

Crossroads Group

Sierra Club

WINTER 2018



Sierra Club's "Growing for Change" Efforts Emphasize Equity, Justice and Inclusion

"You can't enlist all of humanity if you only speak to half the population." That statement, by environmental activist Gail Swanson, would seem to state the obvious. Yet the Sierra Club as an organization, and most of us as individuals, have at times fallen short of acting and speaking in ways that respect and welcome everyone. As part of the effort to transform the Sierra Club into an organization that is more equitable, just and inclusive, staff and volunteers have been attending "Growing for Change" workshops over the past few months. I am one of two volunteers from Crossroads, and ten from the Michigan chapter who participated; and have just returned from a weekend workshop where I was challenged, humbled, empowered.

Growth and change do not happen without discomfort. Participants were told at the outset that we would be uncomfortable at times, and that was indeed true. I felt sad as we took a hard look at how our history and culture are grounded in white privilege; ashamed to realize that some of my own actions, even when well-intended, have actually contributed to keeping people of different races, cultures, physical traits, or gender identities in oppression; and frustrated by the depth of the divisions in our society that will not be easily healed.

Through real-life examples, we learned better ways of engaging and working with *everyone* in environmental protection. The Sierra Club's commitment to operating according to the Jemez Principles is our starting point. The principles are:

- Be inclusive.
- Emphasize bottom-up organizing.
- Let people speak for themselves.
- Work together in solidarity and mutuality.
- Build just relationships among ourselves.
- Commit to Self-Transformation.

I would be happy to have a conversation with anyone who wants to explore what "Growing for Change" might look like within the Crossroads Group.

Penny Goldstein,
Group Rep to Chapter Executive Committee
Michigan Growing for Change Team

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VISIT US AT:
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Crossroads Group Chair Wins Chapter Award!



Our chair, Lee Burton, has won the **Life of the Party** Award from the Michigan Chapter. This honors volunteers who take seriously the Sierra Club's credo "to enjoy the wild places of the Earth." So **THAT'S** why we have all been having such a great time! Lee has actually been tapped by the Chapter to help other groups increase their membership participation. But the Crossroads Group has the great luck of having the original, fun-loving Lee who manages, apparently effortlessly, to keep us pointed in the right direction. Under his guidance we have become the fastest-growing, most successful group in Michigan. Good job, Lee! We all appreciate you!

A Cure for the Winter Blues

The colder weather and fewer hours of daylight in the winter months can sap energy and cause depression. One cure is to get some exercise outdoors. Even on cold or cloudy days, outdoor light can help. And physical activity helps to relieve stress and anxiety.

We are lucky to live in a part of Michigan that has many beautiful parks filled with hiking and skiing trails. See page 5 of this newsletter for a list of our winter outings – join us and help to alleviate your winter blues.

Pigs Should Be Allowed to Squeal

We are constantly being told by the companies operating the hundreds of miles of pipelines here in Michigan “*You have absolutely nothing to worry about, our pipelines are perfectly safe*”. They reinforce this point by explaining that there are **rules** that the companies in question are required to follow when doing in-line inspections of their pipelines. These inspections are conducted with the use of PIGs (pipeline inspection gauges).



These gauges are extremely “intelligent” and are designed to detect all manner of pipeline defects. This assumes several things.

- #1. Is the PIG being used capable of detecting all potential faults for that particular pipeline?
- #2. Is the PIG programmed to report **all** defects?
- #3. Will the company operating the PIG be transparent in what they report back to regulators and the public?

Unfortunately we don't always have a warm fuzzy trust that we will be told everything. Enbridge Line 5 is a case in point. We have been told that the pipeline is as good as the day it was installed. We now know that that pipeline supports are missing. There are numerous gaps in the protective coating of the pipeline. There are bends and dents in the pipeline, and the list of faults go on.

Another case in point is the failure of a pipeline in San Bruno, California, where eight people were killed. The pipeline had just been inspected by a PIG. Greg Pallast, investigative reporter, has been told by an industry insider who had helped develop the software for the PIGs that petroleum companies are **silencing** them.

A quote from Greg: “Because, as disclosed in my investigation for Britain’s investigative TV series Dispatches in 2010, the PIG has been silenced, its software jacked and hacked by a company that provides PIGs. The software is deliberately set to reduce the warning signals and thereby cut costs of replacement and repair by billions of dollars on the Keystone and other pipes.”

Our concern should be: **are all of these pipelines as safe as we are told they are?** There have been too many accidents to trust the claims of the owners of the pipelines that cross our landscape and waterways.

Transparency in Government: You Can Help!

The Livingston County Board of Commissioners has recently begun filming regular Board meetings on a trial basis and making them available on line. If enough people view the videos the practice will become permanent. Because meetings are not always held at convenient times, access to videos is crucial for those who wish to know how the Board is handling important issues.

We encourage you to go onto the county's website (livgov.com) and view these videos. Commissioners will evaluate public interest based on the number of viewings as of February 1st and then determine if this practice should be continued.

Note: To gauge public interest for the trial period, the Board will be counting distinct viewers, so multiple viewings of a meeting from the same computer or mobile device will not be tabulated.

To access the videos: Go to livgov.com. Under the *Government* tab at top, select *Board of Commissioners*. On the left side of the page under *Livingston County Board of Commissioners Home* select *Video Archive of Board Meetings*.

By viewing the archives you will play a role in attaining greater access and transparency in our county government. We thank you for your help in achieving these important goals!

Be Part of the Future

At our recent January leadership meeting we selected committee chairs and officers for 2018. It was a time to reflect on past successes and consider future goals. We have accomplished much but there is always more to be done. You can be part of our future.

This is a fine time to become more active in the Crossroads Group, an organization that gives as much as it gets for those who participate. Attend a leadership meeting and see what we mean. If you do, this we can guarantee:

- You will make new friends.
- You will help make our community a better place to live.
- You will find it easy to fit in, easy to play a role, and easy to step into a leadership position if and when you are ready.

Why do we say that with such confidence? It's easy. Though we care deeply about the environment, we care even more about each other. We are about people first. No leaders are ever on their own. There is a committed team to back each of us up.

So what's next? If you are ready, come to a meeting and learn for yourself that Crossroads is a dynamic group of good people who get things done. Our meetings are typically held the first Thursday of each month at the house of a leader. Refreshments are served. We have a good time and take care of business.

For more information, contact us at crossroads@michigan.sierraclub.org. You will hear from a member of our leadership team right away.

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**

Annual Owl Walk and Potluck Dinner - Saturday January 13th, 5 PM

Location: Home of Lee Burton and Roberta Shaw-Reeves, Brighton

Difficulty: easy; **Cost:** free

A fascinating way to spend a winter evening in Michigan, hosted by our Crossroads Sierra Club leader Lee and his wife Roberta at their home in Brighton. We will begin with a potluck dinner and drinks and an introduction to owls and owl calls. At about 7:00 we will venture into Brighton Recreation Area - just a short walk from the house - and call for screech owls and great horned owls, both of which will be nesting at the time. Bring a flashlight, a dish to share, something to drink and warm clothes. Your hosts will provide cider, juice, books about owls and the warmth of a wood fire. For more information and directions see our website or contact Lee at 810-231-9045 or lee.burton@michigan.sierraclub.org.

Brighton Recreation Area Penosha Trail Hike - Saturday January 27th, 1 PM**

Location: Bishop Lake parking lot, Howell; meet at the trailhead parking lot: 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 coordinates: 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.

Huron Meadows Metropark Ski Outing/hike if no snow - Sunday February 11th, 1 PM**

Location: Huron Meadows Metropark, 8765 Hammel Rd, Brighton; meet at the Ski/Golf Center

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

Join us for an afternoon cross country ski outing. Ski and boot rental available. Enjoy miles of groomed trails both on the golf course and through the woods. Heated warming shelter and indoor bathrooms available. We will ski on shorter and longer distance trails depending on experience levels. We will hike if there is no snow.

Kensington Metropark Hike - Saturday February 24th, 1 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
Choose either a 5-mile or 2-mile hike around Wildwing Lake and around the wooded nature trails.

Island Lake Recreation Area Hike - Saturday March 10th, 1 PM**

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

meet in the trailhead parking lot (turn right after toll booth, go 1.2 miles, turn right at Trailhead sign, go 0.3 miles, parking lot on left) GPS coordinates: 42.5083, -83.7079

Skill Level: beginner; **Difficulty:** easy to moderate; **Cost:** free, but requires state park entry fee or passport
Join us for a 5.5 mile hike on the yellow loop trail.

Crossroads Group Outings, continued

Highland State Recreation Area Hike & Optional Lunch - Sunday March 25th, 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 coordinates: 42.6345, -83.551

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

Join us for a 5 mile hike through hardwoods and wetlands in a park that is one of lower Michigan's best kept secrets.

LeFurge Woods Nature Preserve nature hike and photo opportunity - Sunday April 8th, 10 AM**

Location: LeFurge Woods Nature Preserve, 2376 N. Prospect Rd., Superior Township

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

Join us as we capture the magic of spring at two of our area's best nature preserves: LeFurge Woods Nature Preserve and Conservancy Farm. We will hike 3 miles through blooming wildflowers, beautiful wetlands, meadows, and quiet woods. These preserves are favorites among birders, and have had recent rare bird sightings. The hike will be led by amateur nature photographer Tony Pitts. Bring your camera or camera phone, or just come along to enjoy the hike.

Earth Day Highway Cleanup - Sunday April 22nd, 3 PM

Location: We will meet at the north side Park and Ride lot off Spencer road and I-96, Brighton.

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

Please join us in helping keep our adopted stretch of I-96 in Brighton clean. Bring gloves (a good, sturdy pair) and wear long work boots or hiking boots if you have them. Bags and vests provided. If this is your first "Adopt A Highway" please see our website for a short video as you will need to sign a paper saying you viewed it.

Island Lake Recreation Area Hike - Saturday April 28th, 1 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 5-mile hike (shorter options available) on the new hikers-only Hickory Ridge trail.

Island Lake Recreation Area Trail Service Outing & Pizza Lunch - Sunday, May 6th, 10 AM

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

meet at the Hickory Picnic Shelter lot - after ticket booth, go straight for 1.2 miles, last (4th) parking lot in the park.

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

Help us maintain and continue to develop the new Hickory Ridge hiking trail. Work consists of mostly tree and brush trimming, some stump removal. No experience is necessary, as there is plenty of work for all skill and ability levels. Tools will be provided. Free pizza lunch for volunteers!

See our website www.sierraclub.org/michigan/crossroads for additional outings including events sponsored by the Michigan Chapter of the Sierra Club and the Friends of Island Lake State Recreation Area.

Crossroads Group Programs

Crossroads Group Sierra Club presents these programs at the Brighton District Library
Free Admission

Using Technology to Probe the Great Lakes

Wednesday January 17th, 7:00 PM

By Steve Ruberg, Project Leader, National Oceanic and Atmosphere Administration (NOAA), Great Lakes Research Lab

In the second of two programs about the Great Lakes, Steve will talk about his work. His team probes the lakes with underwater acoustic technology, video imagery and sensor arrays to uncover mysteries and protect the water, the plants and us from harm. One of the fascinating discoveries: the deep holes in Lake Huron that harbor unique life forms.



Saving the Huron River

Wednesday March 21st, 7:00 PM

By Laura Rubin, Executive Director: Huron River Watershed Council

The Huron River flows through the heart of many communities along its 104 mile route to Lake Erie. But it was not all that long ago that the river was so polluted that swimming and eating fish from its waters carried risks. Laura Rubin will talk about the role of the Huron River Watershed Council in cleaning up the river and securing its designation as a State Natural River and a National Water Trail. Laura will also talk about the role of citizens in furthering the ongoing task of improving the quality of the river and the surrounding watershed. Much has been accomplished but the job is not yet done.



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