

Crossroads Group

Sierra Club

SPRING/SUMMER 2018



Help End Gerrymandering in Michigan

Last year 4,000 volunteers with **Voters Not Politicians**, a grassroots non-partisan volunteer organization, successfully gathered 425,000 signatures to put a proposal on the November 2018 ballot to end gerrymandering in Michigan by Constitutional Amendment.

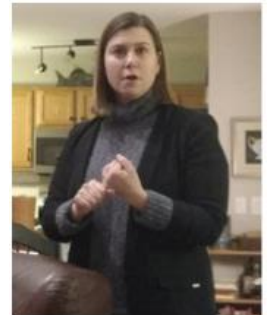
Volunteers all over Michigan are hard at work now to spread the word and build support for an **Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission**. Thousands more volunteers are urgently needed to get this ballot measure passed. Sign up and explore all the ways **you can help** Voters Not Politicians at www.votersnotpoliticians.com.

On April 20, the Sierra Club announced endorsement of two statewide ballot initiatives aimed at improving Michigan's participatory democracy: **Voters Not Politicians** proposal for an **Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission**; and **Promote The Vote** amendment to make voting easier for every eligible person.

Crossroads Group Meets with 8th District Congressional Candidates

In March, Crossroads Group leaders met with the two Democratic candidates vying for the nomination for the House seat held by Republican Mike Bishop. As the Sierra Club is a non-partisan group, Congressman Bishop was also offered an opportunity to meet with Crossroads leaders but he did not respond to our invitation. According to environmental groups, he has among the worst voting records in Congress on environmental issues. The eighth district stretches from Lansing to Rochester.

On March 8, candidate Elissa Slotkin shared her views on environmental issues, equating a healthy environment with national security. A Michigan native from Holly, she spoke of her care for the health of Michigan's environment and its residents. Among the points she stressed in her visits with voters across the district were: Protecting the Great Lakes, ensuring residents have clean drinking water, and not accepting corporate PAC money to fund her campaign. She supports using incentives to support renewable energy and providing the EPA with the resources it needs to protect our environment. She says she practices common sense and follows a philosophy of working together to meet a goal, not playing divisive politics. Elissa has extensive federal experience as former Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Affairs under the Obama Administration. Prior to that she worked alongside military and intelligence experts in the Pentagon during the Bush administration.



On March 29, Crossroads Group leaders met with Chris Smith, a tenured professor at MSU. Chris shared his views on environmental issues and his commitment to renewable energy. Working and living in East Lansing, Smith felt compelled to run in this year's election to combat the policies of the Trump administration. He is gathering support with a strategy of face-to-face visits with voters across Ingham, Livingston, and Oakland counties. Chris is an advocate for a single payer health care system and for social justice. His views on the environment are long held and proactive. He believes in shutting down Line 5 before a disaster occurs and he supports renewable energy. He wants to reverse the weakening of the EPA by the present administration so that it can fulfill its role of protecting the environment. He also believes in basing decisions on science and facts, not on ideology. Chris Smith is a candidate with decades of experience in teaching and writing about American government, policy, and criminal justice.



On April 20, the Sierra Club announced the first round of candidate endorsements for the 2018 primary and general elections. Congressional candidate **Elissa Slotkin** (D-8) is among the first to be endorsed on the combined strength of her campaign and environmental message. Primary Election will be August 7.

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VISIT US AT:

www.sierraclub.org/michigan/crossroads

facebook.com/Crossroads.Group.Sierra.Club

meetup.com/Sierra-Club-Crossroads-Group



Balloonfest Lemonade Stand

Once again the Crossroads Group will have its “world famous” lemonade stand at the annual Michigan Challenge Balloonfest in Howell. The dates are Friday June 22 through Sunday June 24.

For many years, we have been serving up hotdogs, brats, veggie burgers, chips and a variety of cold drinks. But what we are best known for is our trademark fresh squeezed lemonade that we offer to the thirsty crowds that come annually to enjoy all the festivities of the event.

The lemonade 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! Lemonade 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: Evening
- Friday: 12-6 PM, 4 PM until closing
- Saturday: 10 AM-3 PM, 12 PM-6 PM, 5 PM until closing
- Sunday: 10 AM-3 PM, 12 PM-5 PM, 3 PM until closing

Anyone interested in volunteering or learning more:

send an email to sierraclublemonade@hotmail.com or

before June 1 call Paul Thielking at 810-588-6077

after June 1 call Lorne Beatty at 810-333-6090

Our Crossroads Group Political Committee Needs You!

2018 midterm elections could change the political landscape of Michigan. If you are interested in having more engagement with Michigan politics, how about participating in the Crossroads Political Committee? Voices from all corners of our membership are wanted, and we especially need perspectives from members in Oakland County and the 11th Congressional District.

No travel necessary to participate. This committee can meet by phone and email. Please contact Crossroads’ Political Committee Co-chairs Kate and Matt at cg.political@michigan.sierraclub.org.

Handy Township will likely be site of 750-1200 MW natural gas fired power plant

In just four short months, Handy Township officials made the decision to amend their year-old Master Plan and zoning ordinance to make way for heavy industry by special use provision. The Master Plan as adopted on March 31, 2017, emphasized the rural nature and values in the township. The final decision over objections rezoned 125 acres within Section 36 of Handy Township from Agricultural/Residential to Research & Development to allow a power plant by Special Use through new language in the Master Plan.

We attended every public meeting, met with and spoke with township and county decision-makers about serious concerns over the impact of a fossil fuel facility on the township, neighboring communities, and the county. Several of us spent countless hours researching issues and history of the type of plant proposed. Not one official charged with protecting public health, clean air and clean water voiced any concern about potential downsides to this proposal. A promise of temporary construction jobs and some permanent positions in operations, coupled with anticipated tax revenues to the county and the township, outweighed the enormous risk to health and safety and the cost of 140 tons of climate-changing emissions of methane and carbon dioxide to the atmosphere that will be released annually during operation.

So now the responsibility falls more heavily to the residents of Handy Township and to Crossroads members. Many months of planning will go into the review of a site plan and there will be many opportunities to engage and voice demands for the cleanest, least polluting, quietest, gas-fired power plant possible. When these reviews occur, it will be all hands on deck!

In the meantime, we will continue our fight to move beyond dirty fossil fuels and work towards creating a sustainable energy future in Michigan. See our website www.sierraclub.org/michigan/crossroads for further reading on merchant power plants and other communities living with one.

It's Happening...the Livingston Area Environment Coalition!

You may remember reading about the creation of a new environmental coalition in a previous Crossroads Group newsletter. We're pleased to announce that, after months of prep work, the Livingston County Environmental Coalition held its first meeting at the Howell Nature Center in early April. The newly-formed coalition consists of a variety of groups that each plays a role in protecting and promoting the natural environment in our area. A purpose of the coalition is to support and promote each of these nine constituent groups.

The Crossroads Group of the Sierra Club, the Howell Nature Center, the Huron River Watershed Council, Recycle Livingston, the Livingston Land Conservancy, Audubon affiliates Hartland Nature Club and Huron Valley Audubon, and the Friends of Island Lake State Recreation Area and the Friends of Highland Recreation Area were all invited to be a part of this partnership, and each and every group was represented at our first meeting! The enthusiasm and attention for the many ideas presented that morning were inspiring, and an affirmation that this is an idea whose time has come. One of the decisions made was to tweak the Coalition name to better reflect the area beyond Livingston County these groups engage in.

As we move forward, plans include having banners made for use at community events, where coalition group members can distribute brochures about the groups and their activities. The Livingston Area Environment Coalition also plans to have links to individual member group's Web information on our individual websites. By sharing information and working together, the Coalition can better support our shared commitments to the environment, while also providing more opportunities for county residents to become involved with efforts to protect, and enjoy, our beautiful county.

Many Crossroads Group members are already familiar with the various coalition member groups and are active participants in the important work they do. Others may be looking for more information and opportunities to become active in other local environmental groups. Whichever category you fit into, you are sure to find something of interest in the variety of groups participating in the Livingston Area Environment Coalition.

Crossroads Group Program

Coyote - Our Urban Adapter Wednesday May 16th, 7:00 PM
Free Program by Laurel Zoet of *Nature on the Go!*
Brighton District Library 100 Library Dr. Brighton, MI

Native Americans told legends about the coyote and yet today this wild canine only seems to see bad press. How can one animal be feared by some and revered by others? Utilizing data collected in recent big city studies, this one hour educational presentation will look at the biology, the myths and the facts about one of North America's most highly adaptable animals.



Crossroads Group Outings

Outings are subject to weather conditions. To check for cancellations or changes, or to find out more information about any outing, see our website (www.sierraclub.org/michigan/crossroads) or contact John Wilson at 734-355-3822 or crossroadsoutings@michigan.sierraclub.org. All outings are open to Sierra Club members and non-members.

Bring water and snacks.

**** Please arrive 15 minutes early for sign in, outings will start promptly at the stated time**

Huron Meadows Metropark Hike - Saturday May 12th, 1 PM**

Location: Huron Meadows Metropark, 8765 Hammel Rd, Brighton; meet at the Cedar Ridge picnic area / boat launch parking lot

Skill Level: beginner; **Difficulty:** easy to moderate; **Cost:** free, but requires Metropark entry fee

We will hike 3 to 5 miles on the Hidden lake Bend and Beech Alley rustic trails.

Pinckney State Recreation Area Bird and Nature Hike - Saturday May 26th, 10:00 AM**

Location: meet at Lakelands Trail crossing parking lot, Cedar Lake Rd just south of M-36, Pinckney

From downtown Pinckney (M-36 & S. Howell St), go west on M-36 for 1 mile, turn left on Cedar Lake Rd. Go 0.1 miles to trail parking lot on left. GPS: 42.4608, -83.9661

Skill Level: beginner; **Difficulty:** easy to moderate; **Cost:** free

Join us on a 2-3 mile hike through some beautiful wetlands and hilly terrain in Pinckney State Recreation Area. Our hike leaders will point out birds and other interesting flora and fauna.

Waterloo Recreation Area Hike and Bog Visit - Saturday June 10th, 1 PM**

Location: Gerald E. Eddy Discovery Center, 17030 Bush Rd, Chelsea

Skill Level: beginner; **Difficulty:** Easy to moderate; **Cost:** free, but requires state park entry fee or passport

We will hike 3 to 5 miles on the trails from the Discovery Center, and along the way will visit the floating bog. The trail features forests, unusual wetland formations, carnivorous plants, and orchids.

Island Lake Recreation Area Paddle & Pedal 2018 - Saturday June 16th, Noon to 4 PM

Location: Island Lake Recreation Area, 6301 Kensington Rd, Brighton; meeting details below

Skill Level: some experience; **Difficulty:** mild to moderate; family-friendly

Cost: Boat rental (if not bringing your own) - canoes \$20/kayaks \$10, plus state park entry fee or passport

Join the Friends of Island Lake Recreation Area on a paddling and pedaling day! Here's how it works: drop your bicycle at Riverbend in our attended bicycle storage area. Drive to the Kent Lake parking lot with your boat, or rent one there. Paddle on one of the finest natural stretches of the Huron River Water Trail, 1-1½ hours, to Riverbend. Bike back to your vehicle at Kent Lake on paved trails: 3, 5, and 12 mile options. Boat reservations suggested.

Island Lake Recreation Area Weeknight Summer Solstice Hike - Wednesday June 20th, 7 PM**

Location: Island Lake Recreation Area, 6301 Kensington Rd, Brighton;

meet in the Kent Lake parking lot (go straight past toll booth, 1st lot on left) near the boat launch area (west side)

Skill Level: beginner; **Difficulty:** easy to moderate; **Cost:** free, but requires state park entry fee or passport

Join us for a 3 or 5 mile hike on the nearly-longest night of the year on the hikers-only Hickory Ridge trail. This is Michigan's greatest trail ever! (We may be a bit biased as we helped to create this trail).

Yoga on the Beach - Island Lake Recreation Area - Saturday June 23rd, 9 AM**

Location: Island Lake Recreation Area, 6301 Kensington Rd, Brighton;

meet near the Kent Lake beach bathroom building (go straight past toll booth, 1st lot on left), east side of lot

Skill Level: beginner to advanced; **Difficulty:** easy to moderate; **Cost:** \$5, plus requires state park entry fee or passport.

Join us for yoga on the beach. Welcome your day with relaxing poses, stretches and meditation. Bring your own mat. All levels welcome. Lead by an experienced yoga instructor.

Brighton Recreation Area Penosha Trail Hike - Saturday June 30th, 1 PM**

Location: Bishop Lake trailhead parking lot, Howell;

From the intersection of Bishop Lake Rd and Chilson Rd in Howell, go east on Bishop Lake Rd 1.4 miles, turn right at Bishop Lake Complex sign then quick right after toll booth into trailhead parking lot. GPS: 42.501, -83.835

Skill Level: beginner; **Difficulty:** moderate; **Cost:** free, but requires state park entry fee or passport

Join us for an afternoon hike on the Penosha Trail. The trail is 5 miles through woods and meadows. A great hike near our own backyard!

Crossroads Group Outings, continued

Lakeland Trails Bike Ride and Optional Lunch - Sunday July 8th, 10 AM**

Location: Parking lot is across the street from Hamburg Pub, 10668 Hamburg Rd, Hamburg

Skill Level: beginner; **Difficulty:** easy to moderate; **Cost:** free (buy your own lunch)

Join us for a ride on the Lakeland Trail. We will ride from Hamburg to Pinckney and back, about 20 miles total (or you can turn around anytime for a shorter ride). This scenic trail is paved and partly shaded. Optional lunch after the ride. Helmet required.

Kensington Metropark Weeknight Hike - Wednesday July 18th, 7 PM**

Location: Kensington Metropark, park entrance is off Kensington Rd just north of I-96, Brighton; meet at the Nature Center

Skill Level: beginner; **Difficulty:** easy to moderate; **Cost:** free, but requires Metropark entry fee

Join us to take advantage of Michigan's beautiful summer nights. This will be a 3 mile hike around Wildwing Lake and other trails.

Yoga on the Beach - Island Lake Recreation Area - Saturday July 21st, 9 AM**

See description for June 23rd "Yoga on the Beach" outing (on page 4).

Island Lake Recreation Area Canoe / Kayak Outing & Optional Lunch - Saturday July 22nd, 10 AM**

Location: Island Lake Recreation Area, 6301 Kensington Rd, Brighton;

meet at the boat launch/canoe rental area (Kent Lake beach parking lot)

Skill Level: beginner; **Difficulty:** moderate;

Cost: Boat rental (if not bringing your own), plus state park entry fee or passport

Join us for a 2-3 hour paddle on the national wild and scenic Huron River in Island Lake State Park. Discounted canoe or kayak rentals available from Heavner's Canoe Rental (reservations suggested). Optional lunch after the paddle.

Ann Arbor Saginaw Forest Weeknight Hike -Wednesday August 1st, 7 PM**

Location: Meet at parking lot for 242 Community Church: 648 S Wagner Road, Ann Arbor. Saginaw Forest entrance is next to the church. Note that parking is not permitted in front of the access gate for Saginaw Forest.

Skill Level: beginner; **Difficulty:** easy; **Cost:** free.

Saginaw Forest is a nearly 80-acre parcel of land comprising roughly 55 acres of plantations, lakes, and wetlands. This University of Michigan property is used for forestry operations, research, and instruction. There are three trail loops allowing a leisurely 2 to 3 mile hike.

Proud Lake State Recreation Area Hike Saturday August 11th, 10 AM**

Location: Proud Lake Foot Path Trailhead, Commerce Twp; From I-96 & Wixom Rd, go north on Wixom Rd 7.2 miles, turn right on Park Headquarters Rd, go 0.2 miles, see trailhead parking lot on left. GPS: 42.5707, -83.5548

Skill Level: beginner; **Difficulty:** moderate; **Cost:** free, but requires state park entry fee or passport

Join us for a 5.7 mile hike on the River Trail. This scenic trail runs through a variety of landscapes including forests, marshlands, and parts of the Huron River.

Yoga on the Beach - Island Lake Recreation Area - Saturday August 18th, 9 AM**

See description for June 23rd "Yoga on the Beach" outing (on page 4).

Highland State Recreation Area Hike & Optional Lunch - Sunday August 19th, 10 AM**

Location: 5200 Highland Rd, White Lake; meet at the trailhead parking area in front of the historic barn (go straight past toll booth 1.4 miles, look for barn on right side). GPS: 42.6345, -83.5510

Skill Level: beginner; **Difficulty:** moderate; **Cost:** free, but requires state park entry fee or passport (buy your own lunch)

Join us for a 5 mile hike through hardwoods and wetlands in a park that is one of lower Michigan's best kept secrets. Optional lunch at a local restaurant after our hike.

Sierra Club Michigan Chapter Annual Retreat - August 24th - 26th

An affordable all-inclusive weekend retreat at historic Camp Miniwanca, a private Lake Michigan gem just north of Muskegon.

Located among 360 wooded acres on a stretch of gorgeous Lake Michigan beach front, Miniwanca offers lodging options from tent camping, to rooms located steps away from the beach, to cabins among the pines. A fun-filled weekend of activities, workshops, educational presentations, and our famous auction. Join us for swimming, hiking, campfires, kayaking, woodworking, ropes course, crafting, yoga, tubing, and more. See www.sierraclub.org/michigan/chapter-retreat for more information.

See our website www.sierraclub.org/michigan/crossroads for additional outings including events sponsored by the Michigan Chapter of the Sierra Club.



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