

Sierra Club - John Muir Chapter 2010 Annual Report

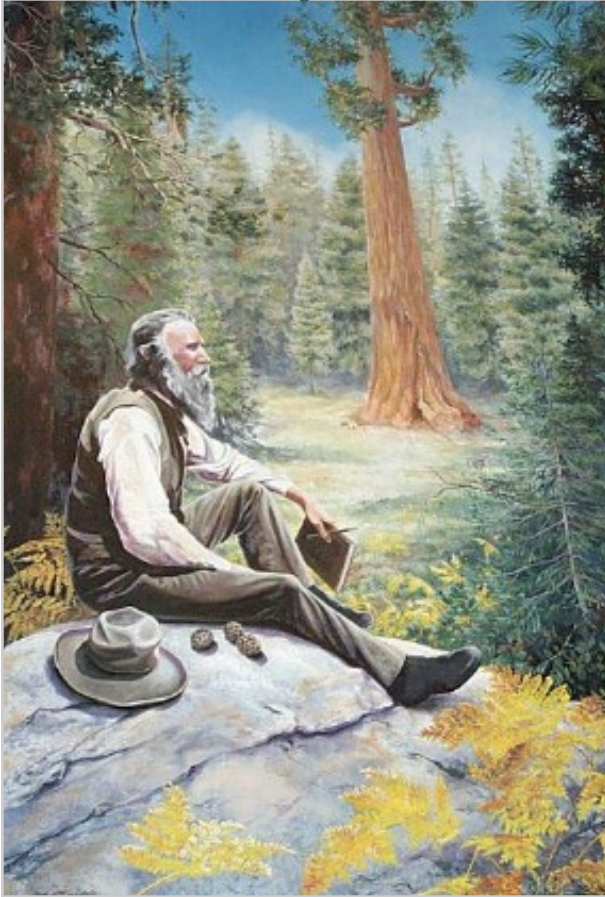


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*Protecting Wisconsin's Air, Water and Wild Places
for Future Generations*

<http://wisconsin.sierraclub.org>

Protecting Wisconsin's Air, Water & Wild Places



The Sierra Club - John Muir Chapter is Wisconsin's statewide voice for the nation's oldest, largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization. Our members and supporters include 15,000 of your friends and neighbors located throughout Wisconsin, following the footsteps of legendary Wisconsin conservationists, including Sierra Club founder, John Muir, Aldo Leopold, Sigurd Olson and Gaylord Nelson. Inspired by Wisconsin's beautiful lakes, forests, rivers, and other natural features, we work together to protect our communities and the planet.

The Mission of the Sierra Club is to explore, enjoy, and protect the wild places of the earth; to practice and promote the responsible use of the earth's ecosystems and resources; to educate and enlist humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment; and to use all lawful means to carry out those objectives.



Conservation Priorities & Related Issues

The priority issues of the Sierra Club – John Muir Chapter are reducing the threat of climate change and promoting clean transportation and smart energy solutions and protecting Wisconsin’s water resources. Group and chapter leaders also work on a broad range of other environmental issues throughout Wisconsin, including promoting recycling and reducing toxic waste; mining issues; protecting threatened and endangered species and the forests, prairies, and other habitats they depend on; and preventing and managing invasive species.

Reducing Climate Change Threats:

The John Muir Chapter works to reduce Wisconsin’s dependence on burning fossil fuels for energy, the leading cause of climate change. Our efforts include advocating for moving beyond coal at state-owned plants, goal-based energy efficiency investments, clean transportation options that include expanding transit and reducing the need to drive, and expanding renewable energy. We also support retaining strong safeguards for nuclear energy that require safe, permanent radioactive waste storage and ratepayer cost protections. The fortieth anniversary of Earth Day was marked by clean energy defeats, including the national BP oil tragedy and the defeat of the Clean Energy Jobs Act and statewide regional transit authorities in Wisconsin. But 2010 also included silver linings, including an end to a century of coal burning at Madison’s Capitol Heat and Power plant, the election of Chris Larson over a clean energy opponent, and an uptick in activism resulting in thousands attending Hands Across the Sand events to protest offshore drilling in the summer, heroic efforts to save passenger train service in the fall and winter, and a Joint Finance Committee vote to dramatically increase investments in goal-based energy efficiency. Despite the challenges that remain, we will build on the foundation of clean energy activism to defeat the polluters who seek to keep us addicted to fossil fuels.

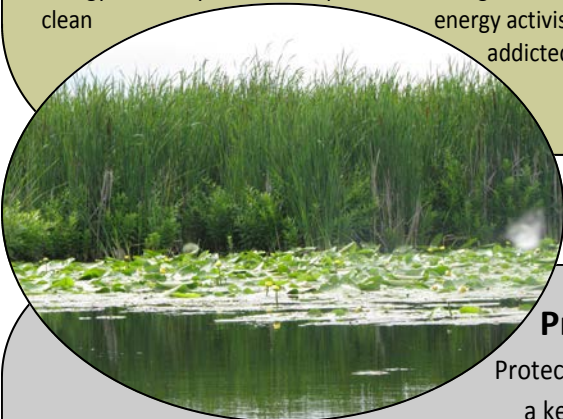


Current Priorities

- Reducing Climate Change Threats
- Protecting Water Resources

Related Issues

- Recycling Waste
- Reducing Mining Threats
- Protecting Forests & Public Lands
- Threatened & Endangered Species
- Curbing Invasive Species
- Supporting Sustainable, Local Agriculture



Protecting Wisconsin’s Water Resources:

Protecting the quality and the quantity of our Wisconsin’s fragile water resources is a key priority of the John Muir Chapter. We have a keen responsibility to the

Great Lakes, which contain 20% of the earth’s fresh surface water, as our state is bordered by Lake Superior and Lake Michigan. Wisconsin is also home to the northernmost headwaters of the Mississippi River, and we depend on our over 15,000 lakes, 12,600 rivers and streams, and countless creeks for drinking water, biodiversity, recreation, and industry.

In order to pass strong rules to control point and non-point sources of phosphorus, water protection activists generated public comments and testified at hearings in favor of reducing toxic algal blooms that threaten our waterways. We supported a groundwater bill that would reduce drawdowns with protections for springs, science-based permitting for high-capacity wells and statewide water conservation and a bill to restrict agricultural, industrial and municipal waste spreading in areas vulnerable to pollution. Although these bills ultimately did not pass this session, we will keep working to raise awareness about the need to monitor and protect Wisconsin’s water for future generations.



2010 Accomplishments & Activities

In 2010 the Sierra Club helped pass strong policies to protect Wisconsin's water quality and move closer to cleaner energy alternatives. With the support of our generous donors and Community Shares, Sierra Club - John Muir Chapter worked with our distinguished partners in the conservation community to achieve lasting victories.

We helped pass the strongest **phosphorus rules** in the country. The new rules will help control toxic algal blooms that threaten Wisconsin's lakes, streams and rivers and our tourism and fishing industries.

We supported the BPA Free Kids Act, which will restrict bisphenol-A (BPA) in baby bottles and children's cups sold in Wisconsin. BPA, which is linked to breast cancer, testicular cancer, low sperm count other diseases, is a plastic additive that can leach into food.

In 2010, the Sierra Club—John Muir Chapter continued our efforts to encourage state-owned heating plants to **move beyond coal**. In February, this prompted the Department of Administration to announce that they will install pollution controls, eliminate coal or shut down five plants violating the Clean Air Act. Although it was great to see Capitol Heat & Power end a century of coal burning in Madison last March, policy-makers were slow to follow through on other state-owned plants. Sierra Club responded by working with student activists to deliver 1,000 postcards to the Board of Regents, followed by rallies and demonstrations at UW-La Crosse and UW-Oshkosh.

We also started a new **campaign to convert aging coal plants to cleaner alternatives**. Our first target was the Valley Coal-Fired Power Plant in Milwaukee. Smog and soot threatens the health of over 24,000 people who live within a mile of this dirty, old plant. Our first step in this campaign included getting 100 residents to attend a public hearing on Valley's permit.

Our clean energy efforts include raising awareness about the entire life cycle costs of depending on coal, from mining to burning, to **coal ash disposal**. So, when the EPA held hearings on regulating coal ash, the Sierra Club took action. The closest hearing to the John Muir Chapter was in Chicago, and we brought 50 people and 400 comments in support of the strongest option to protected communities from the arsenic, lead and Mercury that can leach from toxic coal ash into our water.



The Sierra Club also fought hard to encourage Governor-Elect Walker to reconsider his decision to turn away \$800 million in federal grant funds to extend the popular Hiawatha passenger train service from Milwaukee to Madison.

Losing funding was very disappointing, as expanding intercity rail service throughout Wisconsin could have created 9,570 jobs and taken over 500,000 cars off the road. Despite the loss, our **efforts for clean transportation** goes on, building on our strong coalition from 2010.



Supported standards to get 25% of our energy from renewable sources by 2025 and energy efficiency standards to reduce electricity and natural gas use by 2% and 1% per year respectively under the **Clean Energy Jobs Act**. We also supported a bill to allow communities throughout Wisconsin to form **regional transit authorities** or RTAs, in order to generate dedicated funds for transit. Although these bills did not pass, we raised public awareness built strong alliances with business, tribes, faith, labor, senior and disability rights groups to work with in the future.



2010 Accomplishments & Activities

The Sierra Club also supported tripling the **Focus on Energy** budget for energy efficiency investments, and this was approved by the Joint Finance Committee.

Our Political Committee also **worked to elect pro-conservation candidates** in the fall election. Although we saw the defeat of Russ Feingold and other champions, the elections also included some silver linings. Hundreds of volunteers worked on behalf of candidates in local, state and national races, and 58% of endorsed candidates prevailed. Key victories included the election of former

Milwaukee County Supervisor Chris Larson to the State Senate, and the re-election of former Chapter Chair Penny Bernard Schaber to the Assembly.

We also completed a **strategic planning session** that will increase our organizational effectiveness moving forward. Key results included transitioning to a more programmatic budget; improving committee function and connections among the Chapter, groups, and sections; and expanding our focus to issues surrounding Wisconsin's Land & Water Ethic.



Community Shares and Workplace Giving

The Sierra Club Foundation—John Muir Chapter is a member of Community Shares of Wisconsin (CSW) and Community Shares of Greater Milwaukee (CSGM). We work with these partners to address environmental, social, and economic problems through grassroots action, advocacy, research and education. Community Shares supports its member groups through workplace giving and technical support and training. Campaigns allow employees to support local nonprofits conveniently through automatic paycheck donations. Many employers generously match their support.

Community Shares of Wisconsin, 2010:

Total Donations received: \$32,575.36
 Workplace Giving portion: 16,901.66
 Directed Gifts: 15,173.70
 Blockstein Award: 500.00

Total expenditures using

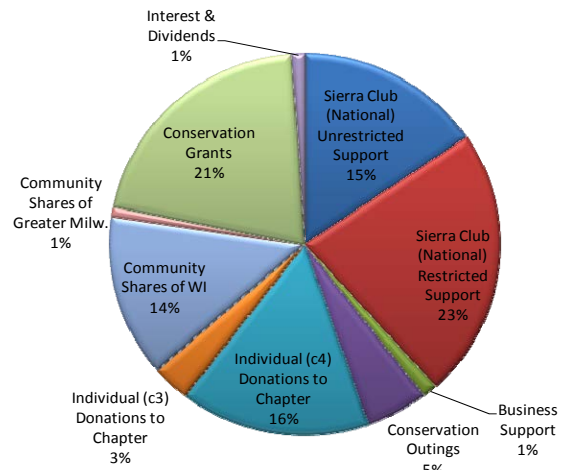
CSW Funds in 2010: \$ 6,156.27
 Administrative support: 4,191.80
 Other expenses: 1,964.47

Community Shares of Greater Milwaukee, 2010:

Total Donations received: \$ 2,051.85
Total expenditures using CSGM Funds in 2010: \$ 948.94
 Administrative Support: 26.37
 Earth day event: 775.10
 Other expenses: 147.47

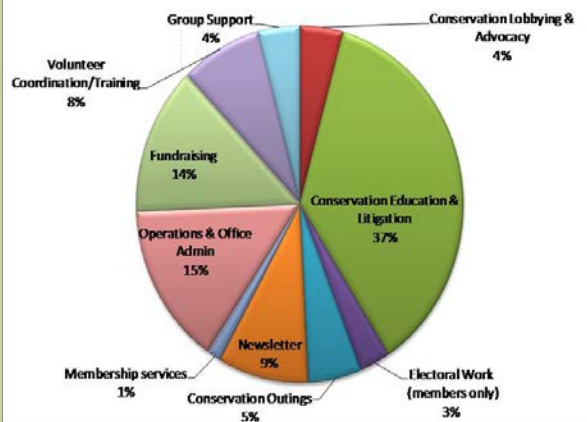
Financial Snapshot

JMC Income



Total 2010 Income \$203,486.12

JMC Expenses



Total 2010 Expenses \$212,550.79

Engaging Our Communities- Volunteers

Hundreds of volunteers were engaged throughout the state of Wisconsin in 2010. Whether organizing rallies, phone-banking during elections, serving on a committee or group, or performing administrative duties in the office, the efforts of volunteers are vital to the success of the John Muir Chapter. **Two Sierra Club volunteers received recognition in 2010 for their outstanding contributions to the community and state.**

The John Muir Chapter was so proud to see Caryl Terrell receive the 2010 Liesl Blockstein Community Leadership Award.



Presented by Community Shares of Wisconsin, this prestigious award is given to an individual who has exhibited exceptional leadership skills in working at the grassroots level for social change.

Caryl has been one of the state's most prominent environmental leaders for over 40 years. She works tirelessly as an advocate—both with

grassroots citizens' groups and the Wisconsin Legislature. Among the many victories that Caryl helped bring about:

- Protecting the Wolf River from Exxon's proposed Crandon Mine
- Passing comprehensive recycling laws
- Passing isolated wetland protection legislation
- Passing groundwater protection legislation

Since Caryl retired, she has continued to do "what she loves best"—working as an advocate on behalf of our environment. Caryl currently serves the Sierra Club-John Muir Chapter as Chair of the Legislative Committee, Chair of the Global Warming Team, and member of the Political Committee. She also volunteers for such groups as League of Women Voters of Wisconsin and currently focuses much of her energy on campaign finance reform.

Jim Connors, Sierra Club - John Muir Chapter

Each month, Community Shares of Wisconsin and their sponsors, [Budget Signs and Specialties](#), [Isthmus](#), and [105.5 Triple M Radio](#), recognizes two outstanding member agency volunteers who have given their time to our member groups and to our community. These volunteers are seldom in the news but are always on the front lines of critical issues that make our community a better place to live.

Sierra Club's volunteer lobbyist extraordinaire, Jim Connors received a Backyard Hero Award in April 2010.

Since retiring as an attorney, Connors has volunteered for many groups, including the Sierra Club-John Muir Chapter. He has provided invaluable legislative service by testifying



on bills related to electronic waste, recycling funds, regional transit authorities, uniform wind siting and a statewide ban on phosphorus lawn fertilizer that recently became law. Jim has also worked on several national Sierra Club Service trips and teaches a course in trial advocacy at the University of Wisconsin Law School. Jim looks forward to many upcoming

victories in his work to promote the responsible use of Wisconsin's ecosystem and clean energy and water resources.

The Sierra Club also awards recognition for volunteer efforts during the chapters

Autumn Assembly.

Will Stahl received the **Merit Award** for his service as Conservation Chair & a member of the Water Protection Team. His excellent conservation writing as a columnist for [The Scene](#) was also recognized.

Organic Valley received the **Torchbearer Award** for all their work to support local, organic family farms, for their instrumental role in defeating Dairyland's planned coal ash dump and for their vocal support of clean energy.

Chiwaukee Prairie Preservation Fund received the **Good Citizen Award** for their work to protect habitat in southeastern Wisconsin.

The **Wildflower Award** was presented to **Group** and **Outings** treasurers **Ann Bourque, Danny Foote, Amy Furreness, Denise O'Meara, Joelyn Olen, Sally Peck, Jim Rickard, John Rider, Gregg Riemer, John Reindl, Jeff Sytsma** and **Eleanor Wolf** for all their hard work to keep the Sierra Club's finances in order.

2010 Local Group Activities

The John Muir Chapter is organized into eight local volunteer groups, each with its own officers, activities, and local conservation priorities. We work together on statewide and regional issues, and each group appoints a delegate who is a voting member of the Chapter's Executive Committee. Groups tackle local conservation issues, host environmental educational programs, and lead a wide variety of local canoeing, bicycling, hiking, skiing, and kayaking outings. Read on to learn about Sierra Club - John Muir Chapter's local group activities in 2010.

The Chippewa Valley Sierra Club Group serves the west central region of Wisconsin, including Eau Claire. In 2010 CVG awarded a total of \$1,500.00 in environmental education grants to Delong Middle School, Chippewa Falls Middle School, Tiffany Creek Elementary and South Middle School. School projects ranged from building a rain garden to a class trip to remove invasive species from a state park, with students learning about topics like sustainable living through gardening, recycling and forestry. Grant funds were generated through CVG's annual Century Bike Ride, held each May. CVG was active in supporting the expansion of Intercity High-Speed Rail service in Menomonie, WI and hosted a rally to "Save the Train" attended by 100. Monthly public educational program topics included Native American metaphysics, phosphorus pollution, Arctic canoeing and mining issues in the north-central states. For more information on the Chippewa Valley Group, visit them online at: <http://wisconsin.sierraclub.org/chippewa/index.htm>

The Coulee Region Sierra Club Group, serves southwestern Wisconsin and the La Crosse area. In 2010 CRG hosted the annual Autumn Assembly at Camp Ehawee. Over 70 chapter members attended the 3 day event which featured educational sessions on building a better energy future, organic food production, eco-housebuilding and protection of bird habitats. CRG was active in supporting intercity, high-speed rail and hosted a rally at the La Crosse Amtrak Station. The group hosted public education programs highlighting the global impacts of genetically modified food, sulfide mining conflicts, effects of mercury in fish and wildlife and efforts to save forests in Costa Rica to protect Wisconsin's neo-tropical migrating birds. CRG's Water Sentinel's team has continued to develop and expand. For more information on the Coulee Region Group, visit them online at: <http://wisconsin.sierraclub.org/coulee/index.htm>

The Four Lakes Sierra Club Group serves Madison and areas in central and southwestern Wisconsin. Their primary campaign focuses in 2010 were "Intercity High-Speed Rail," "Moving Beyond Coal," and "Regional Transit." The group's Recycling Away from Home added two new events in 2010. FLG became a charter partner in a new advocacy effort: Capital Region Advocacy Network for Environmental Sustainability (CRANES) The partnership will allow organizations to work collaboratively to protect resources within an eight county region surrounding

Dane County. FLG also reintroduced the popular "Cruisin for Cuisine" outing, a monthly social dinner and educational program that travels to different restaurants featuring local cuisine. 2010 topics included: clean energy and jobs, protecting water resources, green travel and greening your home. For more information on the Four Lakes Group, visit them online at: <http://www.4lakes.org/>

The Fox Valley Group serves Appleton, Green Bay, Neenah-Menasha and other nearby communities. In 2010 the FVG held work days to lend volunteer help on the Ice Age Trail and to cleanup garlic mustard in Combined Locks. During the 2010 elections, the group offered a forum for local politicians to express their views on environmental issues of concern to residents in the region. Members also played a role in environmental champion, Penny Bernard Schaber's successful re-election campaign. FVG was active in supporting intercity, high-speed rail in Wisconsin and hosted a "Save the Train" rally. FVG also offered educational programs open to members and the public on bat rehabilitation, beekeeping and factory vs. organic farms. For more information on the Fox Valley Group, visit them online at: <http://wisconsin.sierraclub.org/foxvalley/>



The Great Waters Group serves the greater Milwaukee area. GWG hosted a successful 2010 Earth Day event attended by over 200. Highlights included readings on environmental stewardship representing many different traditions including: Ojibwe, Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, Christian and Islamic as well as educational programs on ecological concerns involving the Great Lakes and habitat. The group was active in promoting Regional Transit Authorities in southeast Wisconsin and in supporting intercity, high-speed rail. Cheri Briscoe played an instrumental, volunteer role in the re-election of Sierra Club endorsed candidate, Chris Larson. In 2010 the group increased the number of outings available and chose to focus on local water and energy (climate crisis) issues. Other educational topics included: the future of fair trade, aquaculture and a popular monarch migration outing. For more information on the Great Waters Group, visit them online at: <http://wisconsin.sierraclub.org/gwg/>

Group Activities (Continued)

The Southeast Gateway Group serves members in the Racine and Kenosha areas. In 2010 SEGG worked locally for clean energy, invasive species removal, environmental education, recycling and the preservation of clean water in area rivers and lakes. SEGG began a water monitoring project in conjunction with Water Action Volunteers (WAV) program. The group also organized a huge Hands Across the Sand event to protest offshore drilling and support expanded transit. This event was held in conjunction with 800 other events across the globe. SEGG also offers hiking, biking, field trips and an environmental book club. For more information on the Southeast Gateway Group, visit them online at: <http://wisconsin.sierraclub.org/segg/>



The St. Croix Valley Interstate Group serves members on both sides of the St. Croix River, which is the boundary between northwestern Wisconsin and eastern Minnesota. The SCVIG continued their campaign to preserve the integrity of the St. Croix River, a National Scenic Riverway, in 2010. One of the biggest threats to the St. Croix River is the proposed river way crossing, a huge bridge planned by the Minnesota Department of Transportation to replace a two-lane lift bridge in Stillwater, MN. The SCVIG worked with the North Star Chapter of Sierra Club on the bridge issue and won a major legal victory in 2010. For more information on the St. Croix Valley Interstate Group, visit them online at: <http://www.northstar.sierraclub.org/about/groups/st-croix/>

Special Activity Sections

The River Touring Section (RTS) is a special activity group of the Sierra Club - John Muir Chapter. The mission of the RTS is to coordinate paddling trips, mostly in Wisconsin, promote on-the-water safety, and improve paddling skills, to support river conservation organizations, and to facilitate communication among members of RTS. In 2010 the group offered 25 paddling trips and 4 Instructional Clinics. For more information about the River Touring Section visit them online at: <http://wisconsin.sierraclub.org/rts/>

Madison Inner City Outings is part of the national Inner City Outings (ICO), an outreach program of the Sierra Club. ICO offers hiking and camping trips, boating and skiing outings, and other outdoor adventures to underprivileged youth in the Madison area. For more information visit them online: <http://www.madisonico.org/>



The Sierra Student Coalition (SSC) is a broad network of high school and college-aged youth from across the country working to protect the environment. The SSC is the youth-led chapter of the Sierra Club. In 2010 we worked to reactivate Sierra Student Coalition Groups at UW Madison and UW Milwaukee. We recruited Cal De Witt to be our new UW Madison faculty advisor and several student leaders to head up campus activities. We created a new website and a new member survey. SSC Activities will include promoting **clean transportation**, including intercity high-speed rail between Milwaukee and Madison, protecting student bus passes, ensuring a rapid **transition from dirty coal (fueled by mountaintop removal mining) to sustainable** alternatives at UW-Charter Street and other state owned plants, promoting **energy efficiency, recycling, local, organic food, composting and renewable energy** at UW System schools. For more information visit them online: <http://wisconsin.sierraclub.org/ssc.asp>



Sierra Club-John Muir Chapter

Chapter Leaders and Staff

2010 Executive Committee

Officers

Eric Uram, Chair, Madison, WI, eric.uram@headwater.us
(Headwater Consulting)

Jim Kerler*, Vice Chair, Lake Mills, WI, jfkerler@verizon.net

Liz Wessel, Secretary, Madison, WI, lizard59sc@yahoo.com
(Green Concierge Travel, LLC)

Harriet Iwamoto, Treasurer, Brookfield, WI, hsiwamoto@hotmail.com

Will Stahl, Conservation Chair, Neenah, WI, wrsy55@sbcglobal.net
(Fox Valley Technical College)

Members

Nancy Carlson, Racine, WI, nancyslunar@hotmail.com (UW-Parkside),

Brian Ewing, Gays Mills, WI, bkewing@hotmail.com

Don Ferber, Madison, WI, d_ferber@sbcglobal.net (Dane County Parks)

Carol Hardin, Hudson, WI, cchardin8@gmail.com (Hudson Public Library)

Diana Lynn, Neilsville, WI, dlynn@tds.net (NBI, Inc.)

James Steffens*, Ridgeway, WI, jjsteff@mhtc.net

Marilyn Pedretti, Holmen, WI, mjpedretti@yahoo.com (Town of Holland)

Caryn Treiber*, Colfax, WI, ctreiber@discover-net.net

Barbara Thomas*, Menomonie, WI, thomash@uwstout.edu

Gary Werner, Madison, WI, nattrails@aol.com (Partnership for National Trails)

* Retired unless otherwise noted

2010 Executive Committee Meetings:

January 9, 2010: Executive Committee meeting, Baraboo

March 20, 2010, Baraboo, 1st Congregational Church

May 4, 2010, Conference Call

June 12, 2010, Baraboo

August 3, 2010, Conference Call

September 18, 2010, Baraboo, 1st

Congregational Church

November 9, 2010, Conference Call



Sierra Club- John Muir Chapter Staff:

Shahla M. Werner, PhD, Chapter Director

Patrea Wilson, Chapter Coordinator (retired
September 2010)

Jacinda Tessmann, Chapter Coordinator
(October 2010)

Elizabeth Ward, Rail & Coal Programs
Apprentice



Thank You to our 2010 Donors

Your generous contributions – above and beyond your membership dues – provided crucial support for our local grassroots campaigns to protect Wisconsin's air, water, and wild places for future generations.

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In 2010 donations to the Sierra Club-John Muir Chapter were made in memory of:

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