Rep.Ohnstad@legis.wisconsin.gov
22	66	Racine/Racine	Cory Mason	Rep.Mason@legis.wisconsin.gov

## NATIONAL ELECTED OFFICIALS

President	US	Barack Obama	<a href="https://www.whitehouse.gov/contact/">https://www.whitehouse.gov/contact/</a>
WI Senator	WI	Ron Johnson	<a href="http://www.ronjohnson.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/contact">www.ronjohnson.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/contact</a>
WI Senator	WI	Tammy Baldwin	<a href="http://www.baldwin.senate.gov/contact">www.baldwin.senate.gov/contact</a>
Representative	1st Congressional Dist.	Paul Ryan	<a href="http://paulryan.house.gov">http://paulryan.house.gov</a>

SEGG encourages you to contact your legislators on the issues you care about. Telephone numbers and "snail" mailing addresses are available on the legislators' websites.


Explore, Enjoy And Protect The Planet

### 2016 SEGG Leadership

#### Executive Committee

Tom Rutkowski (Chair).....natom@wi.rr.com  
 Betsy Georg (Secretary).....bgeorg@hotmail.com  
 Judy Rockwell (Vice Chair).....jrockwell@gmail.com  
 Allan Sommer (Outings Chair).....sommerallan4@gmail.com  
 Barb Brattin.....bb81435@gmail.com  
 Karen Hermansen.....ehermansenjr@wi.rr.com

#### Other Group Leaders

Jeff Sytsma (Treasurer).....jeff12759@aol.com  
 Melissa Warner (Program Chair).....melissa.warner3@sbcglobal.net  
 Mary Schroeder (Hospitality).....ilovedogsandcats2@yahoo.com  
 Rebecca Eisel (Webmaster).....SeggWebAdmin@gmail.com  
 Barry Thomas (Conservation, Kenosha, Co.)...bthomas6@wi.rr.com  
 Vickie Stellato (Conservation, Racine, Co.).....gik@wi.net

The newsletter of the Southeast Gateway Group of the Sierra Club is published six times each year by the Group newsletter staff.

Please send any articles, photographs of group activities, letters, calendar submissions, corrections and comments to:

**Nicole Reid**  
**nreid23@wi.rr.com**

Please use subject line:  
**SEGG Newsletter**

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**Deadline for  
 October/November Issue:  
 SEPT 1, 2016**



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- 🌀 RENEW Wisconsin
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- 🌀 Vote on August 9!
- 🌀 and more ways YOU can make a difference!



On the hot Sunday afternoon of July 10, SEGG members, guests, and one dog met at Kenosha County's Fox River Park for a 5.9 mile cruise of the Fox River. The current was strong and many paddlers finished in a short time. A large variety of paddling skills were presented. Some paddled canoes in anticipation of an upcoming trip to the Boundary Waters, some kayaked for the first time. Many look forward to the next outing which involves more floating! (page 5)