

# *Crossroads Group* *Sierra Club*



FALL 2020

## **Elections 2021-2022 - Crossroads Group Executive Committee Members**

Once again, the time has come to elect our Crossroads leaders to carry us through the next 2 years. This will complete our roster of 9 Executive Committee members.

Please read the candidate statements on page 2 and use the ballot below to vote for up to 5 candidates. The second column is for use by those with joint memberships. Ballots must be returned by December 1, 2020.

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### **Sierra Club Crossroads Group Executive Committee 2020 Official Ballot**

	<b>Member</b>	<b>Family Membership</b>
<b>Lee Anzicek</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Lee Burton</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Sarah Keith</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Mary Novrocki</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Cathy Sayre</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please:**

- 1. Vote for up to five people (their statements are page 2).**
- 2. Print out this ballot.**
- 3. Place the ballot in an envelope.**
- 4. Mail the ballot to:**  
**Sierra Club Crossroads Group**  
**P.O. Box 306**  
**Brighton MI 48116**



## Executive Committee Chairs

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

Vice Chairperson: Sue Kelly  
cg.vicechair@michigan.sierraclub.org

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

Secretary: Julie Griess  
cg.secretary@michigan.sierraclub.org

Chapter Group Representative:  
Sarah Keith, Lorne Beatty  
cg.grouprep@michigan.sierraclub.org

Fundraising: Paul Thielking, Paula Gruszka,  
Paul.Thielking@michigan.sierraclub.org

Media: Paula Gruszka  
cg.media@michigan.sierraclub.org

Membership: Cathy Sayre  
cg.membership@michigan.sierraclub.org

Newsletter: Terry Gannon  
cg.pubs@michigan.sierraclub.org

Outings:  
crossroadsoutings@michigan.sierraclub.org

Political: Lee Anzicek, Tiffany Stewart  
cg.political@michigan.sierraclub.org

Programs: Mary Novrocki  
cg.programs@michigan.sierraclub.org

Webmaster: Laurie Mercure  
cg.webmaster@michigan.sierraclub.org

Conservation: Sue Kelly, Ron Kardos  
cg.conservation@michigan.sierraclub.org

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## Sierra Club Crossroads Group Executive Committee Candidate Statements

(see ballot on page 1)

### Lee Anzicek

During the 2018 campaign for Elissa Slotkin, I kept running into fellow campaigners who asked me "Have you heard of the Sierra Club? The local group is very exciting". After the election was over, I joined the Crossroads Group and I've been privileged to work with a great Leaders Team that makes a difference, while having fun. I am currently on the 2020 ballot running to become a Brighton Township Trustee.

### Lee Burton

All of my life I have enjoyed the outdoors, from wilderness traveling to exploring my own backyard. As someone who loves nature, I feel a responsibility to do a share to help protect and preserve our environment. One way to do this is by serving as a leader in the Crossroads Group of the Sierra Club. For several years I have served as Group Chair. By maintaining my position on the executive committee I can continue to take part in a strong and committed leadership team.

### Sarah Keith

Hi Sierra Club friends. I am running for a second term for a position on the Executive Committee for our local Crossroads Group. I have represented our local group to the State Chapter for two years. I joined the Sierra Club wanting to be a part of a dynamic group that promotes outdoor enjoyment and environmental protection. I found a group of friendly, dedicated people who welcomed me and taught me how to engage my community and our leaders to keep our environment in mind when making decisions.

I am a retired teacher who enjoyed taking students on field trips to observe nature up close as we learned about animals, plants and life cycles. Teaching children to experience the beauty and wonder of the world around us was my privilege. My hobbies include: hiking, kayaking, gardening and bird watching. I hope you will consider me for this position.

### Mary Novrocki

I am an avid natural habitat gardener, a birdwatcher, and a longtime supporting member of the Sierra Club. I have been a member of Crossroads Group of the Sierra Club since 2009. As a child, I was a passionate protector of everything living. This has guided my actions ever since. I believe that all species and habitats must be protected. I believe that 100% sustainable energy use is an achievable and necessary path to ending the climate change crisis. I believe that our environmental justice policy must guarantee the equitable distribution of environmental benefits and burdens for all living things. Finally, it is my hope that our country, this United States of America, will become unified within itself - and with the world - to stop the Earth's destruction.

### Cathy Sayre

I have always found outdoor activities and being around nature soul-fulfilling. I joined Sierra Club in 2016 and found the Crossroads group in early 2017 by signing up for Lobby Day. I'm currently on the membership committee, and I mail welcome letters to new Crossroads members. Also I am part of the newly-formed buddies group. I enjoy being part of this nice, well-informed, organized, and like-minded group of people. I would be honored if chosen to continue in this position.

## Gravel Mining: Health Concerns, Environmental Issues, and the Real Story Behind SB431

Local control of sand and gravel operations is under threat by a new proposed law and this could cause serious problems in local communities, with large areas of excavation, more truck traffic and damage to aquifers.

Sand and gravel deposits in Michigan are mostly glacial outwash deposits. These are sediments carried by the water from the melting glaciers that covered the Great Lakes. Because the fine material was washed away, the remaining sediments that make up glacial aquifers have great permeability.

This permeability means that aggregate activity puts groundwater at risk. Approximately 50% of Michigan residents rely on groundwater for drinking water. Our lakes, wetlands and streams are also the result of groundwater. Up to 90% of the water in a stream or lake is actually from groundwater. The threat from aggregate mining is real and pervasive.

Sand and gravel mining is not regulated by the Michigan Department of Environment, Great lakes and Energy (EGLE, formerly the DEQ). It is the responsibility of local units of government to approve and regulate many of the mining activities. EGLE has little involvement and cannot protect local communities against aggregate mining.

Local planning commissions and other local units of government often do not understand the state and federal laws that must be considered in evaluating an application to allow sand and gravel mining. The answer, however, is not to remove their authority to decide upon their operation. The answer is to better educate local planners and elected officials to become more aware of environmental regulations before making a decision.

State Senate Bill 431 (SB431) was introduced by Senator Adam Hollier-D. It removes all zoning restrictions over the location of aggregate mines which could be hundreds of acres in size. Supporters believe SB431 will promote environmental justice by allowing mining in any community regardless of affluence and ability to fight a proposed mine. Supporters also assert it is needed to secure enough material to prevent soaring costs of infrastructure projects such as roads.

These are false arguments. The claim of shortages has been discredited by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) after an investigation into influence from the mining industry in the preparation of the report. Beyond that, SB431 lacks sufficient protection of human health and the environment from aggregate mining. Issues go beyond the area around the mine, such as airborne silica dust, groundwater quality and increased traffic from heavy sand and gravel trucks.

Sand and gravel are needed by our society and there are ways to mine the material we need without destroying natural resources or neighborhoods in the process. Things change and the aggregate industry must do so as well. It is time to strengthen environmental regulations related to aggregate mining, not weaken them. Please contact your legislators and voice your concern about this bill removing critical local controls from the location of aggregate mines.

Pangea Environmental, LLC  
Mike Wilczynski, Certified Professional Geologist



Sand and gravel mine in Grass Lake Twp showing lake created in violation of state environmental law (top of photo)

## The Biggest Election of Our Lifetime!

The 2020 election will be the most important election of our lifetime as it pertains to the protection of our planet. Whether it's encouraging others to get out and vote, educating yourself on candidates or volunteering on local campaigns, now is the time to get involved!

### Vote

Make sure your voice is heard. To check your voting status, confirm your voting location or request an absentee ballot, visit: [Michigan.gov/Vote](https://Michigan.gov/Vote)

### Educate yourself

As the saying goes, knowledge is power! Here are a few resources as you prepare for Election Day.

- **Know your ballot:** Wondering who's running in your district or which key issues are on the ballot? Visit [Michigan.gov/Vote](https://Michigan.gov/Vote) to see your ballot.
- **Sierra Club Voter Education Center:** Learn more about our Sierra Club Endorsed candidates: [www.sierraclub.org/michigan/endorsed-candidates-and-proposals-2020](https://www.sierraclub.org/michigan/endorsed-candidates-and-proposals-2020)  
[www.sierraclubindependentaction.org](https://www.sierraclubindependentaction.org)
- **Local Race Voter Education:** New this year, we invited all candidates for key community races within our region to share their thoughts on issues such as environment and race relations. See what they had to say!  
[www.sierraclub.org/michigan/crossroads/political](https://www.sierraclub.org/michigan/crossroads/political)

### Get involved!

We have many great volunteer opportunities based on your interest and time available.

#### National

- Letter writing: Add your personal statement to a letter template about why it's important to you that people vote in the upcoming election: [sc.org/requestletters](https://sc.org/requestletters)
- Call team: Call infrequent environmental voters and encourage them to vote: [sc.org/CallTeamTraining](https://sc.org/CallTeamTraining). No prior experience required - we'll tell you everything you need to know.

#### Crossroads Area

- For a complete listing of volunteer opportunities for our local endorsed candidates, visit: [www.sierraclub.org/michigan/crossroads/political](https://www.sierraclub.org/michigan/crossroads/political). A few endorsed candidates websites are listed below, check them out and get involved.
  - **US Senate**
    - Gary Peters - <https://petersformichigan.com/>
  - **US House of Representatives**
    - Elissa Slotkin, Dist 8 - <https://elissaforcongress.com/>
    - Haley Stevens, Dist 11 - <https://haleystevensforcongress.com/>
  - **MI House of Representatives**
    - Kelly Breen, Dist 38 - <https://kellybreen.com/>
    - Julia Pulver, Dist 39 - <https://www.juliapulver.com/>
    - Nicole Breadon, Dist 43 - <https://www.votenicolebreadon.com/>
    - Denise Forrest, Dist 44 - <https://voteforrest44.org/>

On Facebook? For the latest news, join the new "Environmentalists for SE Michigan" group.

**Tune into a Political Team meeting to learn more!** We meet via Zoom the fourth Wednesday of every month at 7 pm.

Contact Lee Anzick at 313-350-3482 or email [eg.political@michigan.sierraclub.org](mailto:eg.political@michigan.sierraclub.org) to learn how to attend.

By Lee Anzick and Tiffany Stewart, Crossroads Political Committee Co-Chairs

## Say NO Thank You to Single Use Plastics



We've heard the statistics about the terrible plastic pollution in our oceans—about 8 million tons of plastic entering the sea every year and if we continue at this rate there will be more plastic in the ocean than fish by 2050. What we don't tend to hear as much about is the plastic pollution right here in our backyard. 20 million pounds of plastic make their way into our Great Lakes each year. To put that in perspective, that's the equivalent of 100 Olympic sized swimming pools filled with plastic bottles being dumped into our Great Lakes EVERY YEAR. It is killing aquatic life and polluting our drinking water source, not to mention putting our nearly \$23 billion tourism economy at risk.

Over the last ten years we have produced more plastic than during the whole of the last century. The problem is that we have developed a “disposable” lifestyle based on the convenience of single use plastics. Approximately 50% of plastic made is used just once and thrown away. Sadly, less than 10% of all plastic globally, is recycled. The remainder ends up in landfills, incinerators and nature.

The issue with plastic is that it never really goes away it just breaks down into smaller pieces called microplastics, which are pretty much in everything—our drinking water (including beer!), our food supply and even the air we breathe. A recent study showed that on average, people could be ingesting approximately 5 grams of plastic every week—that is the equivalent weight of a credit card! Unfortunately we're just at the tip of the iceberg in terms of understanding the negative health implications of this.

The positive side is that collectively we have the power to make a change. We must use our voice to refuse unnecessary plastics, be selective in the brands and packaging we choose and continue to educate our legislators on the dangers of plastic pollution and let them know that we support bills (such as HB4500, HB5306 and SB701) that fight plastic pollution and help keep our state beautiful and healthy. For additional information and details on what you can do, visit [www.sierraclub.org/michigan/crossroads/plastic-pollution](http://www.sierraclub.org/michigan/crossroads/plastic-pollution).

By Tiffany C. Stewart

## Introducing EcoHV

The Environmental Council of Huron Valley (EcoHV) was founded in October 2019 after five Milford residents were brought together at the September Climate Action event held at the Brighton Chamber. EcoHV's goal is to get people involved and inspire action for a greener community that includes government, business, schools, parks, and individuals working together. All are welcome to attend though at this time the group is focused on the Huron Valley School District area (Milford, Highland, White Lake, Commerce and Wixom). EcoHV meets the third Monday of the month to discuss current issues facing our community, what we can do and to learn more about a particular topic. Guest speakers in the past have shared their knowledge in areas such as food waste, solar energy and PFAS. Please visit our website at [www.EcoHV.org](http://www.EcoHV.org) for additional information on events and helpful tips on how to live more sustainably.

- September 21: Return of the Monarchs
- October 19: Making your home more energy efficient
- November 16: Eco-Friendly gift making

By Jeff Garner

## Crossroads Under Covid

As with every person, business, and organization trying to survive during the pandemic, these past 6 months have been a challenging time for the Crossroads Group. Fortunately, our leadership team has remained healthy and we hope the same is true for you. Our activities are restricted however, by the governor and by the Sierra Club national office. Their wish, of course, is to keep all of us safe and healthy

Here is how Crossroads has been affected by the limitations. We have held no outings or in-person programs since March. Our fundraiser- the annual “world famous” lemonade stand at the Howell Balloonfest- was canceled. We have held no face-to-face meetings. Our Climate Crisis art show was curtailed. Our Earth Day activities were canceled. And our ability to recruit new leaders is much more difficult.

But that does not mean we have been sitting still. We moved the art show online. We have held programs online (using Zoom). We have closely followed important conservation issues in the state legislature and communicated our positions to members of the legislature and executive branch. We have participated in two virtual lobby days. We have identified environment-friendly candidates. We will work on behalf of those who are endorsed by the Michigan Chapter of the Sierra Club. And our committees and leadership team have met regularly on Zoom.

As you can see, we have been busy. Busy building a better community. We invite you to participate. On our website, there are links to ongoing issues where you can help. And we invite you to consider being a part of our team where you will be warmly welcomed and make new friends.

Interested? Have questions? Contact us at [crossroads@michigan.sierraclub.org](mailto:crossroads@michigan.sierraclub.org). We'd be happy to tell you more about us.

## Sierra Club Opposes Changes to State Conservation Law

In the 1970's, conservationists championed the idea of using the revenue generated from the extraction of non-renewable energy sources on state owned land to purchase land for permanent public benefit. Legislation was first passed in 1976 to create a trust fund for this purpose. Michiganders later placed the Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) and its funding sources in the Michigan Constitution to protect its assets and purposes from diversion by the legislature (Article IX, Section 35). Because the state's oil, gas and other nonrenewable resources would eventually be depleted, the creation of the MNRTF was a visionary plan to assure future generations could protect scenic, recreational and environmentally significant lands in perpetuity.

With this in mind, the Sierra Club Michigan Chapter is urging a NO vote on a 2020 ballot measure that asks voters to amend the MNRTF language in the Constitution (see Senate Joint Resolution O of 2018 for the full language of the amendment <http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2017-2018/jointresolutionenrolled/Senate/pdf/2018-SNJR-O.pdf>). The Constitutional Amendment, which has not yet been assigned a ballot position, would shift funding priority away from the acquisition of lands at the state and local level and place greater emphasis on development and maintenance of public recreation facilities. Revenue which currently is required by the constitution to go into the MNRTF would instead all be deposited in the Michigan State Parks Endowment (MSPE) until that fund reaches \$800,000,000. The MSPE is limited to capital funding, operations and maintenance and land acquisition for Michigan state parks.

The argument in favor of the changes to the MNRTF rests on the removal of the current cap on the MNRTF of \$500,000,000. After the MSPE reaches its cap revenues would again flow into the MNRTF, and a number of conservation organizations have rallied round this proposal despite its serious shortcomings.

Sierra Club recognizes and agrees with the need for greater investments in maintenance of recreational facilities within Michigan's state owned public lands. We have long advocated for the Legislature and Governor to find ongoing sources of funding to ensure that recreational facilities are properly maintained. However shifting prioritization of money from the MNRTF away from purchasing land and to the maintenance of facilities is shortsighted. Requiring revenue from a non-renewable source to go to ongoing, increasing funding needs creates financial problems, it doesn't solve them.

Land is non-renewable. If we miss out on the acquisition of a spectacular parcel and it gets sold and subdivided, that's that -- we missed it.

## Outings Update

This is our first-ever newsletter to be printed without an Outings section. Per the national Sierra Club, we have not been permitted to hold any outings since March. As of this printing date, we are awaiting an update on when outings will be re-opening. We will be sure to update our website, Meetup site, and Facebook page when we begin scheduling outings again. In the meantime, we encourage everyone to get out on their own and keep enjoying nature as much as possible. To help, we have created a guide to all the hiking and biking trails where our Crossroads Group has held outings for the past several years. You can find this guide on our website (under “Events”) or Meetup site (under “Discussions”).

## Crossroads Programs

*Until further notice, all of our upcoming programs will be held online, using either Bluejeans or Zoom.*

You can find the links for these programs on our website calendar ([www.sierraclub.org/michigan/crossroads](http://www.sierraclub.org/michigan/crossroads)) or our Meetup site ([www.meetup.com/Sierra-Club-Crossroads-Group](http://www.meetup.com/Sierra-Club-Crossroads-Group)).

### **Tuesday, September 15 - 7:30pm: Justin Onwenu discusses Environmental Justice**

Native Detroitier Justin Onwenu is a rising star. He has been getting a lot of attention for his work as Healthy Communities and Environmental Justice Organizer at the Sierra Club’s Detroit Regional Office. He works with community members in what has been called “the most polluted Zip Code in Michigan,” 48217. Justin brings his message of environmental justice to a combined virtual program of the Crossroads, Huron Valley, and Nepessing Sierra Club Groups.



### **Upcoming programs:**

- **Wednesday November 18: Climate Change & the Auto Industry by Steve Kolk and Jeff Alson**
- **Wednesday January 20: The State of Social and Environmental Justice in the City of Detroit by Rev. Julie Brock**
- **Wednesday March 17: Spring Clean-up and the Environment by Stephanie Kozak**
- **Date TBD: Plastic Pollution**



**Sierra Club—Crossroads Group**  
**P.O. Box 306**  
**Brighton, MI 48116**

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Our Vision: to lead the community in environmental stewardship, education, and awareness

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