

THE MUIR VIEW



NEWS OF THE SIERRA CLUB IN WISCONSIN - sierraclub.org/wisconsin

Higher Mandatory Fees — Undermine Clean Energy and Energy Efficiency

By Elizabeth Ward, Conservation Programs Coordinator

We were disappointed to learn earlier this year that the fight over increasing mandatory fixed fees or monthly customer charges is far from over. Instead, Xcel Energy — once one of Wisconsin's most progressive utilities — has joined Wisconsin Public Service (WPS), We Energies, and Madison Gas and Electric in proposing these regressive policies. Worse, WPS was back for more, only months after they received approval for an 80 percent fixed fee increase.

In fall of 2014, WPS was allowed to increase their monthly fixed charges from \$10 to \$19. Now, WPS is asking for an additional fixed charge hike from \$19 to \$25. That's \$300 a year that each customer will

pay before they even turn on a light! Xcel is asking for a 125 percent increase, escalating their fixed charge from \$8 up to \$18. Increasing these mandatory, monthly customer charges leaves customers paying a higher fee just for having electricity.

Last year thousands attended Public Service Commission (PSC) hearings, submitted public comments and attended meetings and rallies to stop similar proposals. Groups from all walks of life - from senior advocates to faith communities to low-income advocates - came out to oppose these mandatory fee increases.

Despite this public outcry, the PSC enacted

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New Chapter Director Announced

The Sierra Club-John Muir Chapter is pleased to introduce Bill Davis as Chapter Director. Davis assumed the position on August 10th and will work closely with the volunteer Executive Committee and three chapter staff members to guide the chapter's operations, fundraising and conservation work.



Davis has an impressive resume which includes degrees in wildlife ecology and law from the University of Wisconsin as well as executive experience at three different organizations, State Environmental Leadership Program, Citizens for a Better Environment and Wisconsin's Environmental Decade. Over the course of his career he has worked on energy, groundwater, air and water quality issues as well as transportation and land-use. In his various positions, Bill has been responsible for all aspects of an organization's operations, as well as program work such as litigation, legislative and administrative lobbying, and provision of

internal legal counsel.

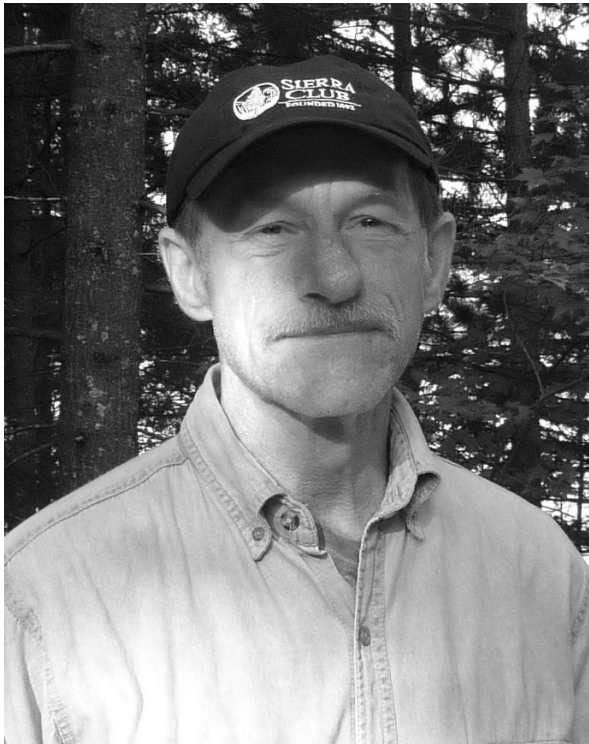
Davis has already begun reaching out to Sierra Club groups across the state and hopes to attend local meetings to introduce himself and share his vision for the club. He looks forward to working with Sierra Club members and allies to restore Wisconsin's conservation heritage. Bill talks about his background and vision for the chapter in the letter found on page 3.

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FROM THE CHAIR

Recently I drove from Lac du Flambeau south to my home east of Madison. The trip began in late afternoon when scattered thunderstorms were crossing the state. Early on I glanced at a map and was conscious that highways 51 and I-39 were generally following the path of the Wisconsin River. Near Tomahawk I encountered my first view of the river, then I crossed or skirted it again numerous times going south. With



the calms between storms, the warm tones of the setting sun and the growing shadows, each view of the river seemed more wondrous than the last.

The sky alternated from dark and threatening to large expanses of blue as the sun slowly set. Shadows and then mists born of rainfall rose from woods and waters, giving

the landscape a mystical quality. As the river and I descended the state, I thought of the stories, legends and history lingering in the mists. The Wisconsin's origins at Lac Vieux Desert and its service to civilization as an artery for travel down through the centuries. Tales of the dangers of driving logs in the early timber industry down long, lazy stretches between today's river mill towns of Tomahawk, Merrill, Brokaw, Wausau, Mosinee and Stevens Point color these city's histories. Then on to Portage, the pre-industrial hub of Great Lakes commerce for thousands of years during the age of dugout and birchbark canoes.

Over centuries rapids and waterfalls were conquered by dams and mills. The Wisconsin River earned the industrial age title of the "Hardest Working River in America." And yet today we see the beautiful shifting sandbars that make wonderful campgrounds (amidst dangerous swimming waters) in the nature playground that is the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway. The lower Wisconsin is the heart of our state, an inspiration to Muir, Leopold, Wright and others. They took

from it spiritual, ethical and even architectural inspiration, and a deep connection to the land. So can we.

North of Madison the river turned west while I continued south and then east. We went our separate ways but the connection stayed with me. Here in our beautiful state, whose name means "gathering waters," we have every reason to connect with our

land and waters. We have opportunities to share our values, helping to open the eyes of others to an ancient heritage and the deeper meanings of this place. Let's start more conversations with those whose vision of the land is obscured by dollar signs, materialism and greed.

With this issue we welcome our new State Chapter Director, Bill Davis. Bill brings a rich background of working across state boundaries to build stronger environmental non-profits. He is known and respected by those in our movement and we will benefit from the organizational skills and wisdom he brings to us. Bill has vision for what we can accomplish and how to go about it, and I believe you will start to hear some of it here.

By the time you read this the October 2-4 Autumn Assembly will be upon us. Hopefully you have registered to join us at this annual gathering. If so, you will have an opportunity to meet Bill personally. The Four Lakes Group has planned a wonderful event, near the dells of our iconic Wisconsin River! You will also meet Sierra Club national Board President Aaron Mair, our keynote speaker on Saturday. He will help us to appreciate why the Club's drive to embrace diversity and civil rights is so important to our mission. And he is only one of the excellent speakers we will hear from. In particular I'm looking forward to hearing Scott Wittkopf, Director of the Forward Wisconsin Institute. Scott will talk about the absolutely critical skill of framing. We'll learn that the frame used to communicate an idea is more important than the facts used to support the idea. With the 2016 election year on the horizon, our skill in framing issues will help us dramatically change the climate for conservation and quality of life in Wisconsin. I hope to see you there.

Jim Kerler

Chair, Sierra Club-John Muir Chapter

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Find all the latest issue information and upcoming events at: www.sierraclub.org/Wisconsin

FROM OUR NEW DIRECTOR

Greetings,

As the new John Muir Chapter Director I wanted to introduce myself and to thank the Chapter for giving me the opportunity to work with you. While not a native of Wisconsin, I have lived here for almost forty years. With my family I have enjoyed hiking, canoeing, birding, camping and sailing around the state. I know the Sierra Club well through the work I have done over the years with folks like former Executive Directors Shahla Werner and Caryl Terrell as well as many regional and national staff, and from the almost twenty years that my spouse, Jane Elder, worked for the Club.

I received both my Wildlife Ecology and Law degrees from the UW-Madison. I have worked in the environmental movement for 30 years here in Wisconsin as well as regionally including three stints as an executive director. I have worked on a wide array of issues from energy to solid waste to groundwater to water quality and air quality with a little transportation and land-use thrown in for good measure. Through this work I have built relationships with many of our brethren organizations in the state. I also have considerable experience running organizations and fundraising.

I realize that I am starting in challenging if not unprecedented times. In my career I have never experienced a time of such dysfunctional and hostile government toward not just the environment but seemingly all progressive issues. Our DNR, once well respected across the country, has now been eviscerated.

So where do we go from here? First, I think we need to recognize it took a while to get here and it will take a while to get better. What we can't, and won't do is give up, nor can we just assume things will get better on their own. I firmly believe the things the John Muir Chapter advocates for -- clean water, clean air, rational transportation, recreational opportunities, renewable and reliable energy -- are winning positions with Wisconsinites. My ultimate goal for the chapter can be summed up as follows:

No significant environmental decision is made in Wisconsin without the knowledge and consent of the John Muir chapter.

To get there we need to be smart, powerful and efficient. This means among other things making ourselves heard in a way that resonates with key audiences, using the considerable resource that is our membership effectively, building strategic alliances and communicating in a way that will rally people to take action. At the same time we need to increase our power by building membership and relationships in places where it will make a difference. Finally, we need to be efficient in our operations so that we do not waste precious resources.

This will take time, patience, perseverance, planning and persistence. I look forward to working with all of you to reestablish Wisconsin's conservation heritage and its place as a leader in the country for environmental protection.

Bill Davis

*Chapter Director
Sierra Club-John Muir Chapter*



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THE MUIR VIEW

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Higher Mandatory Fees *Continued from page 1*
ed the highest fixed charges for any regulated utility in the Midwest. Those who use less power are being unfairly penalized — this includes senior citizens and low-income families, who rely on fixed incomes or need to make every penny count. Customers with low energy usage, including low income customers, will face higher bills. Seeing 10 to 20 percent increases on their power bills can make a huge difference on their lives.

“With energy costs consuming as much as 40 percent of a low-income household’s budget, the ability of that household to reduce their usage through energy efficiency — most notably weatherization — is of critical importance to their overall struggles to get out of poverty. Low-income customers will lose control over their energy bills and they won’t be rewarded with savings through energy efficiency,” said Bob Jones, executive director for the Wisconsin Community Action Program Association in a statement last year.

Additionally, these unavoidable monthly fees remove the ability for customers to control their electricity costs. No longer can residents keep bills low by reminding kids to turn off the lights when they leave the room or by not using the oven in the summer when more air conditioning needs to be used to compensate.

As A.J. Nino Amato, president of the Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups (CWAG) said last year, “We know for a fact, that se-

niors on fixed income monitor their electricity use closely in order to control their bills and the radical fixed fee increase is unfair and it creates a hardship for them. With the growing income disparities, our elderly citizens are already struggling to pay their monthly utility bills and all too often, have to cut their medication in half or skip a meal, in order to pay their monthly utility bills.”

Finally, these fixed fee increases undermine clean energy and energy efficiency by reducing the incentives to invest in efficiency. It sends the amount of monthly bills in the wrong direction for those of us who turn off the lights when we leave a room, invest in energy-saving upgrades, or produce some of our own power such as with rooftop solar. At a time when the rest of the country is moving forward by investing in clean energy, Wisconsin utilities continue to move us backwards with proposals that do just the opposite.

Xcel’s Wisconsin customers will be facing much higher bills than their neighbors across the river in Minnesota. In March of this year, Xcel requested a much smaller fixed charge increase for their Minnesota customers, of just \$1.50. The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission denied that request entirely.

These regressive policies will also factor into Wisconsin’s ability to meet the Clean Power Plan (CPP) goals for our state. In an effort to curb climate disruption, CPP requires states to reduce the carbon pollution

of power plants by 30 percent by 2030. The Environmental Protection Agency encourages states to use energy efficiency as a tool to achieve these goals while still keeping energy bills low. Wisconsin’s over-reliance on coal, which is reinforced by fixed fee policies like these, will make it more difficult for our state to reach the CPP goal than it will be for states that have embraced a clean energy future.

The Public Service Commission held public hearings in September to hear from WPS and Xcel customers about these proposals. The public comment period is still open for a short time. People who would like to comment on the WPS rate increase can still submit comments by October 6. Those who want to submit comments on the Xcel case can submit comments until October 29. To learn how to submit comments, go to sierra-club.org/Wisconsin.

In addition to asking our members to submit comments in these rate cases, we also recommend contacting Xcel and Wisconsin Public Service and telling them to rescind their proposals. These increases are not financially necessary, and allow these multi-billion dollar companies to make money at the expense of the low-income families, the elderly and the environment. Utilities and the electricity system were created to serve the public, not abuse the system.

Wisconsin Wolf Count

By Laura Menefee, Wisconsin Native Forests and Wildlife subcommittee

The return of Wisconsin’s gray wolves to Endangered Species status late last year was welcome news to those who value the role wolves play in healthy ecosystems. However, the fight to ensure lasting protections and to assess the impact of recent hunting seasons on the species continues.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) recently released the results of 2014-2015 wolf count. The report claims a 13 percent increase in Wisconsin’s wolf population, even after exceeding hunting and trapping quotas during the 2014-2015 season. The number of dispersers—wolves who leave the area where they were

born to establish or join another pack—are also up, while pack size is down. Wisconsin counts two wolves occupying a territory as a pack, while other states designate two breeding wolves plus a third as a pack.

WDNR large carnivore specialist David MacFarland said, regarding the numbers, “It does show that you can have sustainable harvest of a wolf population without causing harm.”

That depends on the definition of harm. The health of a social, density-dependent species can’t be measured simply by population count. Studies in Canada and Alaska show

human pressure results in more wolves breeding and increased litter sizes. In cases when one or both of the alpha, or breeding pair dies, it also results in pack fragmentation and more dispersal, often leading to more livestock depredations because of the pack’s loss of hunting-efficiency. This raises questions about the state’s wolf-hunting goal: is it to decrease livestock depredation, or to provide “sport?”

The John Muir Chapter’s Native Forests and Wildlife subcommittee recently used the Public Records Law to request DNR documents about the wolf count. One item of

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Department of Transportation Audit

By Elizabeth Ward, Conservation Programs Coordinator

Plans to expand highways across Wisconsin, especially in the Milwaukee area, were a hot topic during state budget preparations. The final budget included two transportation wins: the I-94 expansion in Milwaukee did not get the green-light and the Joint Finance committee recommended that the way the Department of Transportation (WisDOT) makes highway construction decisions, including traffic projection forecasting, be audited. Although Governor Walker vetoed this recommendation, Legislative Audit Committee Co-chairs, Senator Rob Cowles and Representative Samantha Kerkman are working with the Legislative Audit Bureau (LAB) to conduct an audit.

This audit couldn't come at a better time. WisDOT's track record of over-projecting future traffic to justify highway widening has been consistently called into question. In 2013, the Wisconsin Public Interest Research Group (WISPIRG) released a report that looked at six highway projects that were completed across Wisconsin. The report found that WisDOT's traffic projections on these roads were failing to materialize.

A year later, 1000 Friends of Wisconsin released a new analysis of the WisDOT traffic projections that are being used to justify 11 proposed highway expansions. Comparing the traffic projections with the traffic counts, 1000 Friends found that the projections are unlikely, if not impossible to be reached. For example, the traffic on Highway 23 has grown .28 percent annually since 2000. At the same time, WisDOT has projected traffic on the highway will grow by 2.6 percent per year—a 29.59 percent difference. The most outrageous example was Wisconsin-241 in Milwaukee County. According to 1000 Friends data, that road has seen a traffic decline of 55.70 percent. However, WisDOT's projections have the amount of traffic increasing 252.9 percent by 2040! Even in places where traffic is increasing, like I-94 in St. Croix County, traffic has increased by less than 4 percent since 2000. However, WisDOT projects an increase of almost 80 percent by 2040

In May, a Federal Court agreed with 1000 Friends' determination that the traffic projections used to justify the project didn't pass muster and the project is therefore

ineligible for federal funding making the expansion unlikely. This groundbreaking decision adds credibility to the need for this audit. As Steve Hiniker, director of 1000 Friends of Wisconsin stated, "This is a huge win for taxpayers. We have known for years that the state DOT has been using artificially high traffic forecasts to justify a number of highway expansion projects. Now a federal court has validated our claims."

Given all of this evidence, we are excited to see this audit come to fruition. Though the Audit Committee chairs are committed to completing an audit, we will need to push hard to ensure traffic projections are part of the audit. The results could be a ground-breaking analysis that changes the way Wisconsin spends transportation money in the future.

As Peter Skopec, the director of WISPIRG Director explained, "We just can't afford to keep repeating the mistakes that got us into this year's budget mess. For years, we've wasted billions of dollars on highway expansions based on inflated traffic forecasts, and our existing infrastructure has been left to crumble as a result. This audit brings unprecedented and much-needed scrutiny to WisDOT's highway expansion plans and the methods used to justify billion-dollar projects. This is a crucial first step towards more responsible transportation spending and planning in Wisconsin."

The Sierra Club and its partners, WISPIRG and 1000 Friends of Wisconsin, are calling on legislators to not break ground on new highway expansion projects until the proposed audit is completed.



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ISSUES AT A GLANCE

Out and About at MREA Energy Fair



The Sierra Club once again had an active presence at the Midwest Renewable Energy Association's Energy Fair, June 19 - 21 near Custer, WI. The Energy Fair features terrific speakers, workshops and exhibits to learn about energy and other sustainability issues whether you're into high tech or just a home consumer. Visitors stopped by our Sierra Club booth to learn about the tar sands threats in Wisconsin, clean energy solution options and our solar program, and to gather information on CAFOs and other clean water challenges, as well as local events and outings that are occurring throughout the state. The Sierra Club's Don Ferber also presented a workshop called "What's Up with Utility Rates."

Learning about the Waukesha Water Diversion

In July, John Muir Chapter Water Sentinels and others interested in learning about the proposed Waukesha Water Diversion gathered in Racine. They heard from Dr. Julie Kinzelman who has been active in many watershed restoration projects and from Cheryl Nenn of Milwaukee Riverkeeper. They then took to the water, paddling the Root River and seeing first-hand an area that could be negatively impacted if the city of Waukesha is allowed to divert water from Lake Michigan. Under the proposal return flow of treated wastewater would pass through the Root River to Lake Michigan posing a danger to water quality, water quantity and aquatic life. There is also concern that the increase in water could cause flooding and storm management issues. More about the proposed diversion can be found on page 12.



Wastewater Permit Audit

In April, the Legislative Audit Bureau began an audit of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) wastewater permitting program. The audit is looking at the process, timeliness of issuance, trends, compliance with rules and permit requirements, and the appropriateness of DNR's enforcement actions. This is an incredible opportunity to shed light on some of the most concerning aspects of the DNR's enforcement of factory farms and other industrial polluters.

The Sierra Club worked with the Socially Responsible Agricultural Project and the Midwest Environmental Advocates to send a thorough analysis of our concerns. Our comments included our concerns about the understaffing at the DNR, the slow and limited follow-up to citizen complaints, the reliance of self-reporting by the

factory farm industry, the need for more safeguards and abuse of current regulations.

In addition to working on our official comments, we helped Sierra Club members throughout the state add their comments and personal stories. The Legislative Audit Bureau takes all comments it receives into account before it releases its final audit report. Along with the report, the Audit Bureau will issue a list of policy and administrative recommendations. We look forward to working towards the implementation of those recommendations as well.

To see the analysis or to stay-up-to-date on the audit, visit sierraclub.org/Wisconsin.

Coalition for More Responsible Transportation Work Continues

The Sierra Club is a member of the Coalition for More Responsible Transportation (CMRT), focused on ensuring taxpayer-funded transportation is responsible and not wasteful, especially around the I-94 interchange in Milwaukee. With the delay of the I-94 expansion in the budget, the Coalition scored a huge victory. Though the expansion is currently on hold, our work is far from over. After a late-July celebration, the coalition reconvened in August.

The Coalition has developed an alternative that includes repairing the road and builds a transit corridor. This would replace any need for a highway expansion to the unnecessary and costly expansion and would cut the cost of the project almost in half. We are hosting a town hall meeting in mid-October to highlight this opportunity and are hoping to work with Congresswoman Moore on solutions.

Details will be posted at www.sierraclub.org/Wisconsin as they develop.

Clean Power Plan

In August we celebrated the release of the landmark Clean Power Plan a plan to decrease carbon dioxide emissions from power plants and to increase the role of energy efficiency and renewable energy. Prior to this rule, there were no limits to the amount of carbon pollution that power plants could dump into our air. With this plan, the United States has a 32% projected carbon emissions decrease. The Clean Power Plan is a strong first step toward mitigating climate change and switching to a sustainable future.

In the Clean Power Plan, the EPA sets state-by-state goals for decreasing carbon pollution that drives climate change. According to the Obama Administration and the EPA, beyond providing flexibility for states to effectively achieve their carbon emission goals, the Clean Power Plan will encourage clean energy, create jobs, save money for families and businesses, ensure grid reliability, encourage accessible energy to vulnerable or low-income populations, and continue U.S. leadership on climate change mitigation.

The state goals for emissions reduction by 2030 vary on the type of power plant each state has. Based on our power plants and coal dependency, Wisconsin's goal for 2030 is a moderate state goal. According to the EPA, Wisconsin already has legislation and energy sources that should help ease the transition with goals that are achievable.

The success of Wisconsin – and other states – in achieving these goals lies with leaders who are willing to implement the plan. As such, we call on our Governor to cease denying human-accelerated climate change and urge Wisconsin leaders to embrace the clean energy future. We need to seize the opportunity for growth and innovation that the Clean Power Plan provides and reap the clean energy jobs and other benefits from implementation.

Locally Grown, Nationally Known

Members from across the state gathered in late July for a chapter fundraiser and tribute to former Director Shahla Werner. The annual fundraiser featured appetizers made from locally grown, sustainable items and celebrated the grassroots activism of the club on both local and national issues.



Caryl Terrell and Alyssa Shelstad shop for locally grown ingredients used in appetizers for the Locally Grown, Nationally Known fundraiser.

Some past and present chapter chairs gathered for a photo at the July 29th Locally Grown, Nationally Known fundraiser. From left: Penny Bernard Schaber, Jim Kerler (current Chair), Jim Steffens and Liz Wessel.



New Chapter Director Bill Davis was welcomed by former Chapter Directors Shahla Werner (center) and Caryl Terrell.

TAR SANDS UPDATE

By Elizabeth Ward, Conservation Programs Coordinator

Tar sands issues continue to surge in Wisconsin. From state budget additions that undermine the authority of county governments to a Washington DC rally to citizen education, here is what's been happening the past few months.

State Budget, Committee Removes Safeguards from Tar Sands Pipelines

In a late-night, last-minute addition to the state budget, the Joint Finance Committee removed critical oil pipeline safeguards for Wisconsin communities and landowners.

Prohibiting Insurance Requirements

First, in a direct push-back against Dane County, the state budget motion prohibits counties from requiring pollution insurance on pipelines. After Enbridge announced plans to triple the amount of oil flowing through the Line 61 pipeline, Dane County approved Enbridge's permit with the condition that Enbridge purchase insurance (\$100 million in General Liability and \$25 million of Environmental Impairment Liability) in order to ensure that when a spill occurs, it will be cleaned up and the county will not be on the hook to pay for clean-up costs. Many were thrilled to see this requirement since it's the only way residents in Dane County are guaranteed a full clean-up. This will no longer be possible as a result of the budget motion.

Expanding Eminent Domain

Additionally, the budget motion adds Enbridge, a Limited Liability Partnership, to the list of entities and under the condemnation authority of the Public Service Commission. This means that as Enbridge is laying the groundwork for a new tar sands pipeline, they can take land from farmers and other private property owners, yet the community members will be left to assume the risk of these pipelines.

As Carl Whiting, member of the Sierra Club and the Wisconsin Safe Energy (WiSE) Alliance said, "The budget committee sided with a special interest over Wisconsinites. This didn't just jeopardize our water, our air or our safety-it undermines our democracy."

Dane County looks for other options

At the time of this article, the Dane County Zoning Committee was exploring other options to protect their community. One option being considered is a trust fund in Dane County's name with adequate funds to cover cleanup costs in case of a spill. As Sierra Club leader Don Ferber stated, "If the county can't have insurance to protect them, we'll need assurance," that we are not completely on the hook for the clean-up.

August 25: Midwest Unrest

On August 25, activists from the Midwest traveled to Washington DC to demonstrate outside of Secretary John Kerry's home. The 'Midwest Unrest' took place to urge Secretary Kerry to halt the expansion of the Alberta Clipper pipeline, which runs from Canada to Superior. Enbridge began construction without the required authorizations and permits. In addition to the demonstration, dozens of students tied themselves to Secretary Kerry's home. This act of civil disobedience was intended to show how important this issue is. Though Sierra Club was not involved in this action, we are happy to see the movement growing and are eager to see Secretary Kerry and the Obama Administration take action.

Education Continues Along the Line

We are continuing our outreach as we identify and work with concerned community members throughout the state, especially the Line 61 corridor. This year alone we've spoken to communities in Jefferson, Columbia, Washburn, Dane and Marquette Counties. We know Enbridge is currently surveying and has plans to build another pipeline in the Line 61 corridor. The only way we can defeat this is for communities across the pipeline route to work together, calling for more oversight and a halt to further expansion.

WI Wolf Count *Continued from page 4*

note was the large number of volunteer trackers affiliated with the Bear Hunters' Association. Members of the bear hounding community have been calling for a drastic cull of Wisconsin's wolves throughout their recovery. This, along with changes in the state's monitoring methods, calls the results and their interpretation into question.

Wolf hunters exceeded the quotas in nearly every zone, especially Zone 2 in Northeast Wisconsin, which is prime wolf habitat where wolves cause few problems. Additionally, a reported decrease in average pack-size may signal ongoing poaching. However, at the recent Midwest Wolf Stewards conference, biologists with US Fish and Wildlife Service and WDNR stated they are unaware of "ongoing investigations" into poaching.

With more whitetail deer carrying Chronic Wasting Disease, Wisconsin's wolves could be too valuable to kill for sport when they help naturally control the deer population.

Wolves showed signs of stabilizing prior to the 2012 hunt, but now, a reported increase in dispersal and more, but smaller, packs, could indicate regression to a re-colonization phase and a destabilized population, a situation likely to result in increased livestock losses to wolves.

As long as we deny wolves refuge in areas of prime habitat where they cause few, or no problems, human pressure will push wolves into less suitable habitat.

Stabilized populations with stable territory and pack structure are less likely to see livestock as a food source. Stable packs are even known to provide protection for local livestock against other predators, such as coyotes and bears. This is a significant reason for providing refuge areas and protections for non-problem causing wolves.

Laura Menefee is a member of the Sierra Club—John Muir Chapter, Executive Committee, and a former Wisconsin Volunteer Wolf Tracker.

GREEN REVIEW

Beyond Words: What Animals Think and Feel

by Carl Safina, Henry Holt Co., 2015, 480 p.

Many scholars, from those enrolled in middle school general science to PhD professors, have been exposed to and likely held the standard that prohibits anthropomorphizing animal behaviors. We are told to observe behaviors without attribution of human emotion or any emotion. Even in English class many are held to a criterion that requires calling our beloved family pets by the pronouns “it” or “that.” Fluffy and Fido aren’t graced with the grammatical designation of the human “who.” This is a standard that Jane Goodall rejected during her PhD studies, going against the scientific tide. With obvious satisfaction, Safina reports that Goodall got her papers published, even with the grammatical non-conformance.

In *Beyond Words*, Safina acknowledges the importance of scientific inquiry and objectivism, but questions scientific dictums that have discredited scientists who might gather evidence like “the mother elephant positioned herself between her baby and the alligator” and then draw conclusions such as “to protect her calf.”

Safina deftly argues that scientists have specific knowledge about the common structures and developments of mammalian brains. Conclusions have long been a part of the scientific process, so why has scientific culture slapped the hands of scientists who make scientific conclusions about the inner life of animals?

Perhaps, Safina suggests, humans have reached beyond objectivity to protect a self-inflated view of the human animal. We may have a bias that our rich inner life and our communicative interactions as more worthy and soulful than any other creature. We have denied animals the scientific existence of personality and emotion. We have kept our human status as separate and perhaps superior. *Beyond Words* does not strive to call out animal behaviors as human, rather it seeks to evaluate and study the lives of animals with an attempt to cast off the ego constructs that have been applied to the scientific study of animals.

Embedded with researchers, much in the way reporters live with soldiers during war coverage, Safina shares stories of researchers, species, historical trends and individual animals. The layering of these points of view builds credibility and intimacies with animal species and individual animals. Readers travel to Amboseli National Park in Kenya to learn of elephants trying to survive drought and poaching. Researchers have known these elephants as individuals for decades. Cynthia Moss, described as “a young woman in her seventies,” has been observing these elephants for four decades without one smidgen of field weariness. She knows the individuals:

who is a good mother, who is impulsive and who is silly and playful. These highly social mammals have taught humans something of their language and relationships. Researchers now can recognize some of the words such as the sound made to indicate “bees.”

In Yellowstone, the wolves have reclaimed and supported wilderness with the balance that a top predator brings, but much like the famed Cecil the Lion, they are often shot when they travel away from the park. Can we see wolves as conscious beings who

have bonds, ambitions and the arc of a career? The evidence is credible. Researchers are discovering clues to understand the consciousness of wolves, but the studies are fraught with tales of individual wolves with sad endings at the hands of humans. This outcome is especially sad given that wolves and humans have forged bonds with evolutionary consequences that have resulted in extreme bonds between species. How can “man’s best friend” have evolved from the reviled wolf? The individuality of wolves transforms the scientist’s attempt to give the wolf a number instead of a name, but the life of the canine transforms the number to a name. When Alpha 21 died and his pack was scattered and lost, the lamentations spoken for the name 21 were no less than if the famous wolf were called Henry.

Safina’s stories of whales chronicle amazing and inexplicable behavior. While maintaining scientific objectivity, he questions why whales don’t knock people out of their tiny boats. Why would a whale guide humans to shore, or toss ice onto a ship deck after a snowball was tossed to him? Claiming to be a “hard-hearted disbeliever of things unknown,” Safina doesn’t draw conclusions from what he calls “Woo-woo” stories. But he tells the stories. These stories are not antithetical to scientific study; scientists do share and publish case reports. These stories are evidence.

Beyond Words doesn’t draw all the conclusions, but it makes an entertaining and credible case for the rich lives of animals. The book is opulent with amazing tales as well as scientific analysis. Conclusions are both offered and withheld. Readers who spend time with Safina’s words will begin to see themselves as not separate from animals, but part of a rich network of species and individuals.

Contact Amy at www.AmyLouJenkins.com to forward books for possible review. Amy Lou Jenkins is the award-winning author of *Every Natural Fact*.



Volunteer with the John Muir Chapter

The Sierra Club – John Muir Chapter has many roles that volunteers can fill. From working on priority issue campaigns to helping the Chapter run effectively, volunteers are the driving force behind the chapter's activities. Their hands-on involvement expands the capacity of our staff exponentially, and volunteers have been instrumental in the chapter's accomplishments over the years. Below are the committees that are seeking new members at this time.

Fundraising Committee

The Fundraising Committee works to raise important non-tax deductible funds in the Chapter's budget including planning and hosting house parties, assisting with direct mail appeals and assisting with one-on-one donor visits. If you want to help put the "fun" in fundraising, join this committee!

Commitment: We hold about five meetings each year to plan and execute the Chapter's fundraising plan. The majority of the work takes place outside of the meetings, when individual members opt to help or lead different fundraising activities. Hours will vary throughout the year. House parties are generally in the spring/summer. Mail appeals are in the spring and fall. Major donor work tends to be in the late fall/winter.

Membership Committee

The Membership Committee works to maintain and expand the Chapter's membership. One area of focus is converting supporters to members. Another area is promoting local issue work and outings as points of engagement with the Sierra Club. And we are working on using social media and other techniques to bring members and supporters together in rural areas of the state.

Commitment: We hold about seven meetings each year to develop work plans, assign tasks and check-in on progress. Individual responsibilities can vary from membership data analysis to marketing activities to direct outreach with members



and leaders. Hours will vary depending on the projects in addition to at least 11 hours for meetings over the year.

Outings Committee

Help promote getting all people outdoors whether they seek special trips out to wilderness areas, getting onto Wisconsin's many trails, lakes and streams, visiting county, state and federal parks and forest lands; or simply heading to community parks and green spaces. The Chapter's Outings Committee will work to help elevate Sierra Club as a go-to resource for participating in advanced outdoor recreation opportunities. We want to allow members to develop or maintain their leadership skills through an active engagement in getting members and other interested individuals at all levels of experience outdoors. Between Local Outings, Inspiring Connections Outdoors and Military Families Outdoors, the committee will work to create a tapestry of outings opportunities for everyone to use for exploring, enjoying and protecting the natural resources we have in Wisconsin and around the midwest.

Commitment: We hold quarterly phone meetings to engage with others interested in improving outings programs near them. Members participate in one outing per quarter and commit to becoming a certified outings leader in the first year of participation (if not already). Once certified, members lead at least two outings per

year and continue to provide expertise to the group for improving programs throughout the state.

Communications Committee

The Communications Committee works to consistently and effectively express the Sierra Club – John Muir Chapter's messages concerning our mission, priority issues, outings and events. The committee works to ensure that all campaigns and events have a well-developed communications plan and help implement that plan across all platforms, with an emphasis on online communications.

Commitment: Ongoing involvement required in addition to approximately seven planned meetings a year to discuss campaign strategies. This committee also generates social media content and responds to developing situations.

Conservation Issue Committees

For each of the Chapter's priority issues, there is a team of issue volunteers that plan and implement the campaigns. Our priority issue teams include:

Beyond Coal to Clean Energy: after a history of victories transitioning Wisconsin's power plants off of coal, the Chapter is now focused on pushing for clean energy. This year, the team has been focused on opposing the mandatory fixed fee increases proposed by Xcel and WPS.

Clean Transportation: the Clean Transportation team works to increase state funding for transit, bicycling and pedestrian infrastructure. This year, the Clean Transportation team has been focused on getting the state budget—calling into question the excessive highway expansion spending and showing the need for driving alternatives. Additionally, the team has been focused on preventing the proposed I-94 expansion in Milwaukee and pushing for that funding (or a portion of it) to be invested in Milwaukee's local infrastructure.

Mining Safeguards: the Mining Committee has been focused on stopping the proposed taconite mine in the Penokee Range in Northern Wisconsin, as well as the repeal of the Mining Law that was passed to enable the mine. Additionally, the committee is focused on frac-sand mining and increasing local and state-wide safeguards.

Native Forests and Wildlife: works on protecting the unique habitats, forests and wildlife that make Wisconsin special. Currently, the team has been focused on protecting Wisconsin's grey wolf population.

Water Sentinels: the Water Sentinels work to protect Wisconsin's freshwater resources by monitoring surface water and questioning factory farm applications. Additionally, the Water Sentinels work to protect two of Wisconsin's most important gems—Lake Michigan and Lake Superior. This year, the Water Sentinels have been focused on stopping the application for the City of Waukesha to take water from Lake Michigan.

Commitment: The issue committees meet monthly and members are expected to join the meetings to strategize the program and implement our campaign. Each team member is expected to take on a different

role. The roles include:

- **Facilitator:** holds team meetings, creates agendas, and keeps team members on task. This is also the person with the most interaction with the Chapter and provides updates to the Chapter and to let other team members know of new Chapter needs.
- **Research:** researches national Sierra Club policies and helps compile the research needed to take a position on an aspect of the campaign or legislation. This person also sits on the Chapter's legislative committee.
- **Public Representative:** writes and delivers (or identifies another person to deliver) Chapter comments, public hearing testimony and Action alerts for the campaign.
- **Media:** writes press releases, editorials, Muir View articles and calls for letters-to-the-editor. They also help strategize the best way to get media attention, including planning press conferences and other events.
- **Membership Coordinator:** welcomes and helps coordinate new committee members. They also help create phone banks, event turn-out, etc. This person also serves as the liaison to the Member-

ship Committee as necessary.

• **Social Media/Communications:** serves on the Communication Committee as well while coordinating social media campaigns for the committee. This person works closely with the media representative to spread the message of our campaign and get the word out about upcoming events.

• **Outreach Director:** interfaces with other Sierra Club entities, working with and alerting local Sierra Club groups about upcoming events and actions in their areas. They also serve on the National Sierra Club committee related to the issue. This person also works with faith, labor, tribes, and other potential allies for our work.

If you are interested in serving on any of these teams, email john.muir.chapter@sierraclub.org with your name and the committees in which you are interested. The Sierra Club is committed to the elimination of discrimination and inequity based on race, ethnicity, gender, class, and sexual orientation. We seek to reflect this commitment through programming and leadership structure. We encourage all who are interested to apply for one of our committees.

Support Your LOCAL Sierra Club

Contributions really do make a difference to us, and are an important part of the John Muir Chapter's budget.

When you make a donation to the John Muir Chapter, you support the Sierra Club's work in Wisconsin's own backyard. You allow us to continue our work to protect wilderness and wildlife, to improve the quality of life in our cities, and to promote the enjoyment of nature.

Please be as generous as you are able—and remember, these funds directly affect your way of life in your neighborhood.

Contributions, gifts and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax-deductible.



\$50

\$100

\$250

\$500

any other amount _____

Please keep my gift anonymous

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ email _____

Mail your contribution to: Sierra Club - John Muir Chapter
754 Williamson Street
Madison WI 53703

Donate online at: www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin

Hundreds Attend Waukesha Water Diversion Public Hearings

By Cassie Steiner, Chapter Apprentice



On August 17 and 18 several hundred people attended the Waukesha water diversion public hearings, and over 1,000 people submitted written comments, to voice their concerns with the proposed water diversion from Lake Michigan to the city of Waukesha. Water diversion impacts the entire Great Lakes region and the voice of the people echoed that.

The city of Waukesha is the first straddling community of the Great Lakes Basin to submit a proposal to divert water from the Great Lakes. Waukesha has requested to withdraw an annual average of 10.1 million gallons of water per day and a daily maximum of 16.7 million gallons per day from Lake Michigan to serve their estimated 97,400 population. This request has been made due to concerns about high levels of naturally occurring radium in their groundwater supply.

Many Waukesha residents voiced their opposition to the diversion. One Waukesha resident said, “The states should respond to Waukesha with a simple, ‘no.’” He went on to say that he had watched his city push for growth beyond its ecological limits, and he proposed a simple solution: “The population should move to the water, not the other way around.”

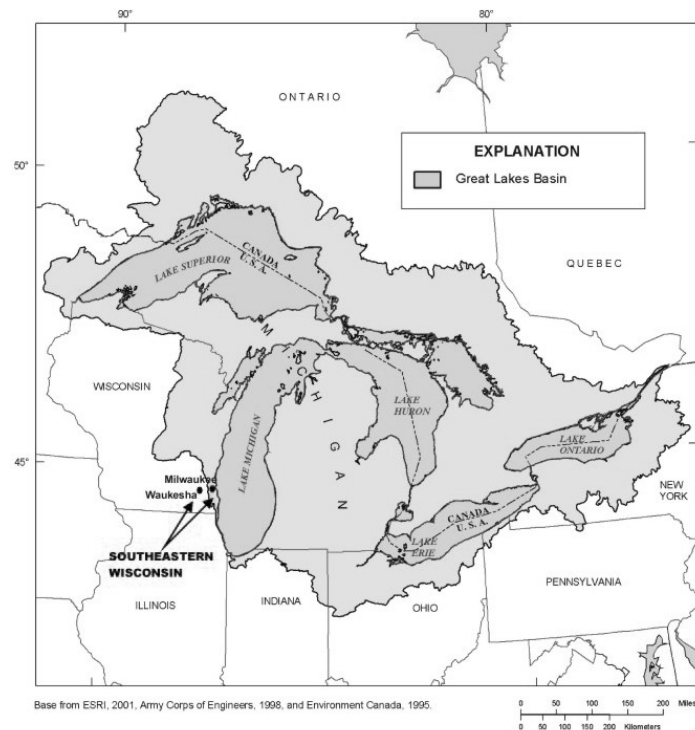
Others from Milwaukee expressed concerns about the economic and demographic impacts that the diversion might cause. “Allowing a Lake Michigan water diversion to enable continued unrestrained sprawl and job migration will have the inevitable effect of perpetuating racial and economic segregation in the region, to the clear disadvantage of persons of color, especially African-Americans,” added Fred Royal, president of the Milwaukee Branch of the NAACP.

While many points of opposition were raised, several were echoed by multiple members of the public: this diversion would set a dangerous precedent, Waukesha did not consider all of its alternatives, Waukesha has not effectively implemented water conservation tactics, the water service area includes cities that do not have a need for the requested water, the amount requested is too high, and the return flow plan will have a significant impact on the Root River and the Fox River.

In written comments, the Sierra Club’s Great Waters Group co-signed a statement with several individuals and organizations that

echoed Fred Royal’s statement. The written comment states, “It is one thing for a water diversion application to seek to serve an existing community that has no other alternative. It is quite another for a community to seek to divert water not only to meet its current needs, but to support and undergird industrial, commercial and residential expansion – especially when the benefits of that expansion exclude communities of color, especially African-Americans, in the region.”

The turnout at the water diversion public hearings demonstrates that many Wisconsin residents do not want the diversion to be approved. Waukesha should have implemented conservation efforts, its request for water is far greater than current consumption, and the precious Great Lakes should continue to be protected by an effective implementation of the Great Lakes Compact. The Sierra Club – John Muir Chapter supports alternative methods of improving Waukesha’s water quality. As one Waukesha resident said at the Waukesha public hearing, “I like Waukesha, and I love water,” but she could not support the diversion.



At the time this article was written, the DNR had not released a decision on the proposal. After the DNR reviews the public comments, there will be a final technical review and a final Environmental Impact Statement issued. If those are approved, they will be forwarded to the Great Lake states for a review and decision.

John Muir Chapter Executive Committee Candidates

Leadership of the John Muir Chapter of the Sierra Club is entrusted to a 16 member volunteer Executive Committee. Committee members provide direction to the chapter on fiscal matters, policy, fundraising and prioritizing issue work. Nine Executive Committee members are elected by the Chapter membership at large and serve staggered, 3-year terms. Each of the chapter's six local groups annually appoints a delegate to represent them on the Chapter Executive Committee.

Three at large seats are up for election this fall. Please read the following candidate statements and use the ballot on page 15 to vote for up to three candidates.

Candidates were asked the following questions:

1. Please discuss when and why you joined the Sierra Club, and describe any leadership or volunteer activities with our organization or other non-profit groups that will help you fulfill your role.
2. What unique skills, experience, or perspective from your personal or professional background (fundraising, legal, accounting, communications, Board, political) will you bring to the Sierra Club – John Muir Chapter's Executive Committee?
3. Why are you applying to become a candidate for the Executive Committee of the John Muir Chapter?
4. Although the John Muir Chapter works on a variety of conservation issues, we focus on a limited number of priority issues affecting Wisconsin. Currently these are:
 - Protecting the Great Lakes and other Water Resources
 - Moving Beyond Coal to Clean Energy
 - Moving Beyond Oil to Clean Transportation
 - Protecting Habitats from Destructive Mining

Of the Chapter's priority issues, which one are you most passionate about and why?

CANDIDATES:

Doug Harrod-Genoa City

To be honest I do not know the exact year I joined the Sierra Club but since the early 70's I have been an on and off member. Since moving to Wisconsin in 1984 from Montana I think we have been consistent members. I have been actively involved in environmental issues since becoming a teacher in 1968. At Woodstock High School in Woodstock, IL we had an active Outdoor Club, Environmental Studies curriculum and field courses. I have been involved with numerous area activities including the stopping of developments in the Lake Geneva area and presently trying to stop further commercialization of the Lake Geneva shoreline.

I have run for State Assembly twice in the 32nd District and been defeated both times! However, my experience of running and dealing with the political situations has given me great insight into the workings of government and the role of lobbying and lobbyists in the process --- mostly negative in my District! The fact that I was a public school teacher for 45 years in three states also gives me important experience in working with the public, media, administration and other teachers. My teaching career involves a science and health education background.

Having retired from teaching I have a desire to continue helping further in the area of environment and natural resources. The present degradation of the Department of Natural Resources is particularly troubling to me as well as legislation regarding the land protection legacy in the State of Wisconsin. The direction of the state is away from safeguarding our resources to commercialization and real estate development which in the long run will have a negative impact on the well-being of our state.

Priority Issues: Protecting Habitats: From Destructive Mining--Living in Montana made me realize the long-lasting destruction which can result from mining practices that are not regulated properly. An example of that was the open pit mining in the Butte area which continues to be a problem to this day. Now there is another threat to that state with the coal mining in the southeast part of the state. They seemed to have not learned from previous mining debacles

James Kerler-Lake Mills



I joined the club in 1983. I served on the Great Waters Group Executive Committee and as Conservation Chair of the GWG. I have served 3 terms on the John Muir Chapter Executive Committee, chairing the Water Sentinels committee for two years. I have been John Muir Chapter Chair for the last two years.

I am an outdoorsman that can relate to other hunters and fisherman, as well as paddlers, hikers, backpackers and campers. I grew up spending time in urban Wauwatosa as well as rural Lac du Flambeau in Vilas County, northern Wisconsin. I live in a community of 5000 in farming country. I have visited numerous state and national parks and wilderness areas. I am an Eagle Scout. I have a

 **Candidates** *Continued on page 14*

background in data communications and IT project management with degrees in Electrical Engineering (BSEE) and Business Administration (MBA) from UW-Madison. I am a board member of the Rock River Coalition and served three years as board president of the Friends of Milwaukee's Rivers (now Milwaukee Riverkeeper).

I feel the Sierra Club JMC is an important and respected voice for conservation and a healthy environment in Wisconsin, and it needs more volunteer leaders. My experiences inside and outside the club give me a broad perspective. I stay abreast of environmental issues, have good communications skills and I am open to change.

Priority Issue: Protecting the Great Lakes and other Water Resources—Water is critical to life. Water quality and quantity are in decline in several parts of Wisconsin and we know the reasons why—mostly due to agricultural practices. At the same time stewardship, science and objectivity in natural resources has declined in Wisconsin due to choices made by voters and the influence of money in politics. Moving Beyond Coal to Clean Energy—We must make changes to our energy sources to prevent disruptive global climate change over the long run. Moving Beyond Oil to Clean Transportation—Transportation is a heavy user of fossil fuels and we can slow the increase of carbon in the atmosphere by making wise choices in our transportation systems.

Laura Menefee-Sturgeon Bay



I've been a Sierra Club member for most of my life, and am now a life member. Preserving native habitat for wildlife and resilient ecosystems is a priority of mine.

Professional expertise in Communications and Education, some academic and field

experience as a citizen scientist, and a deep commitment to protecting wildlife and wild places.

To continue to advance Our Wild Wisconsin, as part of Our Wild America campaign. During my first term on the Executive Committee, we received grass roots funding for Protecting Native Forests and Wildlife. Wisconsin has a long and proud history of conservation, but now that legacy is under threat. With staffing and funding cuts to the Science and Education mission of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, compounded with reduced enforcement capability, in order to insure our natural resources remain viable for generations to come, our voices are needed, now more than ever.

Priority Issue: Our Wild America/Our Wild Wisconsin: protecting native wildlife and habitat.

Liz Wessel-Madison



I joined the Sierra Club in 1984 and became a life member. In 1984, I was living in London England and I could see the impact of grassroots based organizations like the Sierra Club. The environmental movement needed and still needs people power to bring about a transition to a sustainable path.

I have completed two terms on the Executive Committee. I have served as Secretary, Chapter Chair and I have served on the Nominating and Elections Committees. I am currently serving as Chair of the Fundraising Committee and the Membership Committee.

I am also serving as the volunteer chair for National Sierra Club's Mass Mobilization Team which has worked to coordinate Sierra Club's efforts on large scale events such as the People's Climate March, The Enbridge Pipeline rally in Minneapolis and the

10 years on Katrina demonstration in New Orleans.

I have served on both state and national non-profit Boards prior to serving on the Executive Committee. I also have experience in fundraising, campaign planning and communications. I've taken the lead on planning a number of successful fundraisers for the chapter, including the annual Locally Grown, Nationally Known houseparty and the chapter's 50th Anniversary Celebration in 2013.

I'd like to continue to link our Groups, the Chapter and our grassroots activists more closely to support one another. Raise more of our operating funds (non tax deductible) through the Chapter appeal and fundraising events. On the issues, strategically use the mix of tools in our tool box (grassroots lobbying, outings, political work, education and legal) to be successful on the Chapter's priority issues. Get the Chapter to use the combination of outings and issues to build our membership and engage existing members and new faces in the Sierra Club. Build a stronger Chapter through developing new leadership

Priority Issue: Of the variety of issues the Chapter works on, I am most passionate about transportation and water issues. Fresh water is a precious resource and distinguishes Wisconsin which straddles two great watersheds of the country – the Mississippi River Basin and the Great Lakes Basin. While we may be water rich, the resources are threatened both by sources of pollution and by withdrawals. I started a local Water Sentinel Team in the Four Lakes Group to explore water issues in our area. We also worked to pass a county groundwater resolution that adds water quantity as a priority to pollutants of concern, phosphorus and chlorides.

We need to continue to fight for a more equitably distributed transportation budget. Maintaining existing roads and investing in public transit infrastructure are as important if not more important for the quality of life in Wisconsin. People use transit to get to jobs, schools, healthcare and other vital services. The John Muir Chapter's work and commitment to public transit infrastructure needs to continue as an answer to climate change and economic and social justice in Wisconsin.

John Muir Chapter-Executive Committee

ELECTION BALLOT 2015

Instructions: Read the candidate statements on the preceding page. Select up to three candidates. Indicate your choices by marking the appropriate box. Only ballots from mailed copies of The Muir View with legible membership numbers on the back are valid. One vote per member. "Voter 2" column for use in households with a "joint membership."

Voter #1:

Voter #2:

Doug Harrod

Doug Harrod

James Kerler

James Kerler

Laura Menefee

Laura Menefee

Liz Wessel

Liz Wessel

Write In:

Write In:



Ballots must be postmarked by November 6, 2015

Mail to: Heather Hansen, 3821 Humboldt Blvd. Apt. 5, Milwaukee, WI 53212-1321

*Your voice matters!
Vote in the chapter Executive Committee elections.*

How do YOU want to change the world?



Photo: Community GroundWorks

Protecting our environment,
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Support our group and
over 60 other nonprofits through
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JOHN MUIR CHAPTER CALENDAR

Executive Committee Meeting

November 14 UW-Stevens Point, Schmeckle Reserve
10:00-3:00 p.m.

Events Calendar:

- October 2-4** **Autumn Assembly**
Perlstein Resort & Conf Center, Lake Delton
<http://sierraclub.org/wisconsin/2015-Autumn-Assembly>
- October 3** **Chapter Awards**
Perlstein Resort & Conf Center, Lake Delton
<http://sierraclub.org/wisconsin/2015-Autumn-Assembly>
- October 6** **WPS Rate Case Public Comment Deadline**
www.sierraclub.org/Wisconsin
- October 29** **Xcel Rate Case Public Comment Deadline**
www.sierraclub.org/Wisconsin
- November 6** **Executive Committee Elections Ballots Due**

Help the
Muir View
Save a Tree



If all of our members signed up to receive and read their quarterly *Muir View* online, Sierra Club - John Muir Chapter members would save 400,000 double-sided sheets, or two tons of paper per year

To request the newsletter online please send your email address to muir.view.intern@gmail.com with your request to receive the *Muir View* online, or call us at (608) 256-0565

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Phone: (608)256-0565
E-mail: john.muir.chapter@sierraclub.org