

Crossroads Group *Sierra Club*

Spring/Summer 2022



It's Back! The Balloonfest Lemonade Stand

After a two year Covid hiatus, the Crossroads Group will again have its “world famous” lemonade stand at the annual Michigan Challenge Balloonfest in Howell. The dates are June 24-26.

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, June 23: Evening
- Friday, June 24: 12-6 PM, 4 PM until closing
- Saturday, June 25: 10 AM-3 PM, 12 PM-6 PM, 5 PM until closing
- Sunday, June 26: 10 AM-3 PM, 12 PM-5 PM, 3 PM until closing

If you are interested in volunteering or learning more about this event, please call Paul Thielking at 810-588-6077 or send an email to sierraclublemonade@hotmail.com. If you are volunteering, be sure to include your phone number and mailing address so you can receive a parking pass



Executive Committee Chairs

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VISIT US AT:

www.sierraclub.org/michigan/crossroads

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2022 Redistricting Implications for Crossroads

Michigan's Independent Citizens Redistricting Committee has completed its task and on December 31, 2021 the new maps became law. In March, it was announced the maps will be used for the 2022 Elections. Primary elections will be held on August 2, and the General Election will be November 8, 2022.

Congressional District 7 covers Livingston, Clinton, Shiawassee, most of Ingham, and the SW corner of Oakland County. Two candidates are running in the District: Democrats Elissa Slotkin, Holly (incumbent), and Jake Hagg, Holt; and Republican Tom Barrett, Pottersville, currently a State Senator.

Most Crossroads members in Oakland County fall into new districts 9 and 11.

Congressional District 9 has Democrat, Brian Jayne, Rochester and Republicans Michelle Donovan, New Baltimore, and Lisa McClain, Bruce.

Congressional District 11 Two Democrats, Andy Levin and Haley Stevens, both strong environmental champions, will face each other in the August primary. The MI Chapter Pol Com hasn't endorsed either candidate to date, though they have both been endorsed in past years. The three Republicans, also facing each other in the primary, are Mark Ambrose, Bloomfield Township, Matthew DenOtter, Waterford, and Gabi Grossbard, Southfield.

State Senate District 22 which includes Livingston County plus the SE portion of Ingham Co., SE Shiawassee Co, SW Genesee Co., and NW Oakland County. Republican Lana Theis, Brighton is running for a 2nd term. She will be challenged in the primary by Mike Detmer of Howell. At present, there is no Democratic candidate.

Livingston County has a presence in **4 House Districts:**

48th - Democrat Jennifer Conlin of Ann Arbor; Republicans Jason Negri, Whitmore Lake and Jason Woolford, of Howell.

49th - Democrat Christina Kafkakis, Brighton; Republicans Ann Bollin, Brighton (incumbent) and Chase Turner, Brighton.

50th - Democrat Glen Miller, Howell; Republican Robert Bezotte, Howell (incumbent).

72nd - Democrat Mike Mueller, Linden; Republican Dylan Pescarolo, Fenton.

The Michigan Sierra Club Political Committee will be meeting monthly to support endorsed candidates statewide and promote environmental goals. To date, early endorsements have been announced for Governor Gretchen Whitmer, Attorney General Dana Nessel, and Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson. Additionally, early endorsements have been made for 4 Congressional candidates: Debbie Dingell (CD6); Dan Kildee (CD8); Elissa Slotkin (CD7); and Rashida Tlaib (CD12). And 12 early endorsements have been given to Michigan House and Senate candidates. Questionnaires have been drafted to be sent out to other candidates, seeking SC endorsements at the State and local levels.

The Michigan SC will be working with a number of partners to address the many important environmental issues, such as Line 5, access to clean water and avoidance of water shutoffs, PFAS contamination, environmental and social justice issues, transportation, clean energy, species diversity, protection of the Great Lakes, to name a few.

The Hard PAC currently has a balance \$53,535 and there will be another fundraiser this summer. The staff is actively recruiting interns for use in both the primary and general elections. The Staff have presented 2 very comprehensive plans for this election year: Coordinated Plan (19 pages) and the Independent Expenditure Plan (31 pages). Finally, staff will be meeting with local groups to provide suggestions and support for both state and local candidates.

Ginny Maturen, Crossroads Political Representative

Fighting the Asphalt Plants

It's time for some good news. As we are bombarded with environmental follies and disasters, our Crossroads Community can rest (briefly) to take time to savor a few victories.

In early 2021, Capitol Asphalt Inc. of Lansing began to request zoning changes in Tyrone Township from Farm Residential to Heavy Industrial, in order to accommodate their wish to open a new asphalt factory in Livingston County. A year later, after the proposal was defeated in Tyrone, the company set their sights on Genoa Township, where property was available and already zoned for light industrial which must have seemed an easier hurdle.

While Capitol Asphalt in Lansing is said "to be in compliance" with state regulations, there is no denying that they emit literally tons of hazardous pollutants every year that include xylene, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide, benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide, and lead, just to name a few. Studies prove that plants of this sort affect property values as well as health.

The Crossroads Group has a reputation of responding when called upon by people who are suddenly faced with challenges in their communities, especially when there is no time to re-invent the activist wheel.

Citizens in Tyrone and Genoa Townships were rightfully concerned and several leaders contacted our Crossroads Group to find out what they can do to help protect the people of their communities against the possibility of a shower of poison, dust and noise raining down on their land, their kids, their pets, and their homes, schools and businesses.

After decades of doing our best to lead efforts to oppose hazardous and dangerous land use proposals, regardless of community participation, Crossroads Group has learned that the only thing that really has a lasting impact on environmental protection is when the people living nearby are educated to the coming dangers and want to organize with their neighbors to speak and act out before it is too late.

There were several tried and true tactics we used that hopefully added to the final, good outcomes. Meeting with residents we offered ideas on how to effectively engage in working with decision-makers and working cohesively as a group. We also used a Sierra Club tool called AddUp to offer a way for people to make their opinions known to those who will be making the decision. We reached our goal of having over 200 emails sent to the Genoa Township Board of Trustees. Phone calling, emailing, posting on our social media accounts, sending emails directly to our members, and writing letters to the townships from the Crossroads Group happened at the times we felt could have the greatest impact. Tyrone and Genoa Townships ultimately defeated the Asphalt Plant proposals.

Congratulations to the residents in these communities who came together and advocated against the misguided asphalt plant proposals. Without their reasoned input the decision makers in Tyrone and Genoa Townships may not have denied the requests.

by Suzen Oliver

Wanted: Green Social Media Enthusiast

Do you enjoy spending time on social media? Would you like to spend some of that time doing good things for the environment? If so, Crossroads has an opportunity for you.

The Crossroads Group presently has a Facebook page and Instagram page. We would like to make those sites more dynamic and current, and spread to other platforms such as TikTok, WhatsApp and/or YouTube. This will help us reach a different demographic of environmentally concerned citizens.

Qualifications: Membership in the Sierra Club (costs as little as \$15) and ability to manage social media websites.

Time required: You can name your own hours and do only what fits your life comfortably.

What's in it for you: Crossroads leaders enjoy outings, programs, compelling environmental challenges and friendship. At our meetings we serve refreshments and have stimulating conversations. We are a group that gets things done while having a good time.

If this interests you, please contact Crossroads vice chair Lee Burton at lee.burton@michigan.sierraclub.org Your volunteerism will help us build a better community.

Research: Seas May Face Most Cataclysmic Extinction in 250 Million Years

“The future of life in the oceans rests strongly on what we decide to do with greenhouse gases.”

Global heating is causing such a drastic change to the world’s oceans that it risks a mass extinction event of marine species that rivals anything that’s happened in the Earth’s history over tens of millions of years, new research has warned. Accelerating climate change is causing a “profound” impact upon ocean ecosystems that is “driving extinction risk higher and marine biological richness lower than has been seen in Earth’s history for the past tens of millions of years,” according to the study.

The world’s seawater is steadily climbing in temperature due to the extra heat produced from the burning of fossil fuels, while oxygen levels in the ocean are plunging and the water is acidifying from the soaking up of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

Marine conditions, the researchers said, are reminiscent of the mass extinction that occurred at the end of the Permian period. This means the oceans are overheated, increasingly gasping for breath—the volume of ocean waters completely depleted of oxygen has quadrupled since the 1960s—and becoming more hostile to life. Aquatic creatures such as clams, mussels and shrimp are unable to properly form shells due to the acidification of seawater.

All of this means the planet could slip into a “mass extinction rivaling those in Earth’s past,” states the new research, published in Science. The pressures of rising heat and loss of oxygen are, researchers said, uncomfortably reminiscent of the mass extinction event that occurred at the end of the Permian period about 250m years ago. This cataclysm, known as the “great dying,” led to the demise of up to 96 percent of the planet’s marine animals.

“Even if the magnitude of species loss is not the same level as this, the mechanism of the species loss would be the same,” said Justin Penn, a climate scientist at Princeton University who co-authored the new research. “The future of life in the oceans rests strongly on what we decide to do with greenhouse gases today. There are two vastly different oceans we could be seeing, one devoid of a lot of life we see today, depending on what we see with CO2 emissions moving forward.”

Truly catastrophic extinction levels may be reached should the world emit planet-heating gases in an unrestrained way, leading to more than 4C of average warming above pre-industrial times by the end of this century, the research found. This would trigger extinctions that would reshape ocean life for several more centuries as temperatures continue to climb.

But even in the better case scenarios, the world is still set to lose a significant chunk of its marine life. At 2C of heating above the pre-industrial norm, which is forecast as likely even under current climate pledges by the world’s governments, around 4 percent of the roughly two million species in the oceans will be wiped out. Fish and marine mammals that live in polar regions are most vulnerable, according to the study, as they will be unable to migrate to suitably cooler climes, unlike tropical species. “They will just have nowhere to go,” said Penn.

The threat of climate change is amplifying the other major dangers faced by aquatic life, such as over-fishing and pollution. Between 10 percent and 15 percent of marine species are already at risk of extinction because of these various threats, the study found, drawing upon International Union for Conservation of Nature data.

John Bruno, a marine ecologist at the University of North Carolina who was not involved in the study, said the new research appeared “sound” but it differed from previous studies on the topic that suggest species will mainly disperse to new areas rather than be completely snuffed out.

“We’re already losing untold biodiversity and ecosystem functioning with even the relatively modest warming ... It’s very different from what most prior work has developed. But that doesn’t mean they are wrong,” Bruno said. “I think this new work is challenging some of our current assumptions about the geographic patterns of looming extinction in the ocean.” Bruno said that while mass extinctions are likely from extreme heating in the future, the current impacts from climate change and other threats should be concerning enough for policymakers and the public.

“Personally, I’m a lot more worried about the ecosystem degradation we’re already seeing after less than 1C of warming,” he said. “We don’t need to look to a world so warmed over humanity has been wiped out—we’re already losing untold biodiversity and ecosystem functioning with even the relatively modest warming of the last 50 years.”

by Oliver Milman

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 (see more on our Meetup site)

Ann Arbor Saginaw Forest Weeknight Hike - Wednesday May 11, 7pm

Location: 242 Community Church, 648 S Wagner Road, Ann Arbor

We will enjoy a leisurely 2 to 3 mile hike through the forest.

Highland Recreation Area Hike - Sunday May 15, 1pm

Location: Highland Recreation Equestrian Day Staging Area

Join us for a 5-mile hike (with an option to stop after 2 miles).

Pinckney State Recreation Area Bird and Nature Hike - Saturday June 4, 10am

Location: Lakelands Trail crossing parking lot, Cedar Lake Rd, Pinckney

Join us on a scenic 2-3 mile hike through some beautiful wetlands and hilly terrain in Pinckney State Recreation Area.

Detroit Dequindre Cut and Eastern Market Mural urban hike, plus lunch at VegFest - Sunday, June 5, 10am

Location: Dequindre Cut Parking Lot, Wilkins St, Detroit

Join us for a 5-mile urban hike through Detroit's Dequindre Cut Greenway and the many murals of Eastern Market, followed by lunch at VegFest.

Programs

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



Light Pollution and Michigan's Dark Skies by Gillen Brown

Wednesday May 18, 7 pm

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.

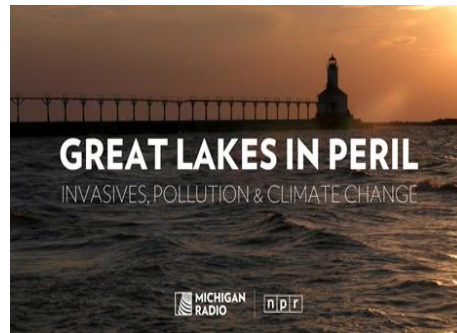
Gillen is a Ph.D. student at the University of Michigan studying astronomy and is a co-coordinator of the Michigan Dark Skies advocacy group.

Water's True Costs: Politics, Pollution, Climate Change by Lester Graham of Michigan Public Radio

Wednesday Sept 21, 7 pm

Local and state governments have long neglected the infrastructure that brings us drinking water and takes away wastewater. This resulted in the Flint water crisis – and allowed problems such as harmful algae blooms in Lake Erie. We're also learning about other threats, such as PFAS, microplastic fibers, and an increasing number of invasive species in the Great Lakes.

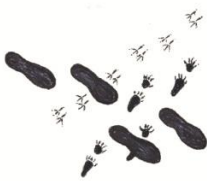
Lester Graham, journalist for four decades and host of Michigan Radio's Environment Report, will focus on these topics and more in his presentation.




Upcoming

November 16 - Cooking with Scraps by author Lindsay-Jean Hard

January 18 - How Great Lakes Observations Help Us Understand the Past, Present, and Future by Steve Ruberg of NOAA



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