



SOUTHEAST SIERRAN

News of the
Southeast Gateway Group
of the Sierra Club

APR / MAY 2017
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From the Chair
by Tom Rutkowski

Science Needs You!

On January 21, I marched in a river of people flowing down Pennsylvania Avenue past the new president's new hotel in Washington D.C. Chants and roars had traveled wavelike through the crowd at random intervals throughout the day so at first, when those around me started chanting "Science is real", it seemed normal for an unusual day. Shortly after that I realized what a strange phrase it was to be shouting early in the 21st century when science permeates so much of our lives.

We should have been chanting "All science is real" since most science and its benefits are still embraced; it is only the inconvenient, profit threatening findings of science that are threatened.

Just as we passed the former post office turned luxury hotel, I looked up to see a statue of Ben Franklin, one of the founding fathers, the citizen scientist himself, overseeing this odd moment. To remind us that we had departed from the usual, some protester had covered Franklin's name with a small cardboard sign that read, "This is NOT normal".

In this age of disruption when so many fundamental beliefs and values are being challenged, we are called to reaffirm and renew them, sometimes even in the streets. When the budgets of scientific agencies become political targets, when scientific findings are censored, when research results must be stored in the cloud so that a political appointee cannot delete it from government servers, it seems appropriate that we who have gained so much from science should come to defend it.

In response to this attack on some science, citizens have become active participants in the scientific process, joining a movement of citizen scientists who, according to Open Scientist, "participate in the systematic collection and analysis of data; development of technology; testing of natural phenomena; and the dissemination of these activities on an avocational basis."

Like Benjamin Franklin, you too can contribute to scientific study, and by contributing, come to know your own surroundings with a new attention to detail. What better way to honor science than by adding your own observations to a collective insight? With camera and a GPS in almost everyone's hands, citizen scientists have helped to document how climate change has affected plant and animal species. Crowd sourced science has also helped to classify galaxies, detect signs of disease and unearth toxic metals in our food.

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A protestor posts a sign at Benjamin Franklin's feet that reads, "This is NOT normal."

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

APRIL

Sunday, April 16: *SEGG Outing-White River Trail Bicycle Ride*, 1:00 PM, Town of Lyons (page 3)

Thursday, April 20: *SEGG Program, Transportation 2050: A Regional Land Use and Transportation Plan*, 6:30 PM at Gateway Technical College in Kenosha, Biosciences Building (page 3)

Saturday, April 22: *SEGG/Weed Out! Racine Work Day* in Colonial Park, 9:00 to Noon. Park at either end and cross the bridge to the Root River pathway. We'll be planting trees and pulling garlic mustard. Dress for the weather with long trousers and closed toed shoes.

Saturday, April 22: *EARTH DAY!!*
March for Science, Washington, DC (page 5)

Wednesday, April 26: Ballots Due for the 2017 Sierra Club Board of Directors.

Saturday, April 29: *Highway 38 Cleanup*, 8:30 AM. Blessed Hope church parking lot (page 3)

Saturday, April 29: *People's Climate March*, Washington, DC (page 5)

MAY

Saturday, May 6: *Garlic Mustard Pickin' Party*, 9:00-1:00 PM, Lincoln Park (page 3)

Thursday, May 18: *SEGG Program, Root-Pike Watershed Initiative Plans*, 6:30 PM at the iMET Center, 2320 Renaissance Blvd., Sturtevant (page 3)

Saturday, May 27: *SEGG/Weed Out! Racine Work Day* in Colonial Park, 9:00 to Noon.

Join our New Meetup Group for SEGG Sponsored Outings and Activities!



Meetup makes it easy to find out about SEGG Sierra Club events and it lets us know whether or not you're coming. All you need to do is create a free account and then join the Meetup group. Use the link below to get started:

<https://www.meetup.com/Southeast-Gateway-Group-Sierra-Club-Hikes-and-Activities/>



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.



New Member or Gift Member Recipient Name(s)

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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.

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Contributions, gifts and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax-deductible as they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to *SIERRA* magazine plus \$1 for your chapter's newsletter.

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Thank You!

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COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

April 20-SEGG Meeting & Program: **Transportation 2050**

6:30 PM at Gateway Technical College in Kenosha, Biosciences Building

The Southeast Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) is just completing the final regional land use and transportation plan to get us to 2050. A SEWRPC representative will present an overview of the transportation portion and explain why the lofty plan fell short. Is there still a chance to realize a more eco-friendly transportation system in our corner of the state?

From the SEWRPC website: *As part of VISION 2050, staff compared the estimated costs and reasonably expected revenues for the recommended transportation system. In doing so, staff identified a funding gap for the public transit element, resulting in the need to identify a "fiscally constrained" version of the recommended transportation system. This Fiscally Constrained Transportation Plan (FCTP) includes a reduction in transit service in the Region (other than committed projects) rather than the significant improvement recommended under VISION 2050.*

More at www.sewrpc.org/SEWRPC/VISION_2050/2050RegLandUseTranspPlan.htm

Please Note
New Venue!

May 18-SEGG Meeting & Program: **Pike/Root River Watershed Plans**

6:30 PM at the iMET Center, 2320 Renaissance Blvd. in Sturtevant

Dave Giordano from the Root-Pike Watershed Initiative Network will give us an update on five local watershed plans, including the Pike River and Root River Watershed Plans. The plan calls for special attention to the portion of the Pike River south of Highway 11 to KR, targeting erosion and pollution concerns. We'll hear about progress since the plan was finalized in 2013 and next steps in the plan to protect our watershed.

Read more at www.rootpikewin.org

Join SEGG, Weed Out! Racine, Wild Ones, and Discover Racine for a Community Earth Day Event

Garlic Mustard Pickin' Party!

Saturday, May 6 ~ 9:00 to 1:00 PM

Meet at Lincoln Park, past the DNR Steelhead Facility.

We will be pulling and bagging garlic mustard from the Colonial Park floodplain as part of a larger restoration project. Garlic Mustard is easy to identify and pull.

Music by the Garlic Mustard Pickers band and lunch provided at noon.

We have gloves and tools, or you can bring your own.

Please dress for the weather with long pants and closed toed shoes.

Let's set a world record for the most garlic mustard pulled at one event!

Contact melissa.warner3@sbcglobal.net or 262 639-0918 for more information.

Bring the
Entire Family!

HIGHWAY 38 CLEANUP

Saturday, April 29, 8:30 AM

Meet in the parking lot of Blessed Hope Church, corner of Hwy 38 and Four Mile Rd for check-in, safety equipment and area assignments. Wear weather-appropriate clothing with good walking shoes.

Contact John Berge for more info:
262-633-8455 or jberge35@wi.rr.com

ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY



WHITE RIVER TRAIL

-BICYCLE OUTING-

Sunday, April 16 ~ 1:00 PM

Join SEGG for a bicycle ride on the White River Trail, running along an abandoned rail bed and connecting an area southwest of Burlington to Elkhorn. We will traverse through picturesque old towns, see old bridges, cross multiple small creeks, and get some wonderful views. The ride is out and back on the 19-mile long trail for a total of 30-35 miles. It is a well-worn, crushed limestone path suitable for most bikes and tires.

Meet in the town of Lyons and park on North Railroad St. between Mill and Church Streets. A \$5 Wisconsin State Bicycle Trail Pass and signed Sierra Club Outings Waiver is required. To sign up or receive more information, contact Allan Sommer at 262-716-6955 or sommerallan4@gmail.com

(Continued from page 1)

Science Needs You!

On page 6 of this newsletter, SEGG member, Stephen Gifford writes of The USA National Phenology Network and its program called *Nature's Notebook* which asks people to record the seasonal changes in their environment, providing information that has already been used in 30 scientific studies. Another, more immediate way that you can support science is by participating in the *National March for Science* on Earth Day, April 22. There is a national march in Washington that day, but also ones much closer to home in Milwaukee and Madison.

Sure, like almost everyone, I appreciated a sunny 70-degree day in the middle of February, but with it came an unsettling feeling that this too is not normal. A stable climate is another feature that we've long taken for granted. Four years ago, the slogan of the *People's Climate March* in New York was "To Change Everything, We Need Everyone".

With that principle in mind, the *People's Climate March*, organized by dozens of social and environmental justice groups, including the Sierra Club, will take place in Washington D.C. the weekend following the *March for Science* on Saturday, April 29. I hope to see you, and several hundred thousands of others, there.

-Tom Rutkowski

A CHANGE IN STRATEGY from John Berge

From statements made during the recent political campaigns, from the persons nominated to cabinet and other positions of power, and from directives written by those now in authority to quash public comments by scientists at all levels, it is apparent that both state and federal governments are in the hands of global warming deniers and advocates of the fossil fuel industry.

Since the President has claimed global warming and climate change is a hoax and has pledged to repeal the Clean Power Plan, pull out of the Paris Agreement and boost fossil fuel development, including coal, it has become obvious that we can no longer expect the government to protect our planet from disastrous global climate change.

But the way is still open for individuals and organizations to act. As Per Espen Stoknes, the co-chair of the Center for Climate Strategy at the BI Norwegian Business School in Oslo was quoted in *The Christian Science Monitor Weekly*, **"No one can do a real shift on this issue alone, but everybody can do something... Especially in the coming four years, these types of actions are more needed than before."**

"As a consumer, look for the most efficient, eco-friendly option when buying anything from a car to a light bulb." This also applies when buying electricity; 'Consumer' in this case certainly means churches, businesses and other organizations as well as individuals and families.

"As an employee, encourage workplaces to be more efficient and, if possible, make the business more climate-focused." SC Johnson employees at Waxdale must enjoy the fact that almost all the energy required to run that factory comes from renewable resources.

"As a stock holder, consider divesting from fossil fuel companies or investing in green bonds and clean energy companies." May I suggest that one gives stock in fossil fuel companies to non-profit organizations and let them do the divesting, thus saving any capital gains tax. Letters to management from stockholders are usually well received and may eventually be acted upon for the good of the environment.

And finally, **"Become more active as a citizen in raising awareness around environmental and climate issues."** Be more aware and respond to false news and "alternative facts", rebutting them when you can and make sure that future elections are not so influenced by them. Surprisingly, with this we are taking a very conservative position on the environment: **Don't wait for the government to act; leave it up to the individual citizens to act.**

Watching the discussions, executive orders and spins on interview programs and newscasts, I find strong similarities between modern-day Washington (and Madison) to the Old Testament.

Who are the false prophets, saying what the "king" wants to hear and who are the true prophets, saying what will happen to the world if we continue on our present course?


If I can help you to make better choices as a consumer, or to be more pro-active as a citizen, please email me at jberge35@wi.rr.com. -John Berge



GET INVOLVED → START HERE!

WE RESIST
WE BUILD
WE RISE

APRIL 29TH, 2017, WASHINGTON DC



PEOPLESCLIMATE.ORG

People's Climate March Saturday, April 29 Washington, DC

peoplesclimate.org

A corresponding march will take place in Milwaukee that day, but we encourage you to make the trip to DC if at all possible.

Busses will leave from Milwaukee on Friday, April 28 at 7:00 PM.

If interested, or to sponsor a marcher, please call Julie at 414-964-9478.

Please Don't Wait--Do it Now!!

The mischaracterization of science as a partisan issue, which has given policymakers permission to reject overwhelming evidence **IS A CRITICAL AND URGENT MATTER.**

It is time for people who support scientific research and evidence-based policies to **TAKE A PUBLIC STAND AND BE COUNTED!**



MARCH FOR SCIENCE EARTH DAY -- APRIL 22, 2017

You can find out more about the March in Washington, DC, and its many satellite marches at: www.marchforscience.com

Learn more about the Citizen Scientist movement at:
www.scistarter.com
www.publiclab.org
nwf.org/Wildlife/Wildlife-Conservation/Citizen-Science.aspx

Oppose EPA nominee Scott Pruitt by voicing your concerns through phone calls, letters or postcards to elected officials and your local print/radio/TV and social media outlets.

www.sierraclub.org/take-action

#YesWeCan

Help track seasonal changes in plants and animals with **Nature's Notebook:**
www.usanpn.org/natures_notebook

(See page 6)

Conservation Chair Needed

SEGG is in need of someone to serve as a contact and coordinator for conservation issues directly affecting Racine and Walworth Counties. There is no salary, but it will be meaningful work!

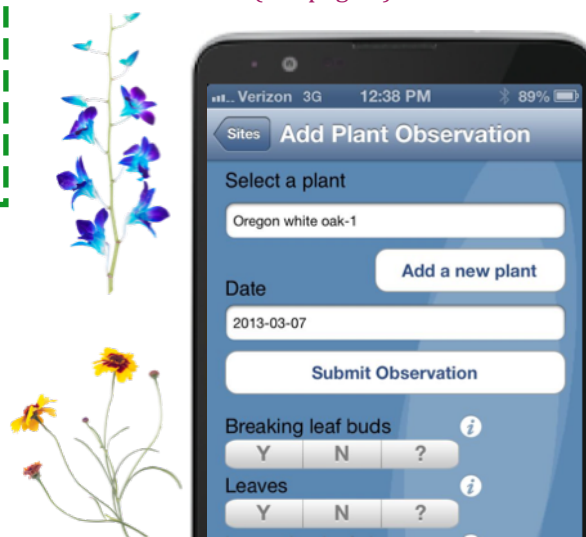
For more information, contact Tom Rutkowski at natom@wi.rr.com

Interact with Sierra Club's BEYOND COAL Campaign



Beyond Coal addresses climate change, EPA's standards on air and water pollution, clean energy, and any possible social justice issues.

Visit content.sierraclub.org/coal/Wisconsin



As Winter Yields to Spring

Text and Photos by Stephen Gifford,
Wisconsin Master Naturalist & SEGG Member

As winter yields to spring, there are subtle changes occurring in nature. As I write this in mid-February, the hanging branches of Weeping Willows have already begun changing from their winter brown to a spring like yellow, showing that its sap is moving into the trees' extremities. Red Tail hawks have already paired off and have selected their nesting site. You may have seen them dancing in the air as they forged their bond in the mid winter. If you hike near a really damp wetland, you may have seen skunk cabbage emerging with its red mottled spathe.

As the growing season unfolds, plants will resume their life cycles, birds will pair, mate, build nests, lay eggs and fledge. Mammals will become more active and rear their own young. The study of the how these processes unfold each season is called phenology.

Phenology refers to key seasonal changes in plants and animals from year to year—such as flowering, emergence of insects, and migration of birds—especially in regards to their timing and relationship with weather and climate. Becoming aware of these changes and recording them in a systematic way can put a sense of purpose to your hikes and backyard observations of your garden, your feeders, and even your trees.

An organization in Arizona, The USA National Phenology Network*, “encourages people of all ages and backgrounds to observe and record phenology as a way to discover and explore the nature and pace of our dynamic world. The Network makes phenology data, models, and related information freely available to empower scientists, resource managers, and the public in decision-making and adapting to variable and changing climates and environments.”



The means by which observations are recorded is through a program called *Nature's Notebook*. Participants are asked to observe specific plants or stands of plants, watch for particular birds, insects or mammals, and record their progress through the growing seasons. Guidance is provided to ensure that the data collected and submitted is useful for research and long term trend discernment. Observers can record their observation on downloaded forms for later transfer to a website, or use *Nature's Notebook* smart phone app. *Nature's Notebook* lists hundreds of species that can be useful for observation.



Before my move to Wisconsin, I had been an observer for several years in Ohio. I am once again selecting sites and species to observe in the coming growing season and will be recording data from both Poerio Park on Kenosha's north side and Pringle Nature Center where a phenology walk has been established. I would welcome the opportunity to introduce others to this activity. Please contact me at sgifford000@ameritech.net. -Stephen Gifford

*USA-NPN is a national, online program where amateur and professional naturalists regularly record observations of plants and animals to generate long-term data sets used for scientific discovery and decision-making. For more info, visit: www.usa-npn.org

SEGG Outing Recap: Ice Age Trail Eagle Segment Hike *from Al Sommer, Outings Chair*

Thirteen hardy souls met on a chilly Saturday morning for a brisk 5.5 mile hike on the Ice Age Trail. It was a beautiful day for a hike; 20-25 degrees with an inch of well trampled snow on the trail that made for good footing, not too wet or muddy. We hiked past a rock outcropping of dolomite called Brady's Rocks named by a family of settlers from when Wisconsin was first populated by immigrants from Europe. The hike was a bit different from previous ones in that evidence of the long ago glacier was not so strong as when we walked along the top of eskers and up and down over glacial came. We were walking mostly in the Scuppernong River Valley, which is a very wide and relatively shallow valley. The relief is low enough that in many places we had vistas of the horizon a good many miles away. Finished up with a visit to a DNR site called Paradise Springs where, with only a little imagination, we could see where the combination of a very productive spring, once thought to have healing properties, and a pond that while a bit weedy was sparkling clear could deserve its name. The pool above the spring even had visible trout.

WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE

SEGG encourages you to *WRITE* to your legislators on the issues you care about.

Find yours at legis.wisconsin.gov



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Explore, Enjoy And Protect The Planet

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

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

Nicole Reid - nreid23@wi.rr.com

Please use subject line: **SEGG Newsletter**

Deadline for June/July Issue:

May 1, 2017

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As Winter Yields to Spring...



Photo by Stephen Gifford who invites you to join the *Nature's Notebook* program. See page 6 for details.

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GET INVOLVED!!