



# Sierra

November  
2008

*Newsletter of the Coulee Region Group*

## NOVEMBER MEETING

### Thanksgiving for the Land

**Tuesday, Nov. 25<sup>th</sup>**

7 pm at the  
HoChunk Three Rivers House  
at 8<sup>th</sup> & Main

(6 pm: ExComm meeting)

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

### Speaker: Tom Thibodeau

Thomas Thibodeau, Director of the Masters in Servant Leadership Program at Viterbo, will present the November program. He will talk on "Thanksgiving for the Land." He will talk about people's relationship to the land and his premise is that we can not care for the natural world unless we have a deep seated love for it. Tom is a great story teller also so this should be a treat to experience.

### FROM THE CHAIR:

Obama wins Presidency! That's the cause for celebrations around the world this week, and bodes well for increased environmental protection. Many other candidates endorsed by the Sierra Club also were elected (or re-elected) including Ron Kind, Jennifer Schilling, and newcomer to the State Assembly - Paul Danou. This should help the country move toward energy conservation and investment in renewable energy resources, as the start of a process to address global warming.

It was a great month for good news! The PSC denied Alliant Energy's application for a new coal burning power plant in Cassville. Dairyland Power suspended the search for an ash disposal landfill in Vernon County. The Great Lakes Compact passed the last hurdle to become a law. More details see other stories in this newsletter! Also read the story on how you can work together with other Sierra Club members across the country to create more good news in areas of most concern to you.

**Pat Wilson**

*Holiday party at the  
home of  
Barb & Don Frank  
Tues, December 23,  
6 p.m.  
More details &  
directions in next  
month's newsletter.*

### SIERRA CLUB 2009 CALENDARS

#### Looking for that perfect Holiday gift?

As always, this year's Sierra Club 2009 calendars feature stunningly beautiful photos from around the world. They are available either as wall or desk calendars and are appreciated by everyone. The wall calendar sells for \$12.95; the desk calendar is \$13.95. They will be available at the Sierra Club meeting, or you can order yours from Maureen Kinney (who will also deliver them if you live in the La Crosse area!). She can be reached at 784-9324 (home); 784-5678 (work) or by e-mail at [maureen@johnsflaherty.com](mailto:maureen@johnsflaherty.com)

### Clean Energy Coalition Meeting Power Lines Coming to La Crosse

Thursday, November 20 7-9 p.m.

HoChunk Three Rivers House

Speakers: *Tim Carlsgaard* - representing CapX 2020, the consortium of eleven utilities that is planning the expansion of the transmission grid across the Midwest

*Carol Overland* - lawyer out of Redwing, MN, who has represented Citizens' Energy Task Force before MN's Public Utilities Commission, in opposition to CapX 2020

The CapX 2020 power line proposal - a project of 11 utilities in four states - has proposed a new 345 kv transmission line which would cross the Mississippi River near downtown La Crosse, then head north on the river to French Island, and northeast to a substation between Onalaska and Holmen. Homeowners affected in Minnesota were notified, but those on French Island have not. This project has been the subject of many public meetings in Minnesota. But its impact in Wisconsin is only now coming to the attention of policy makers and governmental officials. This is a hot issue for Wisconsin and specifically for La Crosse. If you need more information about this issue, contact Bill Katra - [billkatra@hotmail.com](mailto:billkatra@hotmail.com)



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### Dairyland Power Suspends Ash Disposal Facility

More good news - On November 3, Dairyland Power announced that it was indefinitely suspending the permitting process for a proposed ash disposal facility in Vernon County. The permitting process was halted at all three potential sites. This is welcome news for residents of the area, since the proposed landfill would have used 600 acres of land and the waste could have caused environmental degradation to surrounding areas.

Dairyland has decided on a plan that significantly reduces the amount of ash produced by using a different coal blend. Dairyland is also adding renewable energy resources, including 20 MW of wind generation brought online in Iowa and purchase 40 MW of biomass-produced energy at the DT Energy Services' Cassville plant. They're working with farmers on manure digesters, and developing recycling alternatives for the ash, including lightweight aggregate material.

### Great Lakes Compact Passes

Good news - On October 3, President Bush signed the Great Lakes Basin Compact. This was the culmination of a nearly ten year effort to increase protection of water in the Great Lakes and its watershed. The compact is designed to prevent Great Lakes water from being sent to other thirsty areas, while requiring the region's eight states to regulate their own water use. Passing the Great Lakes Compact was a major goal of the Sierra Club. It was a top issue for the John Muir Chapter this past year. The compact had to be passed by all eight states in the basin before being passed by the House and Senate and signed by President Bush. The provinces of Ontario and Quebec passed a Canadian version of the compact, and will work with the U.S. states on the Council of Great Lakes Governors, chaired by Wis. Governor Jim Doyle.

### Alliant Coal Plant Denied

On November 11, Alliant Energy's application for a new coal-fired power plant in Cassville was unanimously denied by Wisconsin's Public Service Commission! All of the Commissioners talked about the pressing need to reduce global warming pollution. Commissioner Meyer said that in terms of CO<sub>2</sub>, this plant "is certainly a loser."

Commissioner Meyer noted that he had never seen so many public comments in a case before the Public Service Commission. Comments against the plant outnumbered comments for the plant by a margin of more than 10 to 1. Congratulations and **THANK YOU** to all of you made comments. The Sierra Club worked with our allies at Clean Wisconsin and CUB to make this victory possible.

### Sierra Club Volunteers Desired

The Sierra Club is a large and successful grassroots environmental organization that depends heavily on like-minded volunteers working together across the state and country to reach conservation goals. As with any task the best way to get it done is to find someone committed to the cause and with skills he or she wants to devote to achieving success.

There are many roles that could be filled in the Coulee Group, including issue chairs that work with other Sierra Club members within the group and around the country who have an interest in the same issue. For issue chairs, there are dedicated email groups to communicate with others working on the same issue. There are position papers and sample action plans. There are paid staff members you can consult with. Have a look at the following roles, and let me know if you are interested in working on any of them – Pat Wilson, 788-8831, [pwilson@centurytel.net](mailto:pwilson@centurytel.net).

Activity Chairs: Conservation Chair; Computer Chair / Webmaster; Env. Education Chair; Fundraising Chair; Newsletter Editor; Outing Chair; Political Chair

Issue Chairs: Agriculture; Air Quality; Campaign Finance Reform; Power Generation; Contained Animal Feeding; Wildlife; Genetic Engineering; Global Warming; Grazing; Population; International Trade; Mining; Mississippi River; National Forests; Wildlife Refuges; Urban Sprawl; Transportation; Waste; Water Quality; Wetlands; Wilderness