



Sierra

January
2008

Newsletter of the Coulee Region Group

JANUARY MEETING

The Cultural Significance of Wilderness: A Lost Voice?

Tuesday, January 29th
7 pm at the
HoChunk Three Rivers House
at 8th & Main
(6 pm: ExComm meeting)
**Sierra Club members &
non-members all welcome!**

Speaker: Rick Kyte
director of the D.B. Reinhart Institute for Ethics in Leadership and associate professor of philosophy at Viterbo University

Environmentalists from the mid-nineteenth through the mid-twentieth centuries shared a conviction that the experience of wilderness was crucial to the health of American society. That conviction has all but disappeared from contemporary social commentary. This presentation will look at the writings of authors such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, John Muir, Theodore Roosevelt, Aldo Leopold, and Sigurd Olson in an attempt to reclaim an important voice in American social and political life.

FROM THE CHAIR:

As you can read in the January-March issue of the Muir View, Shahla Werner is the new director of the John Muir Chapter, starting Feb. 1. Shahla currently works for the Pennsylvania Department on Conservation and Natural Resources. She has a Ph.D. in entomology from UW Madison, and has been Co-President of the Wisconsin Chapter of the National Organization of Women, and served as the Grants Coordinator for the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin.

The director is the chief spokesperson for the Chapter on issues to the government, press, public, and other volunteer organizations. While the lobbying role of the director continues, the primary goal of the new director will be to lead the fundraising efforts for the chapter. Shahla was chosen partly due to her fundraising experience.

The Chapter has spent quite a bit of effort on litigation in the last few years, particularly around energy issues, and has had good success. But it has taken its toll on finances. The Sierra Club needs to spend more effort on fundraising to maintain current environmental protection activity.

The Coulee Group has been the beneficiary of Paul Stry, who specified that the Coulee Group receive an annual payment through the Paul E. Stry Foundation. We just received our annual payment of \$633. This has allowed us to maintain a monthly newsletter while the Muir View is now published four times a year instead of six times a year. We also have calendar sales support the Environmental Grant program. (More on that next month.) But we would have to do more fund raising to take on more action.

Pat Wilson

Coulee Region Group 2008 Elections

Steve Fruechte, Maureen Kinney, and Marilyn Pedretti were elected to two year terms on the Coulee Region Group Executive Committee, joining Danny Foote, Rick Komperud, Andrea Parr, and Pat Wilson who are in the middle of two year terms. Thank you to Steve and Maureen for continuing on the board, and to Marilyn for joining the ExCom in addition to your newsletter editor role. The ExCom will elect officers at the January meeting.

Welcome new members!

Nichole Bailey, George Bedessem, Eirca Black, Rita Burnstad, Ursula Chiu, Brenda Davis, Kyle Deno, Amy Estep, Delores Gaidowski, Yannick Grenier, Judy Hebel, Jeanne M. Johnson, Melanie Johnson, Mary Overlien, R.A. Siegler, Bonnie Staff, Judith Sullivan, Shirley Trott, Jim Welander, Marion Kay Zinn



Coulee Region Sierra Club
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New Power Plant Proposed Near Cassville

The state Public Service Commission finally has accepted Alliant Energy's application to build a new coal power plant in Cassville. The PSC it will either approve or deny construction within the next 360 days - 180 days plus an optional 180 day extension. The 300-megawatt coal plant will join two existing plants at the Nelson Dewey Generating Station along the Mississippi River in Grant County.

The Citizens' Utility Board and environmental group Clean Wisconsin have spoken out against the proposed plant, saying they want the state to focus on conservation and renewable energy sources such as wind power.

Alliant said the plant also will be capable of burning biomass such as switchgrass, corn stalks (stover), and wood. "Certainly global warming is a concern for everybody," Alliant spokesman Rob Crain said. "What we have done is made a responsible choice in terms of using renewable fuels and developing a market to support that, as well as a responsible choice for customers in providing reliable and affordable energy."

The PSC said it will work closely with the state Department of Natural Resources in "conducting a thorough analysis of the project plan." The process "involves months of extensive environmental review, technical assessments, public input and further analysis," the PSC said.

**Cross Country Ski Outing
 Saturday, January 26, 2008
 Meet at 9 a.m.**



Let's hope for snow this year. We'd like to do some exploring and trail breaking at the Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge, followed by lunch at a local restaurant. The Trempealeau Refuge is fairly flat, and there are good chances to see wildlife. This is weather dependent. Please call to let us know if you are interested and to make sure the trip is a go. Leaders: Pat and Bobbie Wilson, 608-788-8831.

Clean Energy Coalition

The next CEC meeting will be Thursday, January 31, at 7 p.m. in the basement of the Ho Chunk Three Rivers House, as usual. For the next few months we will focus on building issues. The brave adventurers in our midst who have already invested their time, energy, money, and enthusiasm in innovative energy-saving systems, and even in the construction of whole houses, have a lot to teach the rest of us: some successes but also some painful failures or problems. For the January meeting we are inviting a few of these brave souls to share their lessons with us.

**La Crosse District Nurses Association
 Programs on the Environment**

Tuesdays: Feb 19th and March 18th
 7-8:00 pm at the Food Coop (Community Room)

Feb 19th will focus on mercury and pharmaceuticals in the environment. The focus will be on actions that health professionals can do to reduce the waste. La Crosse area has a new initiative for waste management of pills. Jeff Gloyd, La Crosse Waste Management, will explain the complexities of the start up program and the methods for health professionals and community to assist with the program. The mercury in medical equipment, its toxicity, and methods for clean up will be described by another speaker, possibly Elizabeth Evans, Public Health Educator, Bureau of Environmental and Occupational Health, Division of Public Health, Wisconsin Dept. of Health & Family Services.

March 18th will focus on hospital practices that contribute to waste and toxicity of the environment. Nick Nichols from Gundersen Lutheran will be presenting on local issues for the hospital. He will also present on the City and County Eco Friendly Designation efforts.

Members and non members are welcomed to attend these free programs