



# SOUTHEAST SIERRAN

News of the  
Southeast Gateway Group  
of the Sierra Club

AUG-OCT 2021  
VOLUME 40, No. 1

From Co-Chair, *Laura Schulz*



Hi everyone! My name is Laura Schulz and I am one of the new co-chairs of the Sierra Club along with Laura Buska. I work at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside, where I teach in the Environmental Studies Department and run the Root River Environmental Education Community Center (REC). I have been a member of the Sierra Club since 2017 and I am so excited to help lead this group!

During the pandemic, I spent a lot of time hiking, kayaking and canoeing. One of my favorite adventures was canoe-camping in the Boundary Waters. It was nice to escape into the wilderness for a week without a phone or internet access and to really connect with nature. I saw a bald eagle's nest and managed not to be eaten by a bear. I am excited that things are starting to open up again and I am looking forward to future outings and programs with fellow Sierra Club members.

## Ex-SIGHT-ing NEWS!!



According to the US Fish & Wildlife Service: The rusty patch, which is an area of rust-colored hairs, is on the front of the second abdominal segment with yellow hairs on the sides and towards the back of the segment.

The local environmental nonprofit, Root-Pike Watershed Initiative Network, has a CONFIRMED SIGHTING of the federally endangered Rusty-Patched Bumble Bee!

Over the last few years, Root-Pike WIN has been working with UW-Parkside in a huge effort to restore habitat for the federally endangered Rusty-Patched Bumble Bee. Pollinators such as the Rusty-Patch contribute to our food security and to healthy, functioning ecosystems. Their restoration strategy is working!

It has now been confirmed by both the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that they have indeed spotted this important pollinator within the restored area of the UWP Cross-County Course.

Discovered by their project team at Applied Ecological Services, this

Rusty-Patch was enjoying the high-quality nectar from the newly planted native *Monarda fistulosa*, located along the main trail within Phase 1 of the project area. The Rusty-Patched Bumble Bee is only likely to be present in 0.1% of their historical range, making this discovery most rewarding. Learn more about Root-Pike WIN and their mission to protect water quality in southeastern Wisconsin on their website. [www.rootpikewin.org](http://www.rootpikewin.org)



# GET INVOLVED → START HERE!

## September Program

### The Return of the KRM Commuter Train Wednesday, September 15, 6:30 PM

Petrifying Springs Park-Pavillion #3  
4909 7th Street, Kenosha

*“This is a unique opportunity for us as a community to be out ahead, to make sure that we voice our support for this fundamental infrastructure...”*

-Trevor Jung, Racine Alder

With talk of infrastructure funding that will address climate change and transportation, interest in reviving talks about the Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee commuter train has been renewed. In June, all fifteen members of Racine City Council sponsored a resolution in support of constructing this line, a resolution unanimously adopted. Many of these supervisors pointed out that commuter rail is an equity issue and that this transportation option would address “the stark disparities in socioeconomic measures between Black and white residents, such as household income, education attainment, unemployment rates, and home ownership.” At a crucial time for lowering greenhouse gas emissions, the Sierra Club is actively supporting public transportation.

**Trevor Jung**, a Racine City Council member and advocate for public transportation, will be joined by **Keith Kohlman**, a train historian, to discuss the history of the previous KRM line and the great potential it holds to connect the cities in our area to job opportunities and cultural offerings. With the passing of the Racine resolution in support of the KRM train, we need to discuss ways to pass a similar resolution in Kenosha. Discussion following the presentations will include ways to advance this project in the Kenosha and Racine areas.



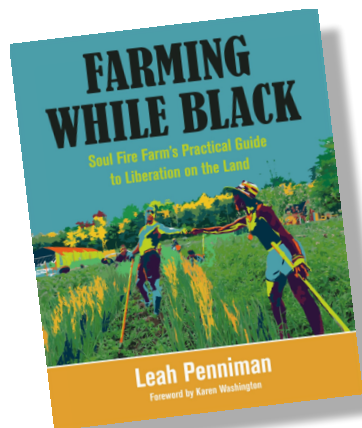
## Join the Sierra Club Wisconsin **Book Club!**

Virtual meetings are held via phone or video chat every other month. Get to know fellow Sierra Club members in a less formal setting and engage in discussion about the best environmental or social justice related books.

September's Book is by Leah Penniman:

***Farming While Black: Soul Fire Farm's Practical Guide to Liberation on the Land***

Join the discussion on **Tuesday, September 7 at 7:00 PM**



“At Soul Fire Farm, author Leah Penniman co-created the Black and Latinx Farmers Immersion (BLFI) program as a container for new farmers to share growing skills in a culturally relevant and supportive environment led by people of color. Farming While Black organizes and expands upon the curriculum of BLFI to provide readers with a concise guide to all aspects of small-scale farming, from business planning to preserving the harvest.”

Sign up to receive the Google Meet Invite link or phone number to call-in by searching “Sierra Club Wisconsin Book Club” on Facebook or on the Sierra Club Wisconsin events page at [www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/southeast-gateway](http://www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/southeast-gateway)



## Canoe/Kayak the Nippersink Creek Through Glacial Park

**-- Sunday, August 15 at 1:00 PM --**

Join the Southeast Gateway Group for a canoe/kayak trip down Nippersink Creek through Glacial Park in the McHenry County, Illinois Park System. Glacial Park is part of the Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge System.

Meet at 1:00 PM at the Keystone Rd landing parking lot for a car transfer to the Pioneer Rd landing before we get paddling.

Glacial Park is an aptly named gem of park in the McHenry County Park System. It has glacial features, (kames, kettles, bogs, etc.) and is a beautiful park. Nippersink Creek is a locally famous destination for hand-powered watercraft. Hackmatack Nat'l Wildlife Pres. is a recent addition to the system of wildlife preserves that is defined by being in the Nippersink drainage basin. It lies in both Wisconsin and Illinois.

We will enjoy seeing prairie plants, marsh and riverine plants, beautiful oak woods (appreciating the shade on a warm sunny day) and bikers on the Illinois Prairie Path crossing the bridge over us, and kames and other glacial features for which the park is named.

The trip downstream will last about two hours. There are 10 riffles which will challenge the group to find the ideal place to navigate the stream.

It is important that you sign up if interested so that I can get hold of you should conditions be too bad to go.  
**Please contact:**  
**SEGG Outings Chair, Allan Sommer**  
**Sommerallan4@gmail.com**

### STAY CURRENT

Sign up to receive our Monthly SEGG E-News filled with upcoming SEGG programs, events, meetings & other local happenings by Emailing: [melissa.warner3@a2q.com](mailto:melissa.warner3@a2q.com)

## Kohler Andrae Lakeshore



[wiscoland.com](http://wiscoland.com)

The Kohler Company has plans to construct their fifth golf course in Sheboygan County, the 16th in total for the County.

Kohler's website calls the design for the new course "minimalist" and pledges to "leave the world a better place." However, the proposed golf course would devastate **247 acres of dunes and wetlands** on the Kohler Andrae Lakeshore, one of the rarest ecosystems in Wisconsin.

The plan would destroy **50-60% of old growth forest** that has not been logged in over 150 years.

More than **11,000 migratory birds** use this habitat on an annual basis, as well as hundreds of species of mammals, amphibians, and plants, some endangered or threatened.

**Five acres** of Kohler Andrae State Park, the fourth most visited State Park in Wisconsin, would be used to build a rotary, a four-lane road, and a 22,000 square foot maintenance facility for the golf course.

The Kohler Andrae Lakeshore is also culturally significant. Over **25,000 artifacts** have been recovered onsite, as well as 2,500-year-old human remains.

Multiple Environmental groups have spoken out in opposition of their construction plan, including the Wisconsin Chapter of the Sierra Club.

### YOU CAN HELP!!

Visit the Sierra Club Wisconsin website or Facebook page to find out how you can get involved.



Photo by Ryan Brady for Wisconsinbirds.org

# Science Shorts: Greenhouse Gases

*A Better Understanding of the World We Live In*  
By Andy Hayes

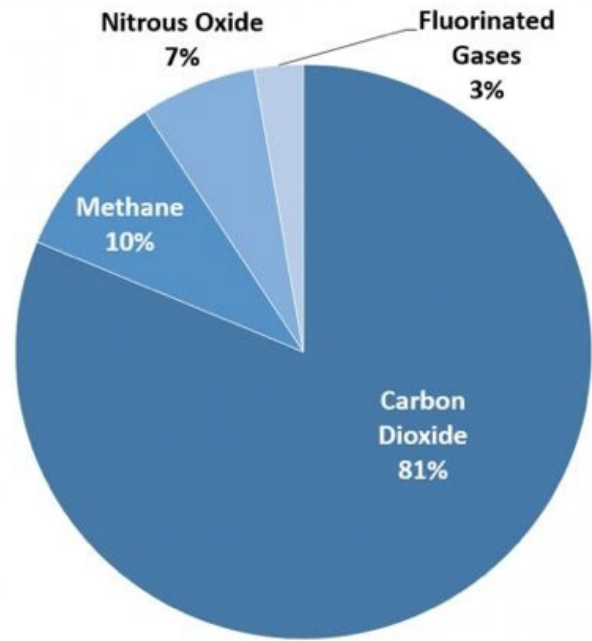
Welcome, scientists, to the first of many Science Shorts that we all can use to understand our world around us a little better!

Throughout our day-to-day lives, we hear scientific claims and scientific terms that accompany these claims. Throughout this series, our goal is to gain a little more familiarity with some of the most common (though sometimes confusing) terms used in topics concerning the environment and our future. Let's start with one of the most iconic terms in the business: greenhouse gases!

What is a greenhouse gas? Why is it called a greenhouse gas? These questions can be best answered by considering what a greenhouse is in the first place. So, what is a greenhouse? Of course, we know that it's not a house that's painted green. Rather, it is a building that provides plants (green plants) the optimal conditions to grow. Setting up these conditions requires trapping in humidity and warm temperatures so that the plants have the resources and energy to grow. To accomplish this, greenhouses usually have clear walls and a clear roof. This allows sunlight in to warm the plants and give them sunlight for photosynthesis. The sunlight has enough energy to make it through the glass on its way in, but not enough to make it out.

Ok, so we know what a greenhouse is, but what is a greenhouse GAS? To allow us to live our current lifestyles, humans have been putting many harmful gases into the atmosphere. We've been having a problem with our atmosphere (made up of a whole bunch of gases) behaving like the clear walls and roofs of a greenhouse. Our atmosphere allows sunlight to enter and then traps that sunlight and heat inside our atmosphere. As you might be able to recall, this is exactly how greenhouses work. You might be asking yourself some questions: Do all gases in our atmosphere do this? Which gases are the most common to lead to a greenhouse effect?

## Overview of Greenhouse Gas Emissions in 2018



The most common gases that you've heard of include carbon dioxide (mostly from emissions from vehicles and energy production), methane (from livestock farts), and nitrous oxide (used in agriculture). Look at this pie chart to see how much we put into the atmosphere. Carbon dioxide is by far the most emitted gas and we're working very hard to bring that number down (we'll learn more about these ways in future science shorts!

What is the problem with greenhouse gasses? The Earth right now is like a greenhouse that doesn't have a climate control switch. We keep putting gases into our atmosphere, which traps more and more heat. You may be thinking, "this sounds like global warming!" You're right; that's exactly what it is! Can we stop it? That has been and is still a debate. If it's possible, it's definitely going to take all of us.

### ***Are you interested in what you can do to help?***

Understanding how your lifestyle adds to the greenhouse effect on this planet by looking at your "carbon footprint" is the first step. Check the website below to calculate your impact:

[www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/household-carbon-footprint-calculator](http://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/household-carbon-footprint-calculator)



## Racine County Conservation Issue **Save Gifford Oaks**



Racine Unified School District purchased a property directly east of Gifford School to expand its parking lot, a site where 28 mature, hundred year oaks now stand. While another parking lot might be necessary, trees, too, are necessary for much more than we take for granted. We ask the school district to find a way to rearrange the current plan in a way that expands parking options while also preserving these hundred year old trees.

This grove of oaks, an example of the oak savannah that once covered our area, could provide students with a nearby experience in nature that doesn't require busses and permission slips. Considering that RUSD Board policy recognizes the need to "exercise stewardship of the environment" this compromise and revision of the existing plan seems reasonable to expect.

Please sign the petition at <https://tinyurl.com/savegiffordolks>

# Sharing is Caring: For Each Other and For Our Mother(earth)

by Amy Macemon



Through these “hitches” I find myself where I am now. As a life-long Racinean, I am constantly discovering the hitches between people, ideas, aspirations and, ultimately, the hope that so many people have to make our local communities a better place. By thinking locally, we act globally. And it doesn’t get more local than our neighbors. With summer in full swing, the weather is ripe for getting outside. So, why not make it a point to meet your neighbors? And while you’re at it, consider how you can share resources amongst yourselves.

Are you wondering, “What is she talking about?!” I’m talking about working to create mini-sharing economies. A sharing economy is, at its essence, the idea of sharing goods without the transfer of ownership. Examples include peer-to-peer lending, apartment/house renting, couchsurfing, ridesharing, WWOOFing, reselling and more. There are many businesses that utilize sharing economy principles, but I want to think about the sharing economy’s utility on a smaller scale.

I want to expand upon the idea of borrowing the proverbial “cup of flour” from your neighbor and challenge you to talk with them about how you may be able to share larger possessions such as lawn mowers, snow blowers, weedwhackers, the slow cooker you don’t use anymore, your garden seeds, etc. Often, our neighbors are a constant and it may be worthwhile to have a conversation with them to think strategically about sharing or trading goods and services.

Besides, by sharing goods, we reduce consumption and when we reduce consumption, we take it easy on good ol’ Gaia; not to mention our pocketbook!

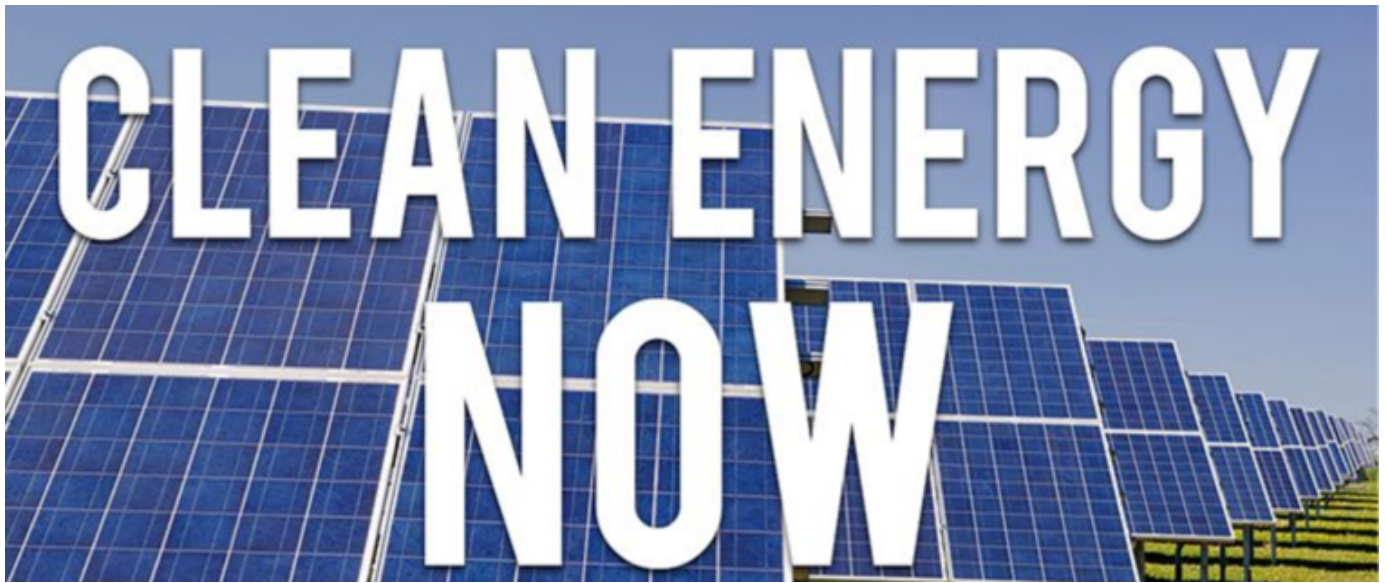
Another option to embrace is purchasing items second-hand. Think about the Goodwills, the Salvation Armys, the Habitat for Humanity’s ReStores, the Value Villages, and The Play It Again Sports. Not to mention the many local consignment and resale shops, tailors, seamstresses, lamp repair shops (La Esther’s in Kenosha!), shoe repair shops, etc. And, of course, estate and rummage sale season is upon us! Whether you’re attending or hosting, be sure to donate items you no longer have a use for instead of throwing them away which ultimately adds to the issue of overfilled landfills, like in Racine. If you’re looking for something specific, turn to the internet—Craigslist, Facebook Market place, eBay, PoshMark, Tradesy, and more—to find it second-hand.

My hope with this article is to re-invigorate the sense of connection to all things, specifically in regards to our considerations to our many possessions. Let’s think about the need to buy in the first place. Let’s think about what we might have on hand. Let’s think about the need to buy new versus the opportunity to give new life to something old. Let’s think about the opportunity to connect with a neighbor or friend to discuss how we can trade goods or services instead of buying them outright. Let’s think about building a stronger community through the idea of **sharing is caring**.

## Other related resources and ideas:

- Greening Greater Racine’s Zero Waste Group
- Look up Blue Zones and the Moai way of life
- Join a local “Buy Nothing” page on Facebook
- Check for local rummage and estate sales
- Check the “free” listing on Craigslist for your county
- Reduce, Reuse, Recycle- in that order!
- Mend and fix items before purchasing another
- Buy experiences, not things

**Have other great “consumption reduction” ideas?  
Shar it on our “Sharing is Caring” Facebook post!**



**By Carl Lindner**

Late last year, We Energies' \$15 million-a-year executive Gale Klappa announced that the older coal burning plant in Oak Creek would be retired in 2024. This decision is hardly cause for celebration. This plant should be shut down immediately. It is unnecessary. We Energies could save \$75 million every year by purchasing that energy from the Midwest grid. Four more years of poisoning our air and water, and for what? We Energies' self-proclaimed "good neighbor" should act like one. Remember the hazards posed by coal, the dirtiest of the fossil fuels:

Coal is toxic, start to finish. Coal dust alone is a prime factor in causing breathing problems, such as asthma, bronchitis, emphysema and COPD. Children and the elderly are especially susceptible to these health dangers. Coal dust blows off the 120-140 cars that make up the many delivery trains, affecting all who live in the vicinity of the tracks. Coal dust blowing off the mountains of coal at the two plants in Oak Creek poisons the air for residents and for everyone living in southeastern Wisconsin. This is no exaggeration as the smallest dust particles (2.5 microns) can be airborne over a radius of 30 miles—an area extending from Milwaukee through Racine and all the way to

south Kenosha. These fine dust particles are the most dangerous, as they lodge in the lungs and cannot be expelled by coughing or sneezing.

At the end stage, coal ash (the residue of burned coal) contains large amounts of mercury, arsenic and lead. There is no safe way to dispose of coal ash, which sooner or later leaches into groundwater and wells or finds its way (sometimes by being dumped secretly) into rivers and streams. The other threat from the end stage of coal energy comes from the plants' daily effluent discharge. The water pumped out into Lake Michigan every day contains those same carcinogenic metals at levels well above safety limits and which have been accumulating for decades.

And none of this is new information. What IS new is the just-released national report and research tool by the Sierra Club, a report "which grades the 50 largest investor-owned utilities across the country based on their current plans for the next decade for retiring coal plants, investing in clean energy and canceling plans for construction of new gas plants." On the basis of "Planned Clean Energy vs. Existing Fossil Generation," We Energies receives a "D" (23 points out of 100), and WEC, its parent company, an "F" (17 points). These

two energy producers supply all of eastern Wisconsin —Green Bay to Kenosha — with energy almost entirely generated from fossil fuel.

We Energies' announcement said not a word about retiring the larger plant. Remaining in effect is We Energies' intention to continue operating its massive 1300 MW Elm Road Generating Station through 2050.

2030 is the scientifically agreed-upon date for ceasing all fossil fuel production to save our planet from going past the tipping point for climate disaster. We Energies promises to continue its environmental assault for more than 20 years beyond that deadline. That mountain of coal will continue to expel toxic dust into the air and our lungs for the foreseeable future. That monster of a coal plant will continue to produce coal ash and will continue to discharge, every day, its devil's cocktail of mercury, arsenic and lead into our Great Lake.

That plant must stop burning coal by 2030 and it must begin its transition to clean, renewable energy immediately. By doing this, We Energies and WEC will continue to reap large profits for as long as energy is needed AND our lives will be healthier and so will our planet.

Is that too much to ask?  
Is it really, Mr. Klappa?



Your donation helps us continue to "Explore, Enjoy and Protect" SE Wisconsin. Checks can be made out to *Sierra Club SEGG* to be used towards any purpose, or to *Sierra Club Foundation* to be used strictly for educational programs and activities. Please mail donations to our treasurer:  
**Jeff Sytsma, 3508 Washington Ave, Racine WI 53405**

SEGG encourages you to WRITE to your legislators on the issues you care about. Find your representative at [legis.wisconsin.gov](http://legis.wisconsin.gov)



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# SOUTHEAST SIERRA



The newsletter of the Southeast Gateway Group is published quarterly by Group members. Please send articles, event submissions, photographs, corrections and/or comments to:

**Nicole Reid - nreid23@wi.rr.com**  
 Please use subject line: *SEGG Newsletter*

**Deadline for Nov-Jan Issue:**  
**Friday, Oct. 1, 2021**

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## **SAVE GIFFORD WOODS!!!** see page 4



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