



SOUTHEAST SIERRAN

News of the
Southeast Gateway Group
of the Sierra Club

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From the Chair
by Tom Rutkowski

The Long Now

The long now—those words might recall a time spent on the phone waiting for a customer service representative to “be with you shortly.” They might remind you of time when you sat at a meeting that was already twice as long as it needed to be. Maybe it best describes this midpoint in a presidential term that seems like it will last forever. The point is that our concept of now, the way we see our moment, is measured in hours and days and maybe even years, not decades or centuries or millennia. Though we’ve been wired by evolution to respond to the immediate, it seems our own sense of the immediate has contracted. The news presents the world in quarterly economic reports and election cycles. Our own daily pace, saturated with the Internet, has quickened. Addressing long-range problems has always been challenging, but now rising to that challenge has become even more crucial for our long-term survival.

The founders of the Long Now Foundation want us to think more broadly and deeply about time, to think even longer than the seven-generation time frame advocated by the Iroquois philosophy. The Long Now Foundation hopes to “foster responsibility in the framework of the next 10,000 years.” As a tangible embodiment of this longer-range vision, they’ve set to work on building a clock within a mountain in the Sierra Diablo range of West Texas. Danny Hillis, a computer scientist who originally conceived of this goal, describes the project:

I think it is time for us to start a long-term project that gets people thinking past the mental barrier of an ever-shortening future. I would like to propose a large (think Stonehenge) mechanical clock, powered by seasonal temperature changes. It ticks once a year, bongs once a century, and the cuckoo comes out every millennium. Such a clock, if sufficiently impressive and well engineered, would embody deep time for people. It should be charismatic to visit, interesting to think about, and famous enough to become iconic in the public discourse. Ideally, it would do for thinking about time what the photographs of Earth from space have done for thinking about the environment. Such icons reframe the way people think.

If you plan to be around in 2040 or care about those who will be, the recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report should have captured your attention. The report, released in October, reveals the stark difference between a world that warms by 1.5 degrees compared to 2 degrees Celsius. It’s the difference between a difficult life and a disastrous one for those alive just twenty-two years from now. At the higher end of this projection, coral reefs will disappear. The number of people facing extreme heat, water shortages, and crop failures will rise by the millions. For thirty years now, such projections of the future have been abstractions apparently too easy to dismiss, but increasingly these abstractions take on concrete form and become headlines.

Since the IPCC report was released, Hurricane Michael hit the Florida Panhandle and caused the deaths of thirty-six people. Fire consumed two million acres of California, destroyed over 18,000 structures and killed eighty-five people. Such catastrophes emphasize the urgency of actions called for in the report. The National Climate Assessment, released on the shopping holiday of Black Friday to minimize attention, was another ominous assessment. Both reports warn of the limited time remaining to act, yet both present the possibility of preventing the worst consequences if we begin now to take necessary, long-delayed action.

To stay within that 1.5 degree range we need to reduce carbon pollution by 45% in twelve years and by 100% by 2050. Considering the magnitude of the task, that window of opportunity is the blink of an eye, too soon to be achieved, and yet at the same time, seemingly too far off in the future to trigger immediate response.



The 10,000 Year Clock is under construction in western Texas

Con't. on page 2

I hope that someone will remember to watch that cuckoo emerge from that mountain a thousand years from now. I appreciate the effort of the Long Now Foundation to counterbalance the short with the long term. There are other ways to achieve this effect. Go out and view a red rock canyon carved by a river over millions of years or see entire mountain ranges rising or subsiding like waves across a continent. You don't need to travel far; go look at our Great Lake and know that just 20,000 years ago an ice sheet

two miles thick left us one of the largest pockets of fresh water in the world. Knowing some geology will help to rescale our sense of time and connect our own brief moment to a much longer now. It can also add a much needed dose of awe and its companion, humility.

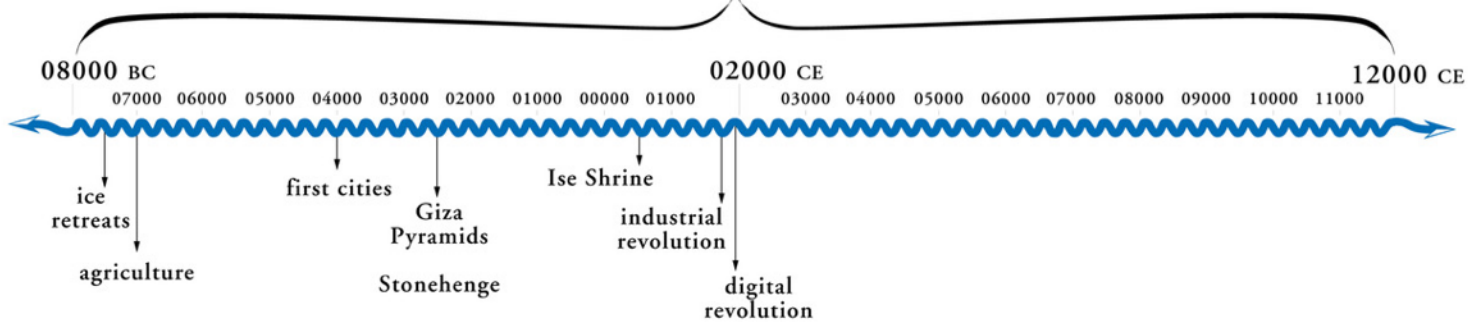
Better yet, go out at night to view a clear winter sky through the lens of astronomy. The long now could

also describe the time that light has traveled from stars and galaxies. Merely 25,000 light years away, the closest galaxy, the Canis Major Dwarf Galaxy, is so small and near that it is contained within our own Milky Way. By the time light just now leaving this galaxy reaches Earth, some historians of the distant future might marvel at how humanity united to overcome greed and division to solve a global problem, might appreciate how we were able to reconcile the demands of the present and the future just in time.



t h e l o n g n o w

20,000 years



Graphs courtesy of The Long Now Foundation at longnow.org

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GET INVOLVED START HERE!

We Need to Talk: SEGG Planning Meeting

Saturday, January 12 from 11AM-2PM

Pringle Nature Center, 9800 County MB, Bristol, WI

There is no doubt that next year Southeastern Wisconsin will be talking about Foxconn and its impact on our environment. A new governor, a new leader for the Department of Natural Resources, and new appointments for the Public Service Commission might bring important changes in environmental policy and regulation. We will be gathering in January to discuss these issues and more.

If you have ideas you would like to suggest, actions to initiate, or talents to contribute, please come and help us set our priorities and goals for the coming year at the Southeast Gateway Sierra Club's annual planning meeting at the Pringle Nature Center on Saturday, January 12th at 11:00 AM. Feel free to bring a bag lunch.

If you're interested in becoming more active with the Southeast Gateway Group, this is a great opportunity to jump in.

2019 Sierra Club Calendars

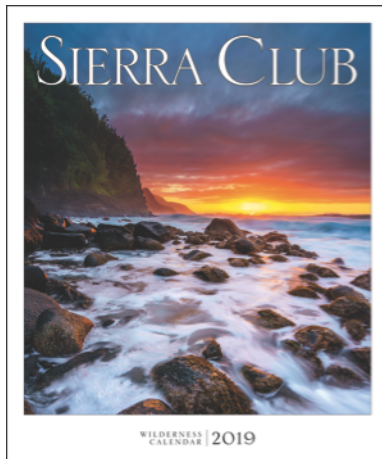
It's not too late to get your 2019 Sierra Club Calendars!

They make a nice gift and are a great way to support Southeast Gateway Group activities. Purchase yours at the next Southeast Gateway Group program or by contacting Judy Rockwell at jjrockwell@gmail.com or 262-742-4306.

Two styles to choose from:

The engagement calendars are spiral bound, have a week-by-week format, and

56 full-color images by America's leading nature photographers. Engagement calendars are \$16.00.



The spiral-bound wall calendar features twelve stunning landscape photographs. Sierra Club Wilderness Calendar has been America's best-loved wall calendar for more than 40 years. Wall calendars are \$15.00.

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Sandy Berezowitz
G. R. & A. C. Boucher
Timothy Canady
Sue Clohan
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Mark Redlin
Michael & Susan Remson
Sue Rich
Patricia Rompesky
Eugene Ruhle
Russ Schwartz
Robert Watts
C. Patrick & D. Welle
Sandra Willard
Steven Wortman

Kenosha Green Congregations Revived!

Led by Bradford Community Church UU, Grace Lutheran Church, and Immanuel United Methodist Church, the Kenosha Green Congregations are now active again. We are currently working on two initiatives:



The first initiative is to promote recycling in Kenosha Parks and at special events. As a result of our efforts and the cooperation of Kenosha Waste Superintendent Keir Powell, a pilot recycling program will be started in Pennoyer Park this Spring. Recycling containers will also be available for special events such as the Tall Ships Event and the Fourth of July Parade.

The second initiative is to work on climate change on the local level. We have learned that Kenosha Mayor John Antaramian signed the Chicago Climate Charter last year. This accord basically asks mayors to achieve a percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions in their cities equal to or greater to that determined by the Paris Agreement. The first step to achieve this goal is to quantify, track, and publicly report Kenosha's emissions.

We met with Mayor Antaramian and he authorized us to use UW-Parkside staff to complete a greenhouse gas inventory. Parkside professor Ross Astoria has agreed to make this a class project starting next semester.



Big Changes Coming to The Pringle Nature Center

Kenosha County has entered into a contract with Boundless Adventures to operate an aerial adventure park in Bristol Woods County Park, home of the Pringle Nature Center. Clearing of brush and dead trees is now under way. This is the first step in the preparation for the construction of platforms and connecting cables that will crisscross through the tree canopy within a six-acre section of the 200-acre park.



image from boundlessadventures.net/wi-park/



Nine courses will vary in difficulty, offering visitors of all ages and skill levels the opportunity to traverse the park via zip lines, ladders and bridges.

Although some would like to see the park remain as it is, there are benefits to the Pringle Nature Center. A portion of the proceeds from the adventure park will be used to make improvements to Bristol Woods and its nature center. Under consideration are expansion of the building, construction of a handicapped accessible trail and a nature play area for children.

In addition, Pringle Nature Center Board Chairman, Barry Thomas, has been working with Boundless Adventures to include an environmental education component to their program. The aerial adventure park is set to open by early summer 2019.

CLEAN POWER COALITION UPDATE

Do you live near a coal train? Have you ever walked along the tracks and noticed spilled coal? Are you frustrated with the impact coal trains are having on your community? The Clean Power Coalition wants to hear from you!

Coal trains aren't simply a nuisance; they're a source of fine particulate pollution in the form of coal dust. Coal is one of the only substances that is transported by rail car uncovered. Even though coal and coal dust contain toxins like mercury, arsenic, and lead, the trains remain uncovered due to the combustible nature of coal. This coal dust can land on nearby homes and hang in the air, putting people's health and nearby waterways at risk. Coal dust is very fine and can easily be inhaled by anyone near a coal train passing by. Breathing in coal dust can cause many serious illnesses and diseases, such as asthma, chronic lung diseases, cancer, and other illnesses that have been found in exposed coal miners. Children, seniors, and people with pre-existing lung conditions are most vulnerable to getting sick from coal dust, but it can affect anyone. Coal traveling through Racine is burned at the Oak Creek coal plants. Coal trains typically have around 115 cars, making them over a mile in length.

On November 27th, the Clean Power Coalition of Southeast Wisconsin held a community meeting about coal trains cutting through Racine and Kenosha. CPC members also participated in two rounds of door knocking in neighborhoods along the coal train tracks prior to the meeting. At that meeting, CPC heard from many people that the coal trains in Southeastern Wisconsin cause disruptions, impact people's lives, and can even hurt people's health. CPC is asking for help understanding the extent of the problem. If you live near a coal train, consider filling out CPC's train tracker online at cleanpowerwi.org/trains.

Additionally, in November, representatives from Greening Greater Racine, the Sierra Club and the Clean Power Coalition of Southeast Wisconsin delivered 621 petition signatures to We Energies in favor of a massive solar array at the Foxconn campus in Mount Pleasant! The Foxconn campus is projected to consume at least 200 megawatts, six times greater than the next-largest manufacturing plant in the state. Clearly, a decision by Foxconn to rely on renewable energy would have major impacts in leading Wisconsin to a future of clean energy.

Do you want to get involved with the Clean Power Coalition of Southeast Wisconsin? Join us for our next monthly meeting. The Clean Power Coalition meets on the third Tuesday of every month from 6:30 to 8:30 at the Eco Justice Center, 7133 Michna Road, Racine, WI 53402. Questions? Contact Miranda Ehrlich at cleanpowercoalition@gmail.com.

Seven Bridges Hike Recap

by, Allan Sommer, SEGG Outings Chair



Inscription on bridge reads, "Enter this wood and view the haunts of nature"

This past Veterans Day, November 11, Sierra Clubbers and guests met for a hike on the Seven Bridges trail through South Milwaukee's beautiful Grant Park. There are indeed more than seven bridges, plus ravines buttressed with walls of flagstone. The trail was built and augmented with bridges during the depression as part of the Works Progress Administration when young men who would otherwise be unemployed were put to work on public projects.

The trail led from an elevation well above lake level, which gave us great views, then down to some beach areas, and back up again. It crosses multiple ravines and led us past a house where the horticulturist for the Milwaukee County park system once lived and planted specimen trees.

While on the beach we could look both north and south and not see any other roads, houses, or buildings, although we knew that the Oak Creek power plant was looming just south of us. Because the trail is within sight of the Oak Leaf Trail, this outing has inspired me to plan a bike outing or two in the vicinity come next spring or summer. Stay tuned!



Join our Meetup group to stay in the loop!

www.meetup.com/Southeast-Gateway-Group-Sierra-Club-Hikes-and-Activities/

400 Trees Planted in Colonial Park!



Panorama of the park before planting.

Weed Out! Racine

By, *Melissa Warner*

November fourth dawned clear and crisp. Colonial Park looked bare and empty in the early morning light. But, Racine City Forester, Matt Koepnick, and his staff were already busy moving trees and equipment into place. Soon over 40 volunteers would join them, digging holes, then planting, mulching and watering over 400 hackberry, catalpa, red maple and basswood trees.

The bare root "whips" were purchased last spring and kept in an irrigated gravel bed over the summer in order to develop extensive fibrous root systems for a better survival rate once planted. With many willing hands the job was completed in less than three hours!

Tree planting is the most recent step in the reforestation of Colonial Park, necessitated by the removal of over 1,000 dead and dying ash trees. A logging company took the trees, but forestry staff needed to remove stumps and branches to prepare the ground so that new trees could be planted.

We look forward to seeing these trees grow into a sturdy forest, creating new canopy for the ecosystem. Next steps include adding shrubs that will provide food and cover for wildlife, and of course weeding out the garlic mustard that is sure to appear next spring. Another tree planting in adjacent sections of Colonial Park is planned for next fall; be sure to join us!

SEGG encourages you to *WRITE* to your legislators on the issues you care about.
Find yours at **legis.wisconsin.gov**



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

Nicole Reid - nreid23@wi.rr.com

Please use subject line: *SEGG Newsletter*

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In This Issue:

- January Planning Meeting
- Big Changes for Bristol Woods
- Kenosha Green Congregations
- Reforestation of Colonial Park
- Seven Bridges Recap
- Clean Power Coalition Update
- It's Calendar Time
- Welcome New Members!
- ...and more ways
You Can Get Involved!*

400 Trees were planted in Colonial Park, Racine, last November thanks to efforts by Weed Out! Racine, the City of Racine, and many volunteers. The new trees are part of an effort to reforest the park which lost over 1,000 large ash trees due to the emerald ash borer. More on page 6.