



Sierra

April
2008

Newsletter of the Coulee Region Group

APRIL MEETING

Photography of our Fine, Feathered Friends

Tuesday, April 29th

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

(6 pm: ExComm meeting)

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

Speakers: Alan Stankevitz

In the year 2000, Alan began building his eco-friendly house in Southeastern Minnesota and while building the house, Alan's attention was quite often diverted to snapping a few photographs here and there of our fine feathered friends. Alan now has over 60,000 images of birds (don't worry, he won't be showing all of them) and his presentation will focus on some of his favorites, from Gold-Winged Warblers to Bald Eagles. Alan will also talk about digital photography and the advancements that have been made over the past few years.

FROM THE CHAIR:

I read that La Crosse was rated as the 14th greenest city in America - the 2nd greenest small city in America - in Country Home Magazine's 2008 Best Green Cities ranking. If you look through this newsletter, you'll see a lot of activity in April, particularly around Earth Day, that helps explain how we received that ranking. There are two organizations working on local solutions to global warming - the Clean Energy Coalition and the Coulee Partners for Sustainability, and both are increasing their activities and effectiveness. CEC is working on a compact fluorescent light bulb walk soon, which would get CFLs in the hands of residents who may not use them now. I have to admit my second thought on La Crosse's rating by Country Home is that the U.S. has a long way to go to make progress against increasing human-caused environmental problems.

Pat Wilson

Earth Week Events

There are a number of events in April to support Earth Day, extending the event into Earth Week, April 19 through April 27. Watch for more events to be announced closer to the date. Some events are:

► Community Earth Day - Saturday, April 26, 11 am to 5 pm, Cameron Park.

Contact: Erin LaVoie, lavoie.erin@students.uwlax.edu

We're looking for volunteers for the Sierra Club booth!

Contact Marilyn Pedretti, 608-317-9698

► Environmental Film Festival at the La Crosse Main Library, sponsored by Coulee Partners for Sustainability –

Sunday, April 20, 3 p.m. - Suzuki Speaks: It's Not Empty Space;

Wed., April 23, Noon - The Story of Stuff & The True Cost of Food;

Thursday, April 24, 7 p.m. - Affluenza;

Friday, April 25, Noon - Design E;

Sunday, April 27, 3 p.m. - This Ancient Love & Renewal.

► 6th Annual La Crosse County Collaboration Conference – Thurs., April 24, 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Contact Brian Fukuda, 608 785 5792 or fukuda.brian@co.la-crosse.wi.us.

Past Chair Mike Connolly

Mike Connolly died at age 56 on Sunday, March 23, after an eight year fight against a brain tumor and the effects of treatment. Mike was the 1983 Chair of the Coulee Region Group. Mike & Jan and family have lived in Eau Claire since 1988, where Mike continued his interests in canoeing, photography, painting, music, and teaching at Indianhead Technical College. Bobbie and I remember a Sierra Club hike Mike led in 1984 in Black River State Forest - when Bobbie kidded him about a muddy spot in the trail that would get her shoes dirty, Mike carried her across the mud! The Carnegie Hero Fund and the Coast Guard awarded medals to Mike for nearly losing his own life while saving a 9-year-old boy from drowning in Lake Superior in 2000. You can view some of Mike's photos and paintings at www.connollyphoto.com, including photos of son Patrick and daughter Sarah.



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

National Sierra Club Board Elections

It's time for the Sierra Club national Board of Directors election. You can vote until April 21, using the paper ballot you received in the mail or voting on line. Only about 10% of Sierra Club members vote in a typical board election. For the candidates recommended by Wisconsin's John Muir Chapter, see page 4 of the latest Muir View. That list includes local Coulee Region Group member Barbara Frank, who is up for re-election to her second term.

**Clean Energy Coalition
 7 p.m. Thurs., April 24th
 Three Rivers House**

A panel of specialists will inform us about the problems associated with disposing of the ash generated by our electrical power plants here in Western Wisconsin. This issue is moving to the forefront due to Dairyland Power's increased ash disposal requirements due to the emissions control equipment they installed on the Genoa power plant.

**Spring Highway Cleanup
 Tuesday, May 6, 6:00 pm**

The Coulee Region Group's adopted highway is River Valley Drive in the La Crosse River marsh. The first cleanup of the year will be Tuesday, May 6 at 6:00 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. 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.

May Weekday Morning Bird Walks

- ▶ La Crosse River Marsh Bird Walks, Tuesday mornings, April 29, May 6 & 13. Meet at the Rabbit Trail, near the Zoo parking lot.
- ▶ Hixon Forest Bird Walks, Thursday mornings, May 1, 8, 15. Meet at the Hixon Forest Trail parking lot, off Milson Ct.
- ▶ All bird walks start at 6:30 am, and the plan is to finish at 7:45 or 8:00 am. Feel free to leave early or stay later.

Leaders: Bobbie & Pat Wilson, 608-788-8831

Welcome new members!

Jane Aarstad, Peter Allen, Dr. David Ball, Betty Billyard, Richard Brown, Patricia Burr, Anna Doerr, Mark Domroese, Justin Fons, Ned & Carol Gatzke, Sarah Gillett, Scott Hankes, Christen Holcomb, Judith Hutchens, James Inderberg, Steve Kerbaugh, James Kroner, Soch Lor, Scott Mehus, Sheila Nordgaard, Mr. & Mrs. William Rabe, John Renda, Larry Ruby, Jeri Sebo, Laura Seielstad, Jaes Seis, Jesse Todd, Brian Wright & Nedira Haik, Craig Zimmerman

**Black River State Forest Master Plan
 Options**

The Wisconsin DNR has released the Preferred Alternatives and Options for the Black River State Forest Master Plan. It outlines land use and recreational management and potential boundary expansion. The preferred plan looks good! It supports most of the suggestions made by the Coulee Group last year. While 70% of the acreage is proposed for timber production, there 12 areas of forest proposed for native community management - including older white pine & oak communities and peatlands. There are two areas to be managed primarily for wildlife - the Dike 17 area (which will be expanded) and a jack pine barrens. In the 1980's the Sierra Club led annual outings to Dike 17 to view Sharp-tailed Grouse on their booming grounds. The Sharp-tailed grouse have declined sharply since then, but this could help revive them. The plan calls for improved visitor facilities for the cross country skiing and biking trails. The plan does not include any expansion of the motorized trails for off road vehicles, but does include measures to protect the long-term integrity of the forest.

The DNR is accepting public comments on the plan until April 30. I encourage you to read about the plan and send in comments in support of the plan. Read about the plan at http://dnr.wi.gov/master_planning/BlackRiver/. You can submit comments from that web site, or by mail to Pat Murphy, Wisconsin DNR, P.O. Box 4001, Eau Claire, WI 54702-4001.