



Sierra

January
2009

Newsletter of the Coulee Region Group

JANUARY MEETING

Coulee Wildlife Rehabilitation

Tuesday, Jan. 27th

7 pm at the
HoChunk Three Rivers House
at 8th & Main

(6 pm: ExComm meeting)

**Sierra Club members &
non-members all welcome!**

Speakers: Merv & Suzanne Broten

You may have seen coverage in the Tribune or on News 19 of Coulee Wildlife Rehabilitation's most recent rehabilitation and release of a bald eagle after hunters found it caught in a leg-hold trap. Merv and Suzanne Broten from the rehab center will be discussing the work they do rehabilitating wildlife, songbirds, and raptors. Their education ambassadors, a red-tailed hawk and a barred owl, will also be part of the program. We'll learn about the natural history of these birds, their habitat, and ecology, with plenty of time for questions and discussion.

FROM THE CHAIR:

Welcome to 2009! I'm going through the 2009 goal setting process at work - where the organizational goals are translated down to the individual goals that enable the high level goals to be met. The Sierra Club goes through the same process. National Sierra Club goals include:

- Curbing carbon emissions to stop global warming
- Move beyond coal for energy generation
- Clean energy solutions, including conservation
- Green cars, fuels, and transportation
- Critical wildlife habitat preservation
- Safeguarding human communities

Translated to the state level, that has meant:

- Support the Wisconsin Safe Climate Act to reduce CO2
- Member of Governor Doyle's Global Warming Task Force
- Stopping Alliant Energy's Nelson Dewey coal plant
- Promoting energy conservation and efficiency - energy star appliances and CFLs.
- "Cool Cities" program - La Crosse is a member
- The Blue Green Alliance to promote green technology jobs
- Support for the Great Lakes Compact and other Great Lakes protection bills

At the local level we've supported these actions plus:

- Support Clean Energy Coalition to reduce CO2 emissions
- Support for the Natural Step process in city and county government
- Participate in Light Bulb Walk to encourage CFL use and other conservation

The Sierra Club is unique in that it addresses these issues at all these levels to achieve its goals.

Pat Wilson

Cross Country Ski Outing Saturday, Jan. 24, 2009 Meet at 9 a.m.

Let's hope for snow this year. We'd like to do some exploring and trail breaking at the Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge, followed by lunch at a local restaurant. The Trempealeau Refuge is fairly flat, and there are good chances to see wildlife. This is weather dependent. Please call to let us know if you are interested and to make sure the trip is a go. Leader: Rick Komperud, 608-386-8771 or email: energy1@charter.net .





Coulee Region Sierra Club
Maureen Kinney
620 South 23rd Street
La Crosse, WI 54601

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
La Crosse, WI
Permit #814

Wisconsin Goes Solar

The Sierra Club's settlement on the Elm Road power plant near Milwaukee earlier this year secured 15 MW of new solar investment from three Wisconsin utilities. Last week, we won more private solar investments while opening the way for large-scale solar investments by utilities.

In a process that began last June and concluded last week, the John Muir Chapter teamed up with the National Coal Campaign and used the Public Service Commission's ratemaking process to secure about \$7.4 million in solar investments and jumpstart a plan to generate solar electricity for Wisconsin in a big way. Armed with ground-breaking analysis from Millennium Energy, LLC of Golden, Colorado, we demonstrated the incredible economic potential of solar energy in Wisconsin and laid the groundwork for the first state-wide solar collaborative in the nation.

According to the PSC press release: "[Commissioner] Azar said that the agreement with Sierra Club further advances Wisconsin's commitment to reducing greenhouse gases and global warming."

Coulee Region Group 2009 Elections

Danny Foote, Rick Komperud, Andrea Parr, and Pat Wilson were elected to two year terms on the Coulee Region Group Executive Committee. Thank you to these people for serving. The Ex. Comm. will elect 2009 officers at its January meeting.

Progressive State of the Union Friday, January 30, 2009

5:30 to 11:00 p.m.

Concordia Ballroom

The fifth annual event is themed, "A New Day," with keynote speaker Ben Manski, a Madison attorney and Executive Director of the Liberty Tree Foundation for the Democratic Revolution. A donation of \$2 - \$20 at the door will get you a simple meal and plenty of networking opportunities with other area progressives. As in years past, they will collect non-perishable food items for donation to local food pantries.



From *GRIST Magazine* · **Is This What They Call 'Clean Coal'?**

Massive coal-ash spill in Tennessee threatens water supplies and public health. More than a billion gallons of coal ash have spilled from a coal-burning power plant in eastern Tennessee since Dec. 22, when a retention wall at the plant burst. That's billion with a "B," which means the amount of gunk spilled is about 100 times larger than the mess from the Exxon Valdez disaster. Gray sludge has spread across 300 acres, wiped out three homes, oozed into a tributary of the Tennessee River, and made a lot of local residents worried about their health and water supplies. Coal ash contains mercury and traces of heavy metals like arsenic and uranium. In the wake of the spill, high levels of arsenic have been found in some rivers and wells near the spill site, though authorities insist that drinking water is still safe. Enviro's are seizing the opportunity to point out that "clean coal" is an oxymoron. There are several videos on YouTube at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rGmVCABMRRQ&feature=related>