



News of the  
Southeast Gateway Group  
of the Sierra Club  
FEBRUARY / MARCH 2016  
VOLUME 35, NO. 1

# SOUTHEAST SIERRAN

## CHALLENGES TO THE WISCONSIN PUBLIC TRUST DOCTRINE

"Wisconsin lakes and rivers are public resources, owned in common by all Wisconsin citizens under the state's Public Trust Doctrine. Based on the state constitution, this doctrine has been further defined by case law and statute. It declares that all navigable waters are 'common highways and forever free,' and held in trust by the Department of Natural Resources."

Recent actions in Madison seem to be challenging the state's commitment to the public trust doctrine. From groundwater issues and wetland protection to shoreline dredging and phosphate standards, proposed legislation seems to attack the "protected public rights to water quality and quantity, recreational activities, and scenic beauty."

Clean Wisconsin's Senior Staff Attorney and Racine native Elizabeth Wheeler will share an update and some insights into these and other issues relating to the state of water policy in Wisconsin. Elizabeth has vast experience with Wisconsin's recent water-related legislation, from the iron mining laws

that gained significant attention in 2011, to recent changes to navigable water permitting, groundwater, and phosphorus regulations.

Elizabeth studied environmental biology at Beloit College, and then earned her J.D. from Pace University School of Law. She has served as Clean Wisconsin's Senior Staff Attorney since March 2011. She represents Clean Wisconsin at the Public Service Commission, before the Department of Natural Resources, and in court. In addition to litigation, Elizabeth performs legislative analysis, manages Clean Wisconsin's legal internship and externship programs, and advocates for strong policies protecting Wisconsin's natural resources. She is currently involved in work covering water conservation, water quality protection, metallic and non-metallic mining, air quality and energy.

Join us at the SCJ/Gateway iMET Center, 2320 Renaissance Boulevard, Sturtevant, at 6:30 on Thursday, February 18.

### Meet Your New Executive Committee

*Left to Right:* Barb Brattin, Karen Hermansen, Betsy Georg (Secretary), Allan Sommer (Outings), Judy Rockwell (Vice Chair) and Tom Rutkowski (Chair).

*Photo by Melissa Warner*



# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## FEBRUARY

**February 15th**, Monday, 2:00 pm, ExCom meeting at Kenosha Southwest Library, 7979 38th Avenue, Kenosha. Meetings are open. If you have items for the agenda, contact [natom@wi.rr.com](mailto:natom@wi.rr.com) or any ExCom member (See p. 7).

**February 18th**, Thursday, 6:30 pm - *Challenges to the Wisconsin Public Trust Doctrine*, at the SCJohnson/Gateway iMET Center, 2320 Renaissance Boulevard, Sturtevant, See article on p. 1

## MARCH

**March 14th**, Monday, 2:00 pm, ExCom meeting at Kenosha Southwest Library, 7979 38th Avenue, Kenosha. Meetings are open. If you have items for the agenda, contact [natom@wi.rr.com](mailto:natom@wi.rr.com) or any ExCom member (See p. 7).

**March 17th**, Thursday, 6:30 pm, *Enbridge's Wisconsin Highway for Dirty Oil*, We are looking for a location in Burlington, so check the SEGG website, <http://www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/southeast-gateway>, or look for the March E-News Update. See article on p. 5.

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# FROM THE CHAIR

By Tom Rutkowski

## Actually Walking

In our neighborhood, my wife and I are known as the walkers. It has nothing to do with our governor or our political views; we walk near the lake two or three times a day, even in the snow, sometimes even in the rain. We walk to appreciate the endless variety of Lake Michigan. We walk to talk, to think, to problem solve, to exercise. We walk in the inclement elements to appreciate the comforts of home. We walk so we don't feel like captives. For a few months of the year, we walk to meet with our neighbors and other walkers, but for too many months our walks are solitary adventures. The only sign of others is the flickering blue light of one screen or another in the front window. One winter our picture appeared in the Journal Times, merely because we were the only people walking around outside after a snowstorm.

I've been thinking of reasons to walk because my niece asked for a Fit Bit last Christmas. A Fit Bit is a slim wrist band that tracks your footsteps, your calories and even your sleep cycles. Tallying her daily count of steps might be just the motivation she needs to get her walking, but it seems strange to think that a screen can provide the incentive for a twenty-one year old to move more often. There are plenty and more alarming examples of the virtual invading the real, but it seems odd to think that you know you've walked enough in a day when your step count is high, not if you feel tired. There is a popular app called Map My Walk that not only counts your steps, but shows you where you've been. I guess that might be useful if you spend too much time looking at a screen and not paying attention to where you're walking.

For years now, screens have been intruding on and replacing our contact with the natural world. This substitution of the virtual for the actual is called "technological nature" and is defined by the Association for Psychological Science as a trend which "embodies technologies that in various ways mediate, augment, or simulate the natural world". In our time it is possible to go virtual bird watching, to remotely monitor a watering hole in Africa, or

to visit a national park by web cam. The problem with this trend, put simply, is that there isn't much time to "explore, protect or enjoy the planet" when you spend eleven of your sixteen to eighteen waking hours looking at a screen. In an effort to adapt to this habit, the Sierra Club started AddUp, an online activist community that allows people to participate in environmental issues of interest with the click of a mouse. Chris Thomas, the club's Chief Officer of Innovation, sees this effort as a necessary evolution of the Sierra Club's mission. "The Sierra Club created chapters over a hundred years ago to build local change from the ground up, and now we're creating a similar kind of infrastructure for supporting grassroots environmentalism in the digital age." Too new to be evaluated, it remains to be seen if virtual association and advocacy can replace what is done in actual meetings and actions. Will exploring, protecting and enjoying the virtual world preserve enough of the actual planet?

Recently Allan Sommer, a new member of SEGG's Executive Committee, took the training to become an outings leader for the group. For many groups, outings play an essential role, encouraging non-members who participate to join the group and inspiring members who enjoy the outings to become more active in other activities within the group. Come next spring and summer, you should consider joining us as we take real steps on real trails, looking at real trees and maybe even sighting real wildlife. If it's any additional incentive, I'll even count your steps for you.

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• **Get updates monthly - sign up** •  
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• **new or updated information.** •  
• **between Southeast Sierran** •  
• **issues. Contact Melissa Warner,** •  
• **melissa.warner3@sbcglobal.** •  
• **net to sign up.** •  
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# A Note From the Outings Chair

*By Allan Sommer*

I have enthusiasm for many of the silent outdoor sports and am a person with a need to be outside in some of the quieter areas around. Also, I like to enjoy these things with others. I am sure that many more of the readers of this newsletter share these sentiments. As such, I have a hope that if I serve as a focal point, the SEGG will resurrect an active Outings program.

One of the first trips that I hope to get people to accompany me on is a day hike doing a section of the Ice Age Trail that is local to our chapter here in Walworth County.

I am open to suggestions from the membership regarding potential outings. Please, if you have an inkling of some activity you do that you wish to share, bring it up to me and we can get it publicized and hopefully accomplished.

Possibilities are many:

- Canoeing/kayaking; (White River, Fox River, Lulu Lake/Mukwonago River)
- Hiking: (Bong, Pringle NC, Kettle Moraine, etc.)
- X-country skiing: (Kettle Moraine, Bong, Pringle NC, etc.)
- Biking: (Kenosha lakefront, Racine lakefront, Badger State Trail, etc.)
- Service projects: (invasive species removal, trail building or repair/maintenance, prairie burns, native plant seeding/plugging)

Please don't consider this list a limitation to the types of outings that may take place in the future.

Our local group will publish our outings in the SEGG Newsletter, on our website and our Facebook page, as well as with other local Sierra Club groups. I hope to make our readers aware of other Sierra Club groups' outings.

Long ago, some memorable outings were instrumental in my becoming a Sierra Club member and I hope that we will soon share some adventures that will entice another member (or more) to want to preserve nature and to want to share it.

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Bristol	Robert Helfferich	Lyons	George Byrne
Burlington	Mark & Janet Lesko, Lynn Ludtke	Pleasant Prairie	Eric Albrecht
Delavan	Jane Harries	Racine	Linea Anthony, Patricia Bingen, Landon Granger, Cathleen Holmes, Ruth Johnson, Casey Lewis, Pat Machmeier, Brenda M Schuls, Claude Wells, Jeanette Zapushek
East Troy	Amanda Dietel	Springfield	Angela Brooks
Fontana	Kathy Wagner	Sturtevant	Holly Majhenich
Franksville	Betty Jensen	Waterford	Greg Lenser
Genoa City	Jill Krane	Wind Lake	Jean St. Louis
Kenosha	Emaline Kelley, April Kvitek, Kathy Otto, Ned Schmidkonz		
Lake Geneva	Diane Fraser		

# FOOD CHOICES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

*By Melissa Warner*

Eat well and benefit the environment – what a concept! At our November meeting, Jamie Ferschinger, branch manager at Milwaukee's Urban Ecology Center, made several points on how our food choices can have positive effects on the environment. Intensive plant farming requires copious amounts of water, sometimes in drought-stricken areas. Monoculture crops deplete the soil of nutrients, leading to over-use of fertilizers. Monocultures are also a haven for insects, which means that these farmers are dependent on insecticides – which kill off both harmful and beneficial insects, including pollinators. Smaller, more diverse farms, on the other hand, use less fuel and fertilizers, and produce fewer greenhouse gases.

She offers these suggestions for eating well with less environmental impact:

#1 Eat less meat\*. We provide food and water for billions of animals. Much of the grain we grow (including the water and fertilizer necessary to grow them) is for feeding animals. Transporting, processing and packaging the meat also uses carbon fuels. The amount of methane given off by cattle is astounding! Deforestation often results from people's demand for meat, particularly beef.

\*If you want to eat meat, eat more pork and poultry, and less beef and lamb.

\*If you want to eat meat, find sustainably raised, grass-fed meat.

#2 Where possible, grow your own. Contact Racine Urban Garden Network or Down to Earth Kenosha for suggestions on how to start.

#3 Support your local farmers. Use the Farm Fresh Atlas for times and locations for a farm market near you, and find out more about Wild Root Market

#4 Compost.

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## Enbridge's Wisconsin Superhighway for Dirty Oil

While the Keystone XL pipeline has received the lion's share of news coverage in recent years, an equally risky pipeline is being more than doubled quietly here in Wisconsin. The Enbridge Line 61 cuts through the Badger State carrying oil, including tar sands oil. While the line affects all Wisconsinites in general, the proposed pumping station in Delavan concerns Southeast Gateway Group specifically.

Line 61 bisects the Badger state from Superior to Belvidere, IL, putting our water resources, including the Wisconsin River, the Rock River, Lake Superior and Lake Koshkonong, at risk. Because tar sands oil is so dense, it does not float when spilled, making cleanup especially difficult if not impossible. The very severe spill in Kalamazoo (only one of more than 800 Enbridge spills since 1999) will likely

never be fully remediated. There are also rumors about another pipeline planned through the Badger state.

In addition, expanding tar sands production increases CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere, when we need to move toward more renewable forms of energy to counteract climate change.

Join Elizabeth Ward, JMC Conservation Programs Coordinator, and Mary Beth Elliott, head of 350Madison's Tar Sands Team, as they share with us Enbridge's plans for the future, and Sierra Club's strategies to halt them. We are looking for a location in Burlington, so check the SEGG website < <http://www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/southeast-gateway>>, or look for the March E-News Update.

# HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE!!

By Dana Huck

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the creation of the National Park Service. At the time of its creation on August 25, 1916, the NPS became responsible for overseeing those properties that had already been designated, including Yellowstone National Park, established on March 1, 1872 as the first National Park. Today the National Park System includes 409 areas of more than 84 million acres. In addition to parks, the NPS oversees a variety of nationally designated properties, such as Historic Sites; Monuments; Lakeshores; Wild and Scenic Rivers and Riverways; and Trails; among others. Wisconsin is home to Apostle Island National Lakeshore and the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, as well as the Ice Age Trail and a portion of the North Country Trail.

Most national parks don't charge an entrance fee, but some do. This year, those sites that do charge a fee will offer free admission on the following dates in celebration of the Anniversary:

- January 18: Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- April 16 through 24: National Park Week
- August 25 through 28: National Park Service Birthday
- September 24: National Public Lands Day
- November 11: Veterans Day

Annual passes are \$80 and are available to everyone. They can be purchased at any federal recreation site, by telephone or online. Free annual passes are available for current U.S. military members and dependents AND any U.S. 4th grade student with a valid "Every Kid in a Park" paper pass. Seniors age 62 and over are eligible for a \$10 lifetime pass (formerly known as the Golden Age Passport). Details can be found at <http://www.nps.gov/findapark/passes.htm>.

The NPS website, <http://www.nps.gov/index.htm>, can help you find just the right experience. Sierra Club also offers many outings opportunities in National Parks, both recreational and service trips. I was fortunate to be able to participate in two service trips, one in Nantahala National Forest in the Appalachian Mountains of western North Carolina, and one in Guadalupe Mountains National Park in the Chihuahuan Desert of west Texas. They couldn't have been more different, and gave me an appreciation of the great diversity of experiences offered by Sierra Club outings and our National Parks.

## Hydrogen Fuel Cells Revisited

By Jay Warner, SEGG Transit Liaison

Al Sorenson, a fellow resident of Caledonia, long ago discovered the potential of a hydrogen fuel cell electricity source, using hydrogen ( $H_2$ ) electrolyzed from water by a solar panel. Advantages: the  $H_2$  is made from water, whenever the solar panel puts out power. When electricity is needed, the  $H_2$  is reacted with air in a fuel cell, making electricity and water vapor. The total cycle is completely carbon free. No  $CO_2$  emissions, no carbon offsets, just clean water. Al is looking into the present commercial status.

Some such vehicles appeared at the COP21 Paris talks last month. My Sierra Club Transit Forum

contacts told about the Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District (AC-Trans) in the San Francisco Bay area. They have over 200,000 hours of service experience with hydrogen fuel cell buses (picture on p. 8). Some of the hydrogen is generated by solar panels. In their experience passengers like the smoother motion of these busses, and maintenance costs are lower. And yes, the purchase cost is high. Now.

Just think – hydrogen fuel cell busses would wipe out the complaints of frightfully smelly, noisy busses in Milwaukee, not to mention Racine and Kenosha. Hydrogen fuel cell delivery trucks would wipe out diesel exhaust pollution for all of us. What might we do, to hasten that day?

## 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 Wirsch	Sen.Wirsch@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

### SEGG Leadership

#### SEGG Executive Committee

Tom Rutkowski (Chair).....natom@wi.rr.com  
 Betsy Georg (Secretary).....bgeorg@hotmail.com  
 Judy Rockwell (Vice Chair).....jjrockwell@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  
 MaryAnn Ortmyer (Hospitality).....maortmyer@gmail.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 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://www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/southeast-gateway>. Visit our facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/sierraclubsoutheastgatewaygroup>.

**DEADLINE FOR  
 APRIL-MAY 2016 ISSUE IS  
 MARCH 1<sup>ST</sup> 2016**

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**Are Hydrogen Fuel Cell powered buses  
in our future? See article on p. 6**