



Sierra

February
2009

Newsletter of the Coulee Region Group

FEBRUARY MEETING

**Coulee Partners
For Sustainability**
Tuesday, Feb. 24th
7 pm at the
HoChunk Three Rivers
House at 8th & Main
(6 pm: ExComm meeting)
**Sierra Club members &
non-members all
welcome!**

Speaker: Glen Jenkins, CPS Co-Chair

Coulee Partners for Sustainability (CPS) is a group of La Crosse area residents interested in promoting lifestyles that are environmentally sustainable, economically viable, and socially just. CPS was formed in the spring of 2007 and is now recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Glen Jenkins, CPS Co-chair and retired Principal of Longfellow Middle School, will tell us what the organization has been doing. That includes running the Natural Step Study Circles and Northwest Earth Institute Study Circles that support the Natural Step Framework adopted by La Crosse City and County. It also includes support of the 2009 Earth Week celebration in La Crosse and education about the current legislation to create the Sustainable La Crosse Commission and adopt the Strategic Plan for Sustainability.

FROM THE CHAIR:

What an honor to have been elected to serve as your new chair! A big thank you to Pat Wilson for his many years as chair of the Coulee Region Sierra Club—his dedication and commitment have been amazing! I'm not all that sure what I've gotten myself into but, luckily, Pat has reassured me that he'll continue to assist and advise.

With the new Administration, there are high hopes, not only at the Sierra Club but around the nation, that the issues concerning the environment will receive high attention. If you are ready to be a part of this rousing movement, let's talk! There are many opportunities for involvement: attend the upcoming Conservation Lobby Day (see article), join working committees, participate in the clean water monitoring program, register for an outing, write letters to elected representatives, and much more. Check out our web page for more information: <http://wisconsin.sierraclub.org/coulee/index.htm>

I look forward to meeting and working with Sierra Club members over the next two years!

Marilyn Pedretti

608-317-9698 or mjpedretti@yahoo.com

Clean Energy Coalition Thursday, 2/26/09 at 7:00 p.m. Ho-Chunk Building Basement

Topic: *Retrofitting La Crosse's Buildings for
Greater Energy Efficiency*

The two speakers will be Nick Nichols (with La Crosse County), and Jeff Rich (with Gundersen Lutheran Hospital).

Cross Country Ski Outing Saturday, Feb 21, 2009

So, it was too cold in January for our annual ski outing ... that won't stop us! We have another outing planned for February 21st. If interested, contact Sharon Stoll at Stollsha@msu.edu for details. Of course, this will be weather dependent.

Coulee Region Group Officers Determined

The Coulee Group Board met on January 27th and elected the following officers for 2009. Thanks to all these people for serving:

Chair – Marilyn Pedretti
Outings Chair & Program Chair – Pat Wilson
Vice Chair & Chapter Delegate - Rick Komperud
Secretary & Membership Chair - Andrea Parr
Treasurer - Danny Foote
Environmental Ed. Chair & Calendar Rep. –
Maureen Kinney

Non-board positions:
Conservation Co-chairs –
Barb Frank, Ardelle Tuxen
Newsletter Editor – Marilyn Pedretti
Clean Energy Coalition Reps. –
Bill Katra, Barb Frank, Rick Komperud
Water Monitoring Program –
Rick Komperud, Danny Foote

Open positions: *Political Chair & Alt. Chapter Delegate*

Welcome new members! (November 2008)

Drew Augustyn,
Mary Dresser,
Jeremy Gragert,
Mary Jahangir,
Maureen McCarty,
Frank Nolan,
Randy Paine,
Jeff Priem,
Maurice Raifsnider,
Matt Roth,
Melvin Westpfahl



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

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2009 Environmental Grants

For many years, the Coulee Region Sierra Club has provided environmental grants to schools and other youth groups, for purposes of carrying out environmental projects. This year, \$200 was awarded to two different groups: the Sand Lake Elementary School in the Holmen School District and the Norskedalen Nature & Heritage Center.

The Sand Lake Elementary School made an application for a project associated with Earth Day that they were coordinating with the Bluff County Master Gardeners Program. The project will benefit children in grades K-5 (about 515 in all). The project is intended to integrate science, math, language arts, environmental education and health concepts in an interdisciplinary approach. Specifically, the students will plant and care for plants and learn composting, to understand better how food is grown, how to care for plants and how to use the "waste" materials. Our grant will be used to pay for a portion of a small greenhouse and greenhouse supplies. The other co-funder is the Bluff County Master Gardeners.

Norskedalen has a "Wetland Wonders Program" that they offer to K-12 students, which allows students to discover the world of macro-invertebrates as they explore the ponds and creeks at Norskedalen. The students will learn how to use a dichotomous key to collect and identify wetland organisms, and to learn the methods of scientific observation. This will allow students to look at the organisms under microscopes and will allow for hands-on experiences. The actual grant is to be used to purchase the pond life books, collecting nets, forceps and one pair of hip boots.

This grant program allows our organization to help further environmental education, and to also hopefully make the Coulee Regional Sierra Club better known within our community.

Maureen L. Kinney

MVC Wins 3 Awards!

Mississippi Valley Conservancy (MVC), the regional land trust based in La Crosse, has won three awards in the last six months. MVC has permanently protected 8,300 acres in Grant, Crawford, Vernon, La Crosse, Monroe, Trempealeau and Buffalo Counties. This acreage has more than tripled in the last three years. MVC was named *2008 Wisconsin Land Trust of the Year* by Gathering Waters Conservancy in Madison, as well as being named *2008 Conservation Organization of the Year* by the La Crosse County Conservation Alliance. MVC has now been named "*Friend of Conservation – Outstanding Organization*" by the Wisconsin Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society at its annual meeting. For more information, go to <http://www.mississippivalleyconservancy.org/>

Conservation Lobby Day - February 25

Do you want your legislators to vote to protect clean water, clean air, natural areas, and sporting opportunities? Join us for Conservation Lobby Day 2009—February 25th, State Capitol.

Join citizens from across Wisconsin at the State Capitol to tell legislators that you expect them to vote well on natural resource issues. You will speak to both your state Representative and state Senator about key conservation issues. In addition, you'll receive skill and issue training that you can take away and apply when advocating back home. You'll have the opportunity to meet others that share your conservation values - each year, representatives from nearly 100 conservation groups from across Wisconsin descend on the Capitol for Conservation Lobby Day.

In 2009-2010, the conservation community will be fighting to make sure:

- Wisconsin adopts a strong statewide plan to tackle global warming;
- Wisconsin returns to an Independent DNR Secretary and has timely votes on the DNR Board;
- Wisconsin manages groundwater resources to protect drinking water supplies, lakes, streams, and wetlands;
- Wisconsin protects drinking water supplies by making sure we safely spread agricultural, municipal, and industrial waste.

To RSVP, visit www.conservationvoters.org. RSVP deadline is Feb. 13th. Call Pat Wilson at 608-788-8831 if you're interested in car pooling.