

# *Crossroads Group*

## *Sierra Club*



SPRING/SUMMER 2023

### **Crossroads' Balloonfest Refreshment Stand**

The Crossroads Group will once again have its “world famous” refreshment stand at the annual Michigan Challenge Balloonfest in Howell. The dates are June 23-25.

For many years, we have been serving up hotdogs, brats, veggie burgers, chips and a variety of cold drinks. The refreshment stand raises the money that allows us to bring so much value to our community. It funds all of our programs, our outings, our newsletters and our conservation and political work.

But it does not happen without our Crossroads Group supporters! Refreshment stand volunteers get a free pass into the event and the opportunity to meet other members of the Sierra Club and learn what friendly and dedicated people we are!

We have shifts all weekend long to meet your schedule, and people often come early or stay late to enjoy the activities and spectacles surrounding the festival. One cannot say enough about the sight of dozens of hot air balloons lifting off into the summer sky...and there is no better vantage point than our booth, which overlooks the launch field. Friday night has the fireworks and Saturday night the balloon-glow.

The biggest reward is knowing that by giving only a few hours of your time you help make Crossroads Group a vital force for environmental leadership in our area. Suggested volunteer shifts are as follows but feel free to modify them as needed to fit your schedule.

- Thursday setup, June 22: 6:30 PM-8 PM
- Friday, June 23: 1-4 PM, 3-7 PM, 5-9 PM, 6-10 PM
- Saturday, June 24: 10AM-2PM, 12-6 PM, 2-6 PM, 5-9 PM, 6-10 PM
- Sunday, June 25: 10AM-2PM, 2-6 PM, 5-9 PM

If you are interested in volunteering or learning more about this event, please call Paul Thielking at 810-588-6077 or send an email to [crossroads.sierraclub@gmail.com](mailto:crossroads.sierraclub@gmail.com)



## Executive Committee Chairs

**Chairperson:** Lee Anzicek  
Lee.Anzicek@michigan.sierraclub.org

**Vice Chairperson:** Lee Burton  
Lee.Burton@michigan.sierraclub.org

**Treasurer:** Julie Griess  
cg.treasurer@michigan.sierraclub.org

**Secretary:** Cathy Broses  
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### Chapter Group Representative:

Lee Anzicek, Terri Wilkerson  
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**Fundraising:** Paul Thielking, Paula Gruszka  
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**Newsletter:** Terry Gannon  
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**Outings:**  
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**Political:** Ginny Maturen, Curt Hamilton  
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**Programs:** Mary Novrocki, Karen Schmitz  
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**Webmaster:** Laurie Mercure  
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**Conservation:** Ron Kardos, Shirley Jackson  
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### VISIT US AT:

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## Crossroad Group Service Award

Early in 2022, Crossroads Political Committee chairperson, Ginny Maturen, created a system of tracking opportunities and logging political actions taken by members of the Crossroads Group.

Amazingly, Crossroads members logged a total of more than 600 hours of political action work during the 2022 election cycle.

Ginny's creation of this important structure for political action has led to her being awarded our Crossroads Group Service Award. The award was presented to Ginny at our March meeting by chairperson Lee Anzicek and Representative Jennifer Conlin from the 48th District of the Michigan State Legislature.

We look forward to Ginny's continued leadership and increased efforts to elect pro-environment candidates and pass pro-environment legislation in the years to come. Congratulations Ginny!



Left to right: Lee Anzicek, Ginny Maturin, Representative Jennifer Conlin

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# Harvest the Sun: Michigan's Bright Opportunity

*Excerpts*  
by Mike Buza

Note: Mike Buza is a Sierra Club activist, a promoter of solar energy and an excellent resource. You can obtain print or digital copies of his brochure by contacting him at the [theoriginalzuba@yahoo.com](mailto:theoriginalzuba@yahoo.com). Below are selected annotated passages.

## **On Michigan's solar future:**

MICHIGAN has a chance to become stronger through ENERGY INDEPENDENCE. Energy produced from renewable sources such as utility scale solar and wind is less expensive than gas or coal generated electricity. Renewable energy sources create jobs, give our state more money for community needs such as schools, and protect our Great Lakes.

## **On Environmental impact:**

Overall, replacing current, climate disrupting energy practices with clean energy alternatives is the best way to protect the quality of our soil, water and air. Solar installations are an important way forward.

## **Solar Installations and Farmland:**

To start a solar farm, the ideal place is large tracks of cleared, flat land; in other words, farmland. Currently, according to the USDA, over 90 million acres of the farmland in the US is planted in corn. Thirty million acres of that corn is used to produce ethanol that is used for automotive fuel. It would take approximately 11.6 million acres of just solar panels to power the entire US, including cars. This means by totally electrifying our society, including transportation, we would be returning approximately 19 million acres in the US to food production.

Understandably, some farmers were concerned about the impact of solar panels on their farms, but research has shown many benefits to farming practices in addition to the steady income it provides to farmers.

## **Solar Installations and Property Values:**

When a utility-scale solar development is proposed, there is sometimes a question of how this will affect property values. Many owners of smaller properties nearby say the reason they moved into the "country" is that they loved the views of a farming community. Most solar developers are sensitive to this criticism. Planners include vegetative barriers to block out the view of solar panels. Now, almost all proposed solar development companies include green barriers in their plans.

Transmission lines are the other possible concern when a solar installation is sited near homes. Many of these are buried underground thus eliminating the danger from this source.

## **Solar Installations and Toxicity:**

There is much concern about the safety of solar panels. Much of this is a distortion of the facts. One of the common pieces of misinformation is that solar panels will poison the ground. First of all, solar panels are constructed in a similar fashion as car windshields or hurricane glass so that the materials inside will remain intact. This rugged construction has been used for over many years and why manufacturers can give a 25 year power production guarantee.

## **Your Role in the Transition to Clean Energy:**

We need all hands on-deck right now—to have a decent future for our children and grandchildren and the many other unique and irreplaceable species on the Earth. Speak to neighbors and attend township and regional meetings to support the clean, renewable energy provided by wind and solar farms near you.

*BECOME PART OF MICHIGAN'S BRIGHT OPPORTUNITY!*

## **Battery Recycling – Why & Where?**

The EPA estimates that Americans purchase over 3 billion or approximately 180,000 tons of dry cell (non-automotive) batteries every year. The biggest share is single-use batteries – alkaline, button cell, and lithium. Alkaline batteries alone account for half of the total. Placed end to end, they would circle the earth at least 6 times. Rechargeable batteries make up less than 10%. Sadly, less than 5% of batteries are recycled.

Batteries are considered hazardous waste. They contain metals and minerals such as nickel, cadmium, cobalt, lead, lithium, and mercury. When disposed of in a landfill, they can be crushed or disintegrate releasing these harmful materials into the air, soil, and groundwater.

The recycling process varies based on the type of battery. Mechanical, chemical, and thermal processes are used to separate the component materials. Most of the materials find their way into new batteries or new products. Unusable and harmful materials are captured and properly disposed of.

Livingston County has many battery collection container drop-off locations for size D and smaller batteries. They are available at most city/village halls, township halls, and libraries. For a complete list, visit <https://www.livgov.com/dpw/Pages/battery-disposal.aspx>. Larger batteries can be recycled at Best Buy, Home Depot, and Lowe's (except alkaline).

Rechargeable batteries are a great way to reduce the number of batteries needing disposal. Significant improvements have been made since their introduction in the 1990s. Nickel-metal-hydrate (NiMH) is the most common. They don't leak, have an improved self-discharge rate (i.e. better shelf life), and most can be charged up to 1,200 times. In spite of their higher initial cost, they pay for themselves after 5-6 charges according to The New York Times and Wirecutter.

Let's all do our part to keep harmful materials out of the environment and reduce the need to mine those materials and the pollution and environmental damage that goes along with them by recycling our batteries.

Over 3 billion or approximately 180,000 tons of dry cell batteries are purchased annually in the US according to the EPA. The primary culprits are single-use batteries – alkaline, button cell, and lithium. Alkaline batteries alone account for half of the total. Rechargeable batteries make up less than 10%. Unfortunately, less than 5% of batteries are recycled.

## **Join the Team - Experience the Rewards**

It's not often that volunteer opportunities lead a person to look on their involvement in an organization and realize that they get more than they give. But that is how members of the Crossroads leadership team feel. In addition to the good feeling of knowing their time spent goes to good causes, there are the rewards of camaraderie and new friends, too.

The Crossroads Group is a dynamic organization that plays an important role in our community. New members of the team are warmly welcomed and learn the many ways to contribute without any pressure whatsoever to do any more than what each individual wishes.

We invite you to get to know us by attending a meeting which are held on the first Thursday of most months. We are currently looking for a person to share in the duties twice a year of editing our newsletter and someone to lend a hand with social media. However, whatever your interest is in preserving and enjoying the natural world, we have opportunities for you.

If you would like to know more about us or are interested in meeting the team, please contact vice chair Lee Burton at [lee.burton@michigan.sierraclub.org](mailto:lee.burton@michigan.sierraclub.org) call him at 810-231-9045

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## Crossroads Group Events

See our Meetup site [www.meetup.com/Sierra-Club-Crossroads-Group](http://www.meetup.com/Sierra-Club-Crossroads-Group) for more details about these outings and programs (including possible cancellations or changes) and to see details when we schedule future events. Meetup is free to join, and a great way to let us know who is attending each event and to allow us to communicate with our members and for you to communicate with us.

### Outings

**Brighton Recreation Area Weeknight Hike** – Wednesday May 10, 6:30pm

Location: Penosha trailhead off Bishop Lake Rd, Brighton

Join us for a weeknight hike on the Penosha Trail (5 miles) or the Kahchin trail (2 miles).

**Pinckney State Recreation Area Bird and Nature Hike**– Saturday May 27, 10am

Location: Lakelands Trail crossing parking lot, Cedar Lake Rd, Pinckney

Join us on a scenic 2-3 mile hike through some beautiful wetlands and hilly terrain in Pinckney State Recreation Area.

**Detroit Dequindre Cut and Eastern Market Mural Urban Hike, plus lunch at VegFest** - Sunday June 4, 10am

Location: Dequindre Cut Parking Lot, Wilkins St, Detroit

Join us for a 5-mile urban hike through Detroit's Dequindre Cut Greenway and the many murals of Eastern Market, followed by lunch at VegFest.

**Waterloo Recreation Area Hike** – Saturday June 10, 10am

Location: Gerald E. Eddy Discovery Center, Bush Rd, Chelsea

Join us for a 6-mile hilly faster-paced hike or a 2-3 mile nature hike on the Bog trail and other optional trails.

### Programs

Sierra Club Crossroads Group presents these programs free to the public at  
Brighton District Library: 100 Library Dr, Brighton, MI.

**Wednesday May 17, 7pm – Wildlife Rehab**

Presented by the Howell Nature Center, featuring live animals. Fun for the family (3rd grade and up).

**Wednesday September 20, 7pm - Climate Change: The Science and Consequences**

by Dr. Susan Schneider, Kalamazoo Climate Crisis Coalition

**Wednesday November 15, 7pm - The Water Walkers**

by Carol Trembath

**Wednesday January 17, 7pm - The Islands of the Philippines**

by Karen Schmitz





**Sierra Club – Crossroads Group**  
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**Brighton, MI 48116**

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