

Crossroads Group

Sierra Club

Winter 2021



Environmental Justice: Its Time has Come

The Crossroads Group recently hosted a Zoom program with Reverend Julie Brock to talk about environmental and social injustices she has witnessed as a resident of the city of Detroit. These issues have plagued our nation from colonial days to the present. To this day, race plays a major role in whether you breathe clean air and drink safe water.

Rev. Brock pointed out some disturbing statistics. In Detroit, infant mortality is up due to water shutoffs in the city during a pandemic that has already caused a proportionately higher death rate for people of color. In fact, the dirtiest zip codes in the United States typically are home to much higher percentages of people of color.

How did this happen? Centuries of bigotry, segregation and government programs that made it harder for people of color to succeed and have the resources to live in cleaner areas. Meanwhile, government neglect and insufficient regulations have left dirty zip codes still dangerous to live in with much higher rates of disease.

The Sierra Club and other environmental organizations recognize these injustices and have in recent times focused their energies and resources on addressing these issues. Why? It's a moral issue. It's the right thing to do. It's the humane thing to do.

Protecting human life is everyone's business as is protecting the environment. When tens of millions of Americans do not have the leisure time or resources to visit our national parks- "America's Best Idea"- they will have little interest in working on environmental issues. When even state and local parks remain beyond the reach of so many Americans who worry about paying the rent, paying for medical bills, affording safe water, this is an inequity that calls for our full attention.

It will take all of us working together to take care of our people and protect our planet.

This is a big job, it goes without saying, but it starts locally. Here are organizations recommended by Rev. Brock that you can contact to lend a hand. Your dollars and your hours of volunteerism can make a difference in the lives of people.

- United Community Housing Coalition www.uchcdetroit.org (help keep people in their homes)
- We the People of Detroit www.wethepeopleofdetroit.com (help people keep their water turned on)
- Soulardarity www.soulardarity.com (help with fair energy practices)
- Brightmoor Connection Food Pantry brightmoorconnection.org (help families in the most need)



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VISIT US AT:

www.sierraclub.org/michigan/crossroads

facebook.com/Crossroads.Group.Sierra.Club

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Your Crossroads Leadership Team

At the January Zoom meeting of the Crossroads Group, officers and committee chairs were elected for the coming year. There is one important change to note: the vice chair position, formally occupied for many years by Sue Kelly, is now being filled by Lee Anzicek.

In this role Lee will assist Crossroads chair Lee Burton and learn the responsibilities required to prepare him to take on that position in the future. Lee has been an important contributor to Crossroads in his service as Political Committee co-chair. You can find a list of all Crossroads officers and committee chairs elsewhere in this newsletter.

Despite the difficulties imposed by the pandemic, Crossroads continues to be an active organization with ongoing efforts in conservation, programs and political issues. Our leadership team is warm and friendly and invites you to join us in building a better community. With Crossroads, you will make new friends in a pressure-free, supportive atmosphere.

If you would like to consider being part of the team, please contact us and we will invite you to participate in a monthly Zoom meeting where you will be warmly welcomed. Call Lee Burton at 810-231-9045 to learn more.

Crossroads Leaders Earn Awards

At a Zoom gathering in early February the Michigan Chapter of the Sierra Club recognized 4 Crossroads leaders for their contributions to the Sierra Club or for their efforts to protect the environment. These individual awards are just one more indication of the dynamism of the Crossroads Group and its contributions to build a better community. Here are the award recipients:

Terri Wilkerson: The White Pine Award for environmental leadership. Terri headed up the effort to use an underwater drone to film Enbridge's Line 5 beneath the Straits of Mackinac that turned up several indigenous archeological sites.

Tiffany Stewart: The Sylvania Award for a newer member who has demonstrated great enthusiasm, hard work and dedication. Tiffany has been the driving force behind many environmental endeavors, including the upcoming Changing Climate Art Show.

Mike Wilczynski: The Virginia Prentice Award for protecting Michigan Wilderness. Mike seems to turn up anywhere and everywhere that there are threats to our environment. His background as a scientist and former employee of the Department of Environmental Quality make his expertise invaluable.

Laurie Mercure: The Steinman Award for Digital Excellence. Laurie is always ready to lend a hand to improve the digital presence of Crossroads and other Sierra Club Groups.

Crossroads Programs

Per the national Sierra Club, we still are not permitted to hold any in-person events due to Covid restrictions. Until further notice, all of our upcoming programs will be held online, using either Zoom or Bluejeans. You can find the links for these programs on our website calendar (www.sierraclub.org/michigan/crossroads) or our Meetup site (www.meetup.com/Sierra-Club-Crossroads-Group).

Howell Nature Center Virtual Series

The Howell Nature Center “Team Nature” staff will be presenting their four most popular programs, all with live animals. Great entertainment for the whole family.

In Your Backyard - Wednesday February 24 - 7pm

Meet a variety of wildlife species that you may find in your own backyard! In this program you will learn about the wildlife we share our yards with, including their characteristics, behaviors, their important roles in the ecosystem, and what you can do to live in harmony with them.



MythCrackers - Wednesday March 10 - 7pm

Are owls truly wise? Do turtles come out of their shells? You'll find the answers to these questions and more in this live wildlife presentation. This program addresses common wildlife myths, and we'll find out if they are "correct" or "cracked".

Lords of the Sky - Wednesday March 31 - 7pm

See a variety of species of live birds of prey in this program as we explore unique characteristics, habitat, diet, and the importance to the environment of the different types of raptors.

Wild Super Powers – Wednesday April 7 - 7pm

What do Batman, Spiderman and Cat Woman have in common? They base their powers on amazing wildlife abilities! In this mixed wildlife presentation, we look at each animal's "super power" that helps them survive in the wild.

Backyard Birds by Lee Burton - Tuesday March 16 - 7pm

Across our country, tens of millions of Americans put up feeders to attract birds. Why we do so is obvious. They bring joy to our lives and beauty to our yards. In our area, with the right kind of feeders, as many as 30 species or more could show up over the course of a year. At this program you will learn about our backyard birds, their songs, what to feed them and how to attract them. You'll even get a few tips about keeping squirrels from hogging all the food.

This program will be hosted by the Huron Valley Sierra Club Group, and presented by our Crossroads Sierra Club leader and birding enthusiast Lee Burton.



Spring Garden Clean-Up for a Natural Backyard by Stephanie Kozak - Wednesday March 24 - 7pm

Stephanie Kozak is a Certified Interpretive Guide for Kensington Metropark Nature Center in Milford, Michigan. Her virtual presentation will focus on how our spring gardening activities affect the wildlife and habitats that overwinter in our yards – and how we can invite more natural flora and fauna into our spaces.



Check our website or Meetup site for other upcoming programs such as “Nature on the Go!” and a program on Plastics (date/time TBD), and for programs hosted by other Sierra Club groups.





Let's "Carry Out" a Cleaner Environment!

Carry out tips to create less waste

This information sheet is meant to end up on your refrigerator where it will remind you how to order an Earth friendly carry out meal from a restaurant.

Restaurant employees are busy and sometimes special requests get missed, but remember, you can still make the ask:

Please do NOT include:

-  straws,
-  plastic ware,
-  condiments or
-  napkins in the bag.

If at all possible, please use:

- an alternative to plastic or Styrofoam containers
- and a paper bag to pack my order

Always encourage. If you know this restaurant is trying to make positive changes, thank them for their efforts and encourage them by saying: *"I always recommend you to my friends because your restaurant is trying to be environmentally responsible. Thank you!"*

Environmental Council
of Huron Valley 



Our Changing Climate Art Show

The Sierra Club Crossroads group together with the Huron Valley Council for the Arts (HVCA), are holding the second annual Our Changing Climate Art Show. The virtual show last year was visited by more than 1200 art lovers and climate awareness enthusiasts.

This year, the show will be virtual *and* in-person by appointment only at the HVCA in Milford. Entries will be received until February 28 (unless extended), so if you know artists of any age, please encourage them to consider entering their art in the show.

The show opens on April 9, 2021 and runs through April 30th. You can visit our website www.sierraclub.org/michigan/crossroads or www.huronvalleyarts.org for more information.

Conservation Update

PFAS: At this point in time, there are eight known sites being investigated for known or suspected PFAS contamination in Livingston and western Oakland counties. They are Diamond Chrome Plating in Howell, Thermofil in Brighton, Livingston County Airport in Howell, Livingston County Landfill in Howell, Brighton Township Dump in Brighton Township, March Coatings in Brighton, Hi-Mill Manufacturing in Highland Township, and Michigan Seamless Tube in South Lyon. To get detailed information about any of these sites go to www.michigan.gov/pfasresponse and choose the investigations tab. You will be able to access reports from EGLE with the latest information on all of these locations. Testing information can be found at the testing tab on the same page.

Line 5: As this pipeline under the Straits of Mackinac begins its 68th year of operation, its status is still being debated. In November Governor Whitmer gave Enbridge until May of 2021 to vacate the State of Michigan easement that Line 5 occupies. As expected, Enbridge is opposing this order and requesting that the United States District Court dismiss the State of Michigan's action. In the meantime, Sarnia-area politicians and labor leaders have asked Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to appeal directly to U.S. President Joe Biden to intervene in the matter. As I write this, on Inauguration Day, it isn't clear what our newly elected president will do. Knowing that the president has plans to cancel the much-disputed Keystone-XL project as one of his first acts as president is good.

SB 431: This bill, which would have removed any oversight and authority of local municipalities over sand and gravel mining operations, seems to be stalled for now.

President Biden climate actions: As of this writing, the Keystone XL Pipeline permits have been revoked, the USA has rejoined the Paris Climate Accord, a moratorium has been ordered on oil and gas drilling permits in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, and the President has reinstated more than 100 environmental regulations that were weakened or rolled back under Trump. What a great start!

Thank you!

2020 was a year unlike any we have ever experienced and included the most important election of our lifetime as it pertains to the protection of our planet. A huge thank you to everyone who voted, encouraged others to vote, made calls, sent texts and wrote letters — our hard work paid off!

What started as a few friendly letter writing competitions between members resulted in more than 870 letters that were written and sent by Crossroads Group members! Not to mention the countless hours of virtual phone and text banking to help get our environmentally friendly Sierra Club endorsed candidates elected.

Well, together, we have done it! While it feels like our hard work is over, it is really just getting started. If you're looking to make a difference, we have many great volunteer opportunities within our political committee based on your interest and time available. Email us at cg.political@michigan.sierraclub.org to learn more.



The 150 letters that Crossroads member Sarah K. wrote!



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www.brighton000.org/environmental-council

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

Newsletter E-Delivery: Help us reduce costs and save some trees! If you would like to sign up for electronic delivery of our quarterly newsletters, email us at cg.webmaster@michigan.sierraclub.org with the word “e-newsletter” as the subject and your full name and address in the body.