



Sierra

May
2009

Newsletter of the Coulee Region Group

MAY MEETING

CapX2020 Power Line Proposal & Its Effect on the Coulee Region Tuesday, May 26th
7 pm at the
HoChunk Three Rivers House at 8th & Main
(6 pm: ExComm meeting)
Sierra Club members & non-members all welcome!

Speaker: Jeremy Chipps, Member of La Crescent Chapter of Citizens Energy Task Force

Jeremy Chipps is a member of the Citizens Energy Task Force (<http://www.cetf.us>). CETF is a group of concerned citizens of Minnesota and Wisconsin opposed to CapX2020 - a proposal for three new high voltage power lines that would extend across Minnesota. One of the power lines is routed from the Twin Cities through Rochester into La Crosse, eventually being extended across Wisconsin to points east. The crossing of the Upper Mississippi Wildlife Refuge is one of many environmental concerns with the project. The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission recently approved the Certificate of Need for the project, but CETF feels that the project can be blocked through public education and a legal appeal of the Certificate of Need decision. Jeremy will provide the reasons he thinks this project does not serve the interests of local citizens, and tell us what help CETF needs to be successful with its efforts.

FROM THE CHAIR:

I'm excited to report that we'll be welcoming Laura Siitari back as our newsletter editor this fall. She actually volunteered (yes, without any begging on my part) to take on this daunting task each month. As some may recall, Laura did a fabulous job of producing the newsletter previous to me. Thank you, Laura!

A big THANK YOU to all who assisted with the Earth Day celebration here in La Crosse. The event was well-attended and everyone seemed to enjoy the celebration!

If you are you interested in knowing more about your produce, what fruits and vegetables are safer than others, or how to reduce your exposure to pesticides, check out this fabulous resource: www.foodnews.org.

Be sure to mark your calendars for the annual picnic, set for June 30th. More details will follow in next month's newsletter. Meanwhile, continue to enjoy the spring!

Marilyn Pedretti

608-317-9698 or mipedretti@yahoo.com



Trempealeau Bike Ride May 20, 6:00 p.m.

Park & ride from the Trempealeau Hotel. We'll cruise out and back on the Great River State Trail towards the marsh and wildlife refuge. Plan to ride for 1½ hours, at a relaxed pace for all comers. Join us for a bite to eat at the historic Trempealeau Hotel after. If you're unable to make the ride, feel free to meet for dinner (at 7:30?). Contact Sharon at stoll.sharon@mayo.edu or (906) 362-1003 with questions or to RSVP.

May Morning Bird Walks

Tuesdays: May 12 and 19 (La Crosse River Marsh, meet at the RABBIT trail, near new Myrick Hixon EcoCenter parking lot)

Thursdays: May 14 and 21 (Hixon Forest, meet at the Hixon Forest trail parking lot, off Milson Court)
~Join Pat & Bobbie Wilson and Dan Jackson for weekday morning bird walks from 6:30 to 8:00 a.m. to enjoy spring migration and to see our regular residents return. Feel free to leave early or stay later.

Reminder: Spring Highway Cleanup Tuesday, May 12, 5:30 pm

Meet at the city water well building near the intersection of County Highway B and River Valley Drive on the north side of La Crosse and help clean up our adopted River Valley Drive. Wear old clothes and bring work gloves. Orange vests and garbage bags are provided. We'll work for about an hour. There's an optional stop at Rudy's Drive-in after the cleanup. For more information, contact Pat or Bobbie Wilson 788-8831.

Go paperless! Email alp@haleskemp.com to receive your newsletter via email instead of paper!



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**20th MREA Energy Fair
 June 19-21, 2009
 Custer, WI**

Since 1990, the Energy Fair has shown fairgoers how to change the world while having fun. *The Energy Fair is the world's largest renewable energy, energy efficiency, and sustainable living educational event of its kind.* It features hundreds of workshops and exhibits all emphasizing clean energy & sustainable living, and is fun for the whole family. For information about the Energy Fair: www.the-mrea.org

**Bus Trip to the Energy Fair
 Saturday, June 20, 2009**

The People's Food Co-op (PFC) is organizing a bus trip to the Energy Fair again this year! For \$15, you'll enjoy a bus ride to the Fair (departing at 7:00 a.m., arriving at the Fair at 9:30 and returning at the PFC at 9:00 p.m.), visit with interesting folks along the way, and be eligible for bus prizes. To register for the bus, contact the PFC Customer Service Desk or call 784-5798 ext. 244 with credit card information. The deadline is June 6th. NOTE: The MREA gives \$5 off admission to the Fair for bus goers (coupon given on bus).

If you're interested in a nearby, low-cost canoeing clinic with great instructors, consider this clinic offered by the Sierra Club John Muir Chapter's River Touring Section - a statewide paddling group. Local Sierra Club members Pat and Bobbie Wilson will be among the instructors. Students provide their own canoe and equipment. There is canoe rental in the area.

**MOVING WATER CANOE CLINIC
 June 13 Kickapoo River**

Class I. Clinic Fee: \$25 per person. Confident and competent on lakes, but not ready for rivers? Then this canoe clinic is for you. We'll review the basic strokes—draws, prys, sweeps, forward, back and J. We'll discuss safety, reading water, and maneuvers—ferries, side slips, and eddy turns. Then we'll practice these skills as we canoe the Kickapoo. To register or get more details, contact: Meg Nelson, 608-242-8633, prairiesmoke2@gmail.com.

**Clean Energy Coalition
 Thursday, 5/28/09 at 7:00 p.m.
 Ho-Chunk Building Basement**

Topic: **Wisconsin's Electric Energy Future**
 Speaker: Former State Senator Mark Meyer**
 In the past half-century electricity generation and transmission concerns, once only local in importance, now affect complete regions of the country. However, future imperatives require a national and even international focus. Discussion at this forum will touch important issues such as: future wind derived electricity, transmission needs (where?, how large?, who funds new capacity?), the future of coal and nuclear, rate structure changes ("decoupling") for consumers, etc. Attorneys advising Commissioner Meyer require that during the forum there be no discussion regarding any contested case currently pending before the PSC.

**In 2004 Meyer was appointed by Governor Doyle to the PSC—the agency that approves all proposals from the state's utilities for new power generation, transmission modifications, and rate changes. Up until that year he had served as Senator representing the La Crosse area in Madison.



Community Supported Forest First of its Kind

Join the first ever Community Supported Forest, a mutual relationship between urban "members" and a rural forest resource. Membership to Driftless Farm's CSF includes access to 140 acres of forest as well as workshops such as beer brewing, bee keeping, and natural building; and supplies members with tangible goods such as sustainably milled lumber, delivered spring water and firewood, landscaping stone, garden space, gathering space with bonfires, camping & more. Contact Amelia Baxter, ameliaswan@wholetrees.com, 608-452-3894

Coulee Partners for Sustainability (CPS)

The CPS, a grassroots organization begun in October of 2007, has met regularly over the past two years and been involved in many community activities. They would now like to offer assistance with projects in the greater La Crosse community, such as leading study circles, assisting business/ green economy ventures, supporting neighborhood/ housing initiatives and promoting local foods/sustainable agriculture. To learn more, contact Glen Jenkins, www.cpslax.org.