



Sierra

May
2008

Newsletter of the Coulee Region Group

MAY MEETING

Insects and Conservation Issues

Tuesday, May 27th

7 pm at the
HoChunk Three Rivers
House at 8th & Main
(6 pm: ExComm meeting)
**Sierra Club members
&
non-members all
welcome!**

Speaker: Shahla Werner, Ph.D., Chapter Director, Sierra Club John Muir Chapter

We've heard a lot recently about introduced, invasive forest insects such as the emerald ash borer, hemlock woolly adelgid, gypsy moth, Asian Longhorned beetle, and Sirex woodwasp. Most of these insects are not found in Wisconsin yet, but may be here one day. Shahla Werner will tell us about the threats posed by these insects and issues surrounding efforts to manage them in our forests and urban areas. Shahla will also cover the need for conservation of native Wisconsin insects.

Shahla has a Ph.D. in entomology from UW-Madison. She recently returned to Madison from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation & Natural Resources to become the Director of the Sierra Club's John Muir Chapter. She can also tell us what's going on in the Sierra Club in Wisconsin and the status of Sierra Club legislative priorities.

FROM THE CHAIR:

This has been a good month for Coulee Group members running for office! First of all, congratulations to Barbara Frank for winning re-election to the National Board of the Sierra Club. It's great to have someone familiar with Midwestern environmental concerns - such as the Mississippi River and the Great Lakes - on the board.

Second, four Coulee Group members were elected to County Boards in the Coulee Region. Marilyn Pedretti & Bev Mach were newly elected and Sharon Hampson was re-elected to the La Crosse County Board, while Philip Hooker was newly elected to the Vernon County Board. Thanks to these people for committing the time and effort it takes to serve on local government. And my apologies to other members whom I missed who are serving on county boards.

I also wanted to mention the great work the Clean Energy Coalition is doing under the leadership of Bill Katra and others like Michelle Jerome. I was asked by the chapter office to list activities to address global warming that the Group has been associated with. I looked up the CEC programs over the last seven months:

- ▶ October 07 - forum with large energy users in the La Crosse area - Gunderson Clinic/Lutheran Hospital, La Crosse School District, Trane Company - to discuss conservation programs underway.
- ▶ November 07 - meeting with Dairyland Power and Xcel Energy officials on current & future power needs in the area, along with conservation and renewable options.
- ▶ January 08 - forum with owners of energy efficient existing residences in our area.
- ▶ February 08 - forum on LEED certification and "How Green Can the New La Crosse County Jail Be?"
- ▶ March 08 - forum on the Energy Star and Wisconsin's Focus on Energy Program
- ▶ April 08 - forum on the disposal of ash from power plants, particularly the Dairyland Power plant at Genoa.

See the notices in this newsletter on upcoming CEC activities!

Last, thank you to Michelle Jerome, Marilyn Pedretti, and others for staffing a joint Sierra Club / Clean Energy Coalition booth at the La Crosse Earth Day Celebration on May 26.

Pat Wilson

Coulee Experimental Forest Master Plan

The DNR Division of Forestry has begun a Master Plan updating process for the Coulee Experimental Forest. For more information on the process, go to http://dnr.wi.gov/master_planning/coulee/. Comments are being accepted until May 19th, and can be submitted through the web site and also via mail and email.



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Sierra Club Bus Trip to 19th Annual Energy Fair - June 21

The 19th Annual Energy Fair will be held on June 20-22 at the headquarters of the Midwest Renewable Energy Association - MREA - in Custer, WI. This is a large event that draws 20,000 people from around the country and the world to see what's new in energy conservation and renewable energy.

This year the Sierra Club is teaming with the People's Food Co-op, Clean Energy Coalition, and Coulee Partners for Sustainability to sponsor a bus trip to the Energy Fair, enabling you to save even more energy. The bus will leave the People's Food Co-op on Saturday, June 21, at 8:30 a.m., and arrive back at the Co-op that evening at 7:30 p.m. You'll have 6 hours at the Energy Fair, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The cost of the bus trip is \$20 per person. And there will be "bus prizes" to make the trip more fun. The bus will be a coach with restroom facilities. We'd like to be able to guarantee 40 riders by June 13 to hold the bus. You can sign up and pay at the Customer Service Desk at the Co-op, 608 784 5798, ext. 244.

Coulee Group Environmental Grants Awarded

The Coulee Region Group has an environmental grant program that provides funds for environmental projects for youth in the Group's area. This is funded by our Sierra Club calendar sales. Thanks to Maureen Kinney for chairing the grant committee and for chairing the calendar sales that raise the money. This year's grants were \$100 to the Viroqua Middle School 5th grade for gardening equipment for the project, "The Growing Classroom: Garden Based Science"; and \$213 to the Hamilton Early Learning / SOTA program in La Crosse for a weather station for a Daily Weather Study project.

Coulee Region Audubon Society May 21, 7:00 p.m., Ho Chunk Bldg. Program: Ken & Terry Visger

Professional storyteller Terry will act out a story about a clammer's wife in the early 1900's. Ken, a self-described "old river rat with a passion for preserving what we have left of our great Upper Miss resources", will talk about the threat to our native mussels and the life cycle of mussels.

Clean Energy Coalition Meeting

The next CEC meeting is Thursday, May 29, at Three Rivers House. Two panelists, one from the Sierra Club and the other from Clean Wisconsin, will inform us on new developments in coal burning technology, the multiple threats to our health and the environment from Wisconsin's heavy dependence on coal-produced electricity, and recent legislation regarding these issues. The Sierra Club panelist will be Eric Uram, John Muir Chapter Conservation Chair & member of the Sierra Club National Environmental Strategy Team.

Volunteers Needed - Light Bulb Walk Saturday, May 17, 1 to 4 p.m.!

The Clean Energy Coalition is sponsoring a Light Bulb Walk on Saturday, May 17, from 1 to 4 p.m. CEC has obtained 250 compact fluorescent bulbs with funds from Xcel Energy, and reusable Chico grocery bags from the People's Food Co-op. They also have literature from Xcel Energy and rebates for CFLs from Focus on Energy. We need volunteers to go door-to-door in La Crosse on the 17th to get these items in the hands of home owners and to inform them of the value of conservation. There will be an instruction sheet to help you understand the process, and a neighborhood will be assigned. There will also be an instruction meeting ahead of time if you're interested.

Please volunteer to make this activity a success. Michelle Jerome has led the planning group. If you can make it, contact Michelle at 608-738-4248 greenbebes@yahoo.com, or Pat Wilson at 608 788 8831. To distribute all the CFLs, an additional day may be needed--contact Michelle even if you're interested but can't make it on the 17th.