

Crossroads Group

Sierra Club



FALL 2021

Elections 2022-2023

Sierra Club Crossroads Group Executive Committee Members

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

Please read the candidate statements on page 2 and use the ballot below to vote for up to three candidates. The second column is for use by those with joint memberships. Ballots must be returned by December 15, 2021.

Sierra Club Crossroads Group Executive Committee 2022-2023 Official Ballot

| | Member | Family Membership |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Lorne Beatty | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Paula Gruszka | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Laurie Mercure | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Your Name: _____

Your Address: _____

Please:

- 1. Vote for up to three 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: Lee Anzicek

cg.vicechair@michigan.sierraclub.org

Treasurer: Julie Griess

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Secretary: Julie Griess

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Chapter Group Representative:

Sarah Keith, Lorne Beatty

cg.grouprep@michigan.sierraclub.org

Fundraising: Paul Thielking, Paula Gruszka

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Programs: Mary Novrocki, Karen Schmitz

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Webmaster: Laurie Mercure

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Conservation: Sue Kelly, Ron Kardos

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VISIT US AT:

www.sierraclub.org/michigan/crossroads

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meetup.com/Sierra-Club-Crossroads-Group



Sierra Club Crossroads Group Executive Committee Candidate Statements

(see ballot on page 1)

Lorne Beatty

I have been a Sierra club member for over 35 years. As an active member of the Crossroads Group, I have served as Fundraising Chair, Membership Chair, Media Chair, Outings Chair, Group Representative, Treasurer and Vice Chair. I have also been an "At Large Member" of the Michigan Chapter of the Sierra Club Executive Committee, serving as Group Representative on the Chapter Development (Fundraising) Committee, Chapter Outings Chair and on the Chapter Membership Task Force.

Paula Gruszka

I would like to continue my Executive Committee position with the Sierra Club Crossroads Group. I've been active with the Sierra Club for over 10 years, and with Crossroads for 7 years. My volunteer contributions include fundraising through sponsorships, and publicizing our programs in the media. My passion for the environment started when I was in my twenties when I camped in Michigan and around the USA at the National Parks. We must work to save the planet by working towards "green energy". I believe the Sierra Club can help us to achieve this goal.

Laurie Mercure

I have been volunteering with the Sierra Club Crossroads Group since 2012 as the webmaster and since 2015 as one of our outings leaders. My webmaster tasks include updating our website and Meetup site, and helping with our Facebook page. As an outings leader, I help to plan and lead our many hikes and other activities. Our outings are always lots of fun, and a great way to recruit new Sierra Club members. It has been fun and rewarding to connect with this nice group of people who care about nature and the planet as much as I do. I would like to continue to help the Sierra Club by renewing my position as an Executive Committee member.



Encourage Restaurants to Use Sustainable Practices

We have a powerful new tool at hand to encourage local restaurants to use sustainable practices. It comes to us in the form of an App we can install on our smart phones. Go to your App store and download PlasticScore, it's very simple and easy to use.

The company helps you to rate your dining experiences by asking questions about materials the restaurant uses to serve you. It then takes your answers and gives the restaurant a point rating from 0 to 5, 5 being the highest score.

PlasticScore also offsets plastic waste. The plastic offset program helps you make an immediate impact on plastic pollution while building a movement to create a world without *trashy dining*. You can earn plastic offsets by leaving reviews, feedback, and taking photos of your dine-in and takeout experiences on the PlasticScore app

To provide the offsets, PlasticScore, in partnership with rePurpose, pays for the ethical collection of low value plastics around the world. The company makes purchases to offset plastic waste on a monthly basis

You can also create and read blog posts and use the app to partner with organizations to help them make an impact in our community.

Crossroads Group has partnered with Plastic Score which allows us to:

- Have an engaging and impactful activity for our members
 - Earn plastic waste offsets
 - Explore restaurants in our community
 - Raise awareness about single-use plastic waste
- Give our local restaurants a free sustainability audit
- Receive actionable data to help with our advocacy and awareness campaigns
 - Percentage of restaurants using styrofoam in our community
 - Percentage of restaurants giving out utensils and napkins automatically
 - How our stats compare to other communities and much more!

So please pick up your smartphone and start having an impact on *trashy dining* today! For more information, please contact Lee Anzicek at lee.anzicek@michigan.sierraclub.org. Thank you!

Keeping Up With Crossroads

It has not been easy this past year and a half fulfilling all of the tasks that the Crossroads Groups undertakes in "normal" times. The pandemic has created unique challenges and a great deal of hardship. Still, your Crossroads leadership team has worked hard to fulfill our mission. We have begun in-person meetings and events and recently added a virtual option when possible given the rise of the Delta variant. Here's a brief round-up.

Programs: During the height of the pandemic all of our programs were virtual and we held many of them. Our most recent program was held at the Brighton Library as will be our upcoming November and January programs. See page 4 of this newsletter for details.

Outings: After many months when outings were put on hold due to the pandemic, we are now scheduling at least two outings a month. We'd love to have you join us. Check our Meetup site www.meetup.com/Sierra-Club-Crossroads-Group for details.

Political/Conservation work: Our political work both at the state level under the leadership of the Michigan Chapter of the Sierra Club and our local work continues. The Chapter is holding a virtual lobby day on key environmental issues twice a year. Contact us for details. Locally we are helping community groups organize in the face of development that threatens the environment and the health of our citizens. Our most recent efforts include working with Genoa township residents to stop DNR plans to lease land in a residential area for aggregate mining. If you'd like to learn more go to www.stopthegravelpit.com. We have also met with a citizens group from Howell facing the prospect of a heavy industrial shredder plant in their community.

Finances: Because the cancellation of the Howell Balloonfest the past two years also meant the loss of our major fundraiser. If we have some people choose to receive our newsletters digitally, we could save a lot of money and a lot of trees. If you would like to sign up for electronic delivery of our newsletters, please email our webmaster at cg.webmaster@michigan.sierraclub.org with the word "e-newsletter" as the subject and your full name and address in the body.

Crossroads Group Events

See our Meetup site 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

Kensington Metropark Hike - Saturday November 20, 1 PM

Location: Kensington Metropark; meet at the Nature Center

Choose from a 5-mile or 2-mile hike around Wildwing Lake and other nature trails.

Black Friday "OptOutside Hike" - Friday November 26, 1 PM

Location: Island Lake Recreation Area, meet in the Kent Lake beach parking lot

Avoid the malls and #OptOutside on Black Friday with the Friends of Island Lake and Crossroads!

This is a 5-mile hike (shorter options available) on the hikers-only Hickory Ridge trail.

Programs

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



Peru, An Ancient Land of Several Civilizations in a Variety of Climates

Wednesday November 17, 7 pm

A slide show presentation by Ursula Murray

Ursula is a well-traveled art historian raised in Latin America by her Irish and Italian parents. She has taught Spanish and Italian at the CIA, worked as an art guide at the National Gallery in Washington DC and worked at several colleges and universities as an instructor and counselor. For the past 20 years she has run a non-profit arts organization in SW Detroit that includes an art gallery for a diverse group of artists.

Light Pollution and Michigan's Dark Skies

Wednesday January 19, 2022 - 7 pm

by Gillen Brown

Excess artificial light at night, also known as light pollution, is a type of pollution most people don't think about often. However, it stops us from enjoying the night sky and can cause environmental problems. Thankfully, it's pretty easy to fix, and all of us can play a part. In this presentation Gillen will talk about what light pollution is, why it matters for Michigan, and what we can do to make sure our night skies are protected.

Gillen is a Ph.D. student at the University of Michigan studying astronomy and is a co-coordinator of the Michigan Dark Skies advocacy group.



Making a Difference-Making New Friends

The greater Livingston County area is a special place, filled with beautiful landscapes and many good people. The lakes, the rivers, the forests, the wetlands...these are places that are so attractive to so many people love, and where they go to recreate.

It is no accident that these special parklands and other beautiful habitats are here. They were set aside and preserved by people who understood the value of protecting our natural environment. But that job is not done and never will be.

That's why organizations like the Crossroads Group of the Sierra Club are so important. The leadership is made up of your neighbors, good people who care about the environment and want to make a difference. But it takes a team to make a difference.

And that's where you come in. Without the efforts of our leadership team we could not offer programs and outings, all of which are free to the public. We would not be able to support environmental causes. We would not be able to educate the public about the importance of protecting our natural world for all to enjoy. It's a lot of work that brings a lot of rewards. To continue our success we need a good team. We need people like you.

What are the rewards from being part of the Crossroads team? You will make a difference in our community by helping to make it a better place. Beyond that, you will make new friends; other people- like yourself- who care about the world around them and want to make a difference. For all that you give for the good of the cause, you'll receive much in return.

There are many ways to participate in Crossroads. We are sure we can find something to match your interests and time constraints. To learn more, please contact Lee Anzicek at lee.anzicek@michigan.sierraclub.org or Lee Burton at lee.burton@michigan.sierraclub.org Phone: 810-231-9045.

Meet a Local Activist!

Tell us a little about yourself.

My name is Sara Dollman-Jersey. My husband Corey and I are parents to 4 wonderful children. I taught for 15 years in elementary classrooms and worked for MSU Department of Education as an instructor, new teacher trainer, and grant writer. I'm now learning alongside a Montessori Primary classroom and working hard to serve our local community.

My interests include gardening, outdoor activities like hiking, nature walks, and camping. I have a soft spot for children's literature, enjoy as much family time as I can get, and have found new interest in civic engagement.

What was it that got you motivated to organize around the rezoning in Tyrone Township?

When the threat of the rezoning came along, we had only lived in Tyrone Township for just over a year. We had finally settled in a place where we had hoped to raise our 4 children and had chosen this area for its natural beauty and proximity to many things we enjoy. If approved, this heavy industrial area, including an asphalt plant, would have been less than a mile from my home. I decided to get involved because it was unacceptable to me to risk the well-being and health of our family living so close to 124 acres of heavy industry. We also value the natural beauty of the surrounding area and had concerns for the environmental impact of the many wetlands and animals.

Most people who followed this issue know that the asphalt plant and the request for rezoning were two separate proposals submitted simultaneously. While the asphalt plant withdrew their application, the rezoning request is still "on hold" as requested by the applicant. It has not been withdrawn, nor has our Township Board made it a priority to vote it down. The application remains in limbo.

Were you involved in advocacy before you got active around the rezoning/asphalt plant proposal?

I don't consider myself having had experience really in advocacy, other than I am a steadfast advocate for my children and their education. I felt the same for every student in my classroom as well. Students come with a wide spectrum of needs, and I've always felt very passionately about the importance of meeting their needs whatever they might be. We are a family who has changed school districts and made a move across the state to find educational environments that we felt met the needs of our children. In that sense I've been an advocate for the last 20 years. I think it's just engrained in me to use my voice and ability to communicate to seek justice and stand for what I believe to be right and good. That has been a part of me my entire life.

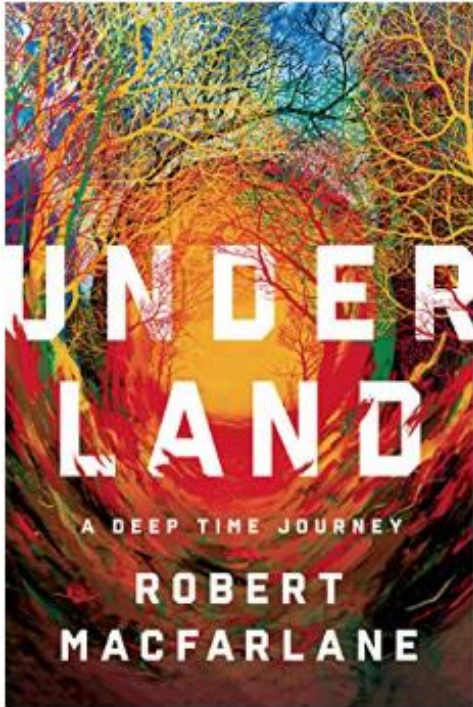
What were the most important lessons you learned from this effort?

I've learned a lot in this role. First and foremost, that communicating with respect goes a lot further than aggression and anger if you want to actually be heard. Sometimes listening is worth more than speaking, and perspective varies widely with life experience. I have learned that a lot can be accomplished when one person is willing to communicate in a way that connects others. I don't have expertise in zoning matters, asphalt plants, or anything remotely close, but I did find that through outreach and communication the expertise came forward and we were able to collectively organize around a common goal. On issues that came forth in our nonprofit work after the asphalt plant, I stayed focused on communication and bringing people together that have the experience and expertise to enable forward progress. Finally, staying aware as to what is happening in the community around you is critically important. Elected and appointed leaders make decisions daily that impact us all. Without eyes and ears present, decisions get made that have adverse impacts and too often we don't realize what's happening until it's too late.

Underland; A Deep Time Journey by Robert MacFarlane

A book review by Crossroads member Suzen Oliver

This is a book of vivid, sensory laden stories of real places you will likely never see. According to MacFarlane, humans have designated the earth's subterranean realm with three tasks: "to shelter what is precious, to yield what is valuable, and to dispose of what is harmful." This "underland" is shrouded in mystery, conceived of with fear, and avoided by most humans, until they die. In telling this story, the author seeks out some of the most astonishing worlds within our world and draws us into them to divine the possible future of us and our exquisite earth.



MacFarlane is an adventurer and a gifted writer. Beginning his journey, he is given a carved owl, a talisman, to help him see in the dark, on the condition he always keeps it close. This book is like that owl, and when we ultimately surface, we may see our world with a new gratitude for its life and beauty.

The journey begins in England, beneath an old Ash tree. We travel to a salt mine where in near total silence, scientists listen for the breath of dark matter, then to an industrious mineral mining operation under the sea. We rise to the Epping Forest's understory to understand the mutualism of the mycorrhiza and the truth that our own bodies are habitats for hundreds of species of bacteria and fungus. We are never alone.

We continue by way of a visit to underground Paris, one of the invisible cities known as a playground for thousands of serious international cataphiles and to starless rivers in Italy's Carso, that play hide and seek by diving suddenly a thousand feet underground. We emerge in the Slovenian Highlands to witness evidence of the White Wars in caves and sinkholes demonstrating that, in many ways, both World Wars are ongoing. Strong human nationalist identities have ravaged the landscape through digging, blasting, killing, and burying.

A trip to Scandinavia and Greenland introduces the Red Dancers of antiquity, living glaciers, the Maelstrom and ultimately the Hiding Place; Olkiluoto Island. This geological tomb is a repository for the "the sewer of our species," nuclear waste. Two problems exist; how to contain this deadly byproduct and how to warn "unknown beings-to-be across chasms of time to the effect that they must not intrude into these burial chambers, thus violating the waste's quarantine?" Ultimately, we are asked "Are we being good ancestors? And if not, is it too late to change?"

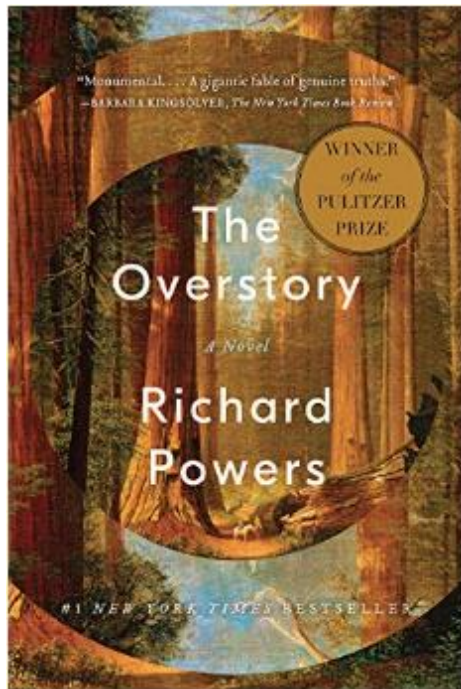
If this book were not so beautifully engaging, through language, myth, and imagination, not to mention the histories and people, it may be too difficult to read. Each chapter is a book unto itself and especially to those of us that love this earth more than money, religion, or politics. The mycorrhiza might tell you "If only your mind were a slightly greener thing, we'd drown you in meaning." MacFarlane has created a work that makes it hard to look away.



The Pulitzer Prize Novel “The Overstory” Presents a Tree’s Point of View “The Overstory” turns the growing evidence of plant communication into literature

By Michael Berry Apr 3 2018, for The Sierra Club

Richard Powers speaks for the trees ... with a dense, passionate, and suspenseful tale of the connection between humanity and some of the planet's most ancient, massive, and indispensable living organisms. *The Overstory* centers around big trees—and around humans who come to take trees as seriously as they do other people.



The Overstory follows nine human characters as they struggle to understand the hidden connections of the natural world and preserve what may be the continent's last stand of virgin forest. With compassion and erudition, Powers has constructed a sweeping narrative that mixes history, myth, science, and literature. The author takes inspiration from John Muir and Thoreau and understands the impact of newly developed technology. In *The Overstory*, Powers presents the treacherous, denuded slope on which humankind has built its dreams, and offers an intricate meditation on extinction, survival, and transcendence.

... I looked deep into what's called the new forestry—the transformation of the way scientists think about what is happening in forests, and the best ways for humans to take the resources they need from those ecosystems with the least possible damage. I looked quite a bit into plant communications, and it changed the way I thought about life. ... Our growing awareness of both over-the-air communication and mycorrhizal exchanges between trees lies at the heart of the story. Trees are every bit as social as we are.

Literary fiction has been somewhat blind to the real world. Belles letters and the novel of character revelation assume that meaning is a strictly private or interpersonal thing. Most novels fail to show the enormous drama that humans live among. They exclude all conflict and reciprocity between humans and non-humans. That's why literary fiction has been so slow to treat the central drama of the present: climate change.

Because trees unfold on such different physical scales over such immensely different time frames, it's hard for us to notice them, let alone take them seriously as complex, social agents who want something. All nine of the central characters in *The Overstory* get turned into something they weren't: people who takes trees as seriously as they take other people.


The book itself is laid out like a gigantic, unfolding tree. In the section called “Roots,” the separate characters emerge from their formative pasts. In “Trunk,” they are joined together in a shared fight to save the last uncut forests. In “Crown,” they scatter, following the catastrophe of those attempts. But in “Seeds,” their legacy diffuses into the world in a surprising way.

The book holds out ... a kind of hope—the hope that people, who are so flexible and so ingenious at telling stories, might learn how to be more capable of living here. We need more stories about re-discovering and re-integrating with a world that is going to survive us one way or the other.





Sierra Club—Crossroads Group
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