

Crossroads Sierra Club

Fall 2012



Fracking Likely in the Future for Livingston County

On May 8 the state auctioned mineral rights for essentially all the public lands in Livingston County – Island Lake Recreation Area, Brighton Recreation Area, Lakeland Trail, and others. The proceeds from this auction, which involved many other counties in addition to Livingston, were around \$4 million for 91,000 acres. The totals for Livingston County leases alone appear to be a few hundred thousand dollars, the order of magnitude of one family's investment in their home in this county.

The primary purchasers in the county are:

- **Jordan Development Company LLC**, which was formed in 1996 and actually operates wells in Michigan,
- **Kosco Energy Group LLC** which purchased leases around Pinckney and is at least mentioned on a web page in association with Master Key Energy LLC,
- and a “company” called **Pteradon Energy LLC**, which was apparently formed at the beginning of 2012 and has a PO Box in Traverse City. That’s about all the information you can find for Pteradon on Google, except for the Wikipedia article about the Pteranodon, that nasty-looking huge flying reptile we have all seen depicted in dinosaur movies. What a sick joke for the name of a fossil fuel company. Sicker yet that we have no information about what company this shell represents, what is the responsibility, and what its track record may be.

Since the state land does not allow drilling directly on site, agents are currently going around to landowners with some acreage bordering the parks, making deals to operate wellheads should testing prove it profitable. The idea is to drill a vertical well, then go horizontally for a mile or more to access the minerals under the public lands. About 4 - 8 million gallons of water and toxic chemicals are forced down each well under pressure to break apart rock and release gases. The exact process depends on the porosity of the rock layer and the type of material sought, but also can be changed in the future.

These wellheads are heavy industrial operations. Land is ripped up, large equipment is brought in, and there is heavy truck traffic, noise, odors, blasting, compression equipment, and possibility for pollution of air and water. The pad is over an acre. It is a far cry from the lone pumps we have seen for years in the middle of a farm field up north. Yet apparently it can be located anywhere. If you wanted to build a heavy manufacturing facility next to residential areas, most likely local governments would not allow it, but they have no say in this matter - it is all “regulated “ by the state, and apparently any place is fair game.

Fracking has been done extensively out west, and there are many claims of environmental problems it has caused. Pennsylvania is the poster child in the east for uncontrolled operation. New York State has had a moratorium out of concern for endangering the water supply for New York City, and just recently opened up a limited number of counties for drilling (what do they know that communities downstream along the Huron River are ignoring?). There is a lot of activity starting in Ohio and Indiana. Vermont has banned fracking outright. The July issue of Sierra Magazine has an excellent article about living near fracking operations in Pennsylvania.

The Crossroads Group of the Sierra Club intends to actively work on this issue. What can you do to help? For now, tell everyone you know! If this proceeds in secrecy, we are sitting ducks for whatever tricks a company wants to pull. Everyone in the county should be aware and informed on the situation. There has been only light news coverage, and mostly a lot of untrue statements about how this is no different from past drilling, and completely safe. People living near the state lands must know what is going on, but also everyone needs to know, since large drilling operations will certainly transform the character of our entire county.

If you want to read more about fracking, you can find links on our web page www.michigan.sierraclub.org/crossroads , click on the Conservation page.

Executive Committee, Committee Chairs

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WebPage: OPEN
Want to fill this chair??
Contact our chairperson, Lee Burton.

Visit us on the Web at
Michigan.SierraClub.org/Crossroads

Crossroads Leaders Receive Training- Join Us!

Recently the Crossroads Group applied to receive training from the national organization on how to build an effective leadership team capable of handling challenging issues in a cooperative, constructive manner in order to achieve our goals. We were one of a limited number of groups that were accepted into the program and had more of our leaders sign up for the training than most other groups.

One of the things we discovered after hearing from several other groups in other states is that we are a very healthy group with many committed, effective leaders. We learned that we have more members attending our monthly leadership meetings than does the New York City group, which serves an immensely larger population. And we work together in an admirably cooperative fashion.

So what has made our group so successful? In a word, people. And not just anyone, but committed leaders wishing to work together effectively to make the greater Livingston County area a better place to live. We believe we have succeeded in that goal through our programs, our outings, our political work and our efforts on conservation.

Why do we have so many people interested in joining our ranks? Because we welcome newcomers with open arms. We respect each individual's choices about the ways they wish to help out and the time they wish to commit. Through this process, we all seem to acquire new friends.

We invite you to consider playing a greater role in the Crossroads Group. Come to a meeting and watch us in action. At your own leisure, you can make decisions about how involved you wish to become.

For more information, please contact group chair Lee Burton (810-231-9045) or vice-chair Sue Kelly (810-599-8803). We'd love to hear from you.

Wanted: Nature Lover/Computer Geek

Then Crossroads Group is looking for someone to help maintain our websites and keep them current. If you enjoy spending time on computers and wish to pay a role in protecting our environment, we have just the role for you. To learn more about the Crossroads Group and our webmaster position, call Sue Kelly (810-599-8803) or Lee Burton (810-231-9045)

Enbridge: Bringing Tarsands Oil Through a Community Near You

The proposed Keystone XL pipeline would transport tarsands oil from Canada through the U.S. to an international port for sale on the world market. Are you aware we have a pipeline coming through our area with the very same, dirty, corrosive, tarsands oil also destined for the world market?



Enbridge, a Canadian Company, has recently been working very hard to get all of the approvals from the government and private citizens to enable them to install or replace a pipeline adjacent to an existing pipeline that runs diagonally across the middle of Livingston County area and continues through the northern part of Oakland County. There have been recent articles in the local papers where citizens are complaining of intimidation on the part of Enbridge representatives to get them to agree to the use (and demolition in some cases) of their property – one resident had armed guards on his private property because of this conflict.

This pipeline, called “Line 6B”, was the source of a spill near Marshall in 2010. Despite numerous warnings that went unanswered for 17 hours, a pipeline ruptured resulting in the spilling of 1 million gallons of oil -- the largest inland oil spill in the continental U.S. in history. Enbridge employees misinterpreted warning alarms and controllers restarted it twice. If they’d responded in a timely manner, 81% of the oil wouldn’t have been spilled. A crack in the pipe identified back in 2005 had not been repaired.

The chronology of this spill, and there have been **804** Enbridge spills in the last decade, does not give us confidence that going forward, everything will be fine. Jeremy Symons, a senior National Wildlife Federation Vice President, has been quoted as saying **“You can’t make the same mistake 800 times ...**

Giving Enbridge (the) green light to build a new pipeline is like giving someone who’s drunk the keys to the car. It’s irresponsible.”

Our country uses fossil fuels and will for the foreseeable future. But transporting it needs to be done in a safe manner. We’d like an answer for these questions:

1. Will Enbridge and all of the government agencies that are tasked with pipeline oversight adhere to the 19 safety guidelines from NTSB*?
2. Are there emergency response teams available in all of the townships that can respond to a problem? How will this be funded: with our tax dollars or will Enbridge fund this expense?
3. What can the local township governments do to protect its citizens, their property values and the integrity of our local environment?
4. Will truck traffic be allowed on the various roads needed to access the pipeline easement? Who will pay for repairs?
5. Can Enbridge demonstrate to us they have adequate safeguards in place, specific to our communities?
6. Will Enbridge representatives use forceful tactics, i.e., harass citizens?
7. Where do our elected officials stand on this issue? (State Rep. Cindy Denby has not returned our phone call yet.)
8. Will the hours of operation be 24/7 for the construction of the new pipeline?

We are working on obtaining answers to these questions. In the meantime, call your elected officials and ask them what steps are being undertaken to protect our community from unprofessional practices. If you are interested in learning more, please email our Conservation Committee at: sue.kelly@michigan.sierraclub.org.

* A report on the spill and the details for the new safety recommendations can be found here: http://www.nts.gov/news/events/2012/marshall_mi/index.html

Meeting With State Representative Bill Rogers

With the issue of hydrofracking for natural gas very possibly happening around and under all of the state owned land in our area, on Tuesday July 24, 2012 several Crossroads Group leaders met with State Rep. Bill Rogers at a local restaurant to discuss our concerns.

We had loaned him our copy of "Gasland" which he said he had watched and returned to us. Speaking about several serious problems that other communities around the country have experienced, the issue of water – the millions of gallons mixed with chemicals needed to fracture the shale and release the gas and what to do with all of the contaminated water (which is then considered hazardous waste) was an issue for Rep. Rogers stating, "...water is our asset; it's our liquid gold."

After our lengthy discussion we came away with the idea to hold a workshop for the local elected leaders to prepare them in the event that hydrofracking for natural gas is a reality in their community. Rep. Rogers offered to help us put this together which we believe will help in getting leaders to take this issue seriously.

We appreciate Rep. Rogers meeting with us to address this issue that may be happening in our area in the near future.

Reformed Conservation Committee Meets

The reformed Crossroads Group Conservation Committee began with a first meeting at the home of chairman, Thomas Schneider, on August 8. Eight members were present.

Early discussion centered on past actions of the Conservation Committee to fight urban sprawl in Livingston county. The Crossroads Group developed an important reputation for being right on local environmental issues which threatened human health and wellness.

An important decision was made by committee members to enhance our environmental clout by forming two distinct groups within the committee. A political group will concentrate efforts to communicate high priority issues with other members, local citizen landowners, and township to state level officials. All members present agreed that the two most pressing issues are the aggressive tactics of Enbridge pipeline installation in county areas and the pollution pressures of hydraulic fracturing. A second committee group will continue important work on conservation service outings starting Sept/Oct in Deerfield Hills Nature Area at the corners of Cohactah and Green roads in Deerfield Township.

We invite all interested Crossroads Group members to become actively involved in the new Conservation Committee. Our next meeting will be held September 12th at Thomas's house. Contact Chairman Thomas Schneider at: 734-772-2826 or email at wildblueexplorations@gmail.com.

Fracking: Here We Go Again

Will we transform our state for \$10 per acre?

PUBLIC NOTICE OF STATE-OWNED OIL AND GAS RIGHTS TO BE OFFERED FOR LEASE AUCTION

Lands under consideration for oil and gas leasing include acreage in the following counties: ALLEGAN, ARENAC, BARRY, BAY, EMMET, GRAND TRAVERSE, IONIA, IOSCO, KALKASKA, KENT, LAKE, MANISTEE, MIDLAND, MONTMORENCY, OAKLAND, OGEMAW, OSCODA, OTTAWA, PRESQUE ISLE, SAGINAW, TUSCOLA, AND WEXFORD.

On October 24, 2012, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will offer, at an oral-bid public auction, approximately 196,000 acres of state-owned oil and gas lease rights in those Michigan counties indicated herein. More detailed information regarding location of the nominated parcels can be found at http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/1,1607,7-153-10371_14793-30912--,00.html or by calling 517-373-7663.

Offering of lease rights will begin at 9:00 a.m. at an expected minimum bid of \$10.00 per acre

Crossroads and the Sierra Club Present

GREEN-UP YOUR VOTE!

Prepare for November Elections –

Learn and Discuss the Environmental Issues at our September 19th Program!

Presenter: Mike Berkowitz, Political Director, Sierra Club Michigan Chapter

Wednesday, September 19th, 7:00 P.M., Brighton Library

Admission: Free

Here is a timely chance to examine the environmental issues in depth, not just sound bites. Mike Berkowitz, political director of the Sierra Club's Michigan Chapter, will present a program entitled "**Environmental Politics and Legislative Issues**". He is a wealth of information on key races and issues, and ways that you can make a difference in local, state and national elections. There will be ample opportunity to discuss any issues you have questions about.

In addition to assisting the Chapter's Political Committee, Mike also staffs the Legislative Committee, which is charged with passing progressive environmental bills through Michigan's legislature. He also directed the Chapter's efforts to collect signatures for the Clean Energy Ballot Proposal. Mike has loved the Sierra Club ever since studying environmental philosophy at Michigan State University. We are very lucky to have such a savvy and committed person on our staff.



To Be Announced

Wednesday, November 14th, 7:00 P.M., Brighton Library

Admission: Free

Better Living Through Bug-Eating

Nobody likes ants at a picnic. But what if the ants are the picnic? A growing number of scientists argue that the only way to feed all of the planet's 7 billion people is to start eating lower on the food chain--way lower. They advocate entomophagy, i.e., eating bugs.

Bugs were once a normal part of the human diet, and in many places, they still are. Ancient Romans were fond of larvae, and the Torah notes that locusts are kosher. Japan, Thailand, Australia, and many African countries still have thriving insect-eating traditions.

At Wageningen University in the Netherlands, Professors Marcel Dicke and Arnold Van Huis have been advocating insect consumption since the 1990s, noting in the Wall Street Journal that bugs are "high in protein, B vitamins, and minerals like iron and zinc, and they're low in fat." Economical too: A pound of feed produces at least five times more cricket protein than beef protein, and while you can eat only about half of a cow, you can eat almost all of a bug.

More pluses: Insect-ranching requires little land or water and involves no steaming piles of excrement. And while meat eaters typically limit themselves to a handful of species, insectivores can pick from more than 1,000 edible options, among them wasps, crickets, grasshoppers, caterpillars, termites, beetle grubs, and ant larvae.

"People who refuse to eat bugs are basically finicky eaters," says Dave Gracer, who promotes entomophagy through his company Smallstock Food Strategies and calls insects "the shrimp of the land." Still, he knows bugs are a tough sell--witness the backlash when customers learned that Starbucks used dye derived from cochineal beetles in its strawberry Frappuccinos. (The dye is also used in yogurts, artificial crab, cosmetics, and other products.) But with almost a fifth of the planet's greenhouse gases coming from livestock production, it may be time to get over such squeamishness. In the food world, Gracer says, "cows and pigs are the SUVs and bugs are the bicycles."

-Dashka Slater

(Reprinted from Sierra Daily)

Crossroads Sierra Club Outings

General Outing Notice

All Sierra Club outings start at the trail head, and some include fees to cover expenses. Sierra Club outing participants are required to sign the standard liability waiver found on our website, or call us to receive a print version at 415-977-5528. Always check with trip leader for cancellations or changes.

Pinckney Recreation Area “Chain of Lakes” Paddle

Seven small lakes on 11,000 acres, Pinckney Recreation Area

Saturday, Oct. 6, 1 PM

Skill level: beginner, Difficulty: Easy to Moderate

Hazards: Deep water, possible motorized boat traffic.

Pinckney’s rolling woodlands feature a cluster of interconnected small lakes that offer a mellow afternoon of paddling. Join the Crossroads Group on a fall paddle with a relaxing alternative to the usual river trips. The summer crowds will have dissipated, and with them, most of the motorized boat traffic. This is a cold water paddle, and a dry bag with an extra set of clothing is required. Personal flotation devices are required on all paddle outings. A minimum boat length of 11 feet is suggested.

Meet at the Pinckney Recreation Area Halfmoon Lake boat launch and day-use area. North Territorial Road to Hankerd Road (about 2 miles north). This outing is free, but requires a State park passport or day pass sticker for Halfmoon Lake. Members, nonmembers, families, beginners and experienced welcome. For reservations and specific information please contact John Wilson at 734-954-0429 (734-355-3822 day of paddle) or john.wilson@michigan.sierraclub.org or Gary Neumeier at Gerry.neumeier@avl.com.

Park Lyndon North and Embury Swamp

Park Lyndon North

Saturday, Oct. 13, 1 PM

Skill level: beginner, Difficulty: Easy

Join the Crossroads Group on a hilly one-mile hike through upland glacial terrain and extensively boardwalked wetland depressions, including the Embury Swamp Natural Area Preserve. Embury Swamp is a rich blend of swamp, fen, bog, marsh, and meadow with over 500 species of plants including orchids, ferns, pitcher plants, sundews, and gentians. Animal residents include turkey, deer, fox, coyote, grouse, and massasauga rattlesnakes. This outing is free and fun for all ages, members, nonmembers, families, beginners and experienced. Meet at the Park Lyndon North Parking lot located on N. Territorial Road a few miles East of M52. For more information contact John Wilson at 734-954-0429 (734-355-3822 day of outing) or john.wilson@michigan.sierraclub.org

Sandhill Cranes at Phyllis Haehnle Memorial Sanctuary

Phyllis Haehnle Memorial Sanctuary, Jackson County

Sunday Oct. 28 5 PM

Skill level: beginner, Difficulty: Easy

The Haehnle Sanctuary is well known as THE staging area for Sandhill Cranes. Every autumn, thousands of these birds gather here in preparation for their southern migration. Join the Crossroads Group for an evening of viewing these birds as they abandon their nesting areas, to gather in their migration staging area, in preparation for their 1,000 mile southward journey. Bring a blanket, and binoculars or viewing scope. Bring a picnic if you like. Hot Cider and Cocoa will be available. This outing is free and fun for all ages, members, nonmembers, families, beginners and experienced. Meet at the Sanctuary parking lot off of Seymour Rd. Take Exit 147 (Race Rd.) from I94 to Seymour Rd. (West on Seymour). The Greater Sandhill Crane, often recognized as the oldest living bird species, has a wingspan eclipsing six feet. For more information contact John Wilson at 734-954-0429 (734-355-3822 day of outing) or john.wilson@michigan.sierraclub.org

Crossroads Sierra Club Outings (cont.)

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Kayaking for Cranes

Deerfield Hills Nature Area
Sunday November 4, 2 PM.

In conjunction with a crane count at Deerfield Hills, there will be a kayak outing from the Deerfield Hills Nature Area boat launch to view closeup migration of Sandhill cranes to their roost area on an island in Bennett lake. Please RSVP to: Thomas Schneider, at: wildblueexplorations@gmail.com

Annual Winter Ducks Outing at Kensington Metro Park

Kensington Metro Park Nature Center
Sunday Nov. 18, 1 PM.
Skill level: beginner, Difficulty: Easy

Join the Crossroads Group to witness one of nature's amazing shows--the migration of ducks, geese and other wildfowl heading south for the winter-- at this 4,481 acre park featuring wooded, hilly terrain surrounding beautiful Kent Lake. This popular outing is free (but requires a Metro Park pass for entrance) and fun for all ages, members, nonmembers, families, beginners and experienced birders. Bring binoculars and meet at the Kensington Metro Park Nature Center parking lot. For more information contact John Wilson at 734-954-0429 (734-355-3822 day of outing) or john.wilson@michigan.sierraclub.org.

Brighton Recreation Area early Winter Hike

Brighton Recreation, Penosha Trail
Sunday, Dec. 2, 1 PM
Skill Level: beginner Difficulty: Moderate

Join the Crossroads Group of the Sierra Club for an afternoon hike on the Penosha Trail. Sunday, Dec. 2, 1PM. The trail is 5 miles, approximately 2-2 ½ hours, through woods and meadows. The trailhead for the Penosha trail is at the Bishop lake parking lot, in Brighton Recreation area. 6360 Chilson Road, Howell, Mi. The outing is free but requires an annual or daily Michigan State Parks pass (or passport pass) for entry. Open to members and nonmembers, families, and beginners who can hike this distance. Hiking boots and appropriate warm clothing recommended, trails may be muddy. A great hike near our own back yard! For information call John Wilson at 734-954-0429 (734-355-3822 cell day of outing) or john.wilson@michigan.sierraclub.org

Huron Meadows Metropark Ski Outing

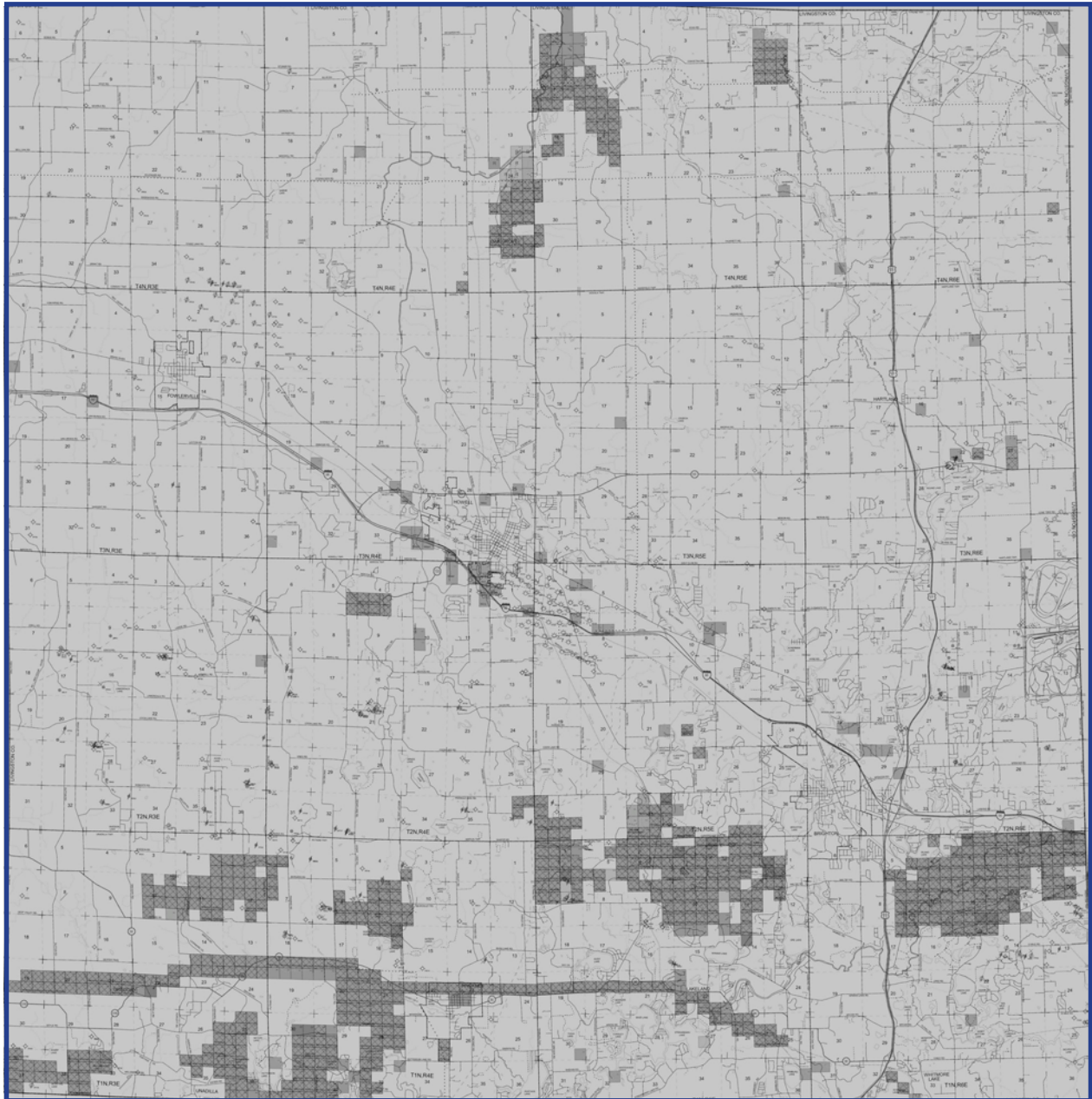
Meet at the Ski Center in Huron Meadows Metropark
Saturday, December 29, 1 PM
Skill level: novices to advanced, Difficulty: Easy to Moderate

Join the Crossroads Group of the Sierra Club for an afternoon cross country ski outing at Huron Meadows Metropark. Meet at the Ski Center in Huron Meadows Metropark at 1PM. Enjoy miles of groomed trails both on the golf course and through the woods. Groomed skate ski trails also. Heated warming shelter and indoor bathrooms available. Members, nonmembers, novices and expert Nordic skiers are welcome to enjoy this outing. Outing is free except a Metropark annual sticker or daily pass required for entry. Celebrate the New Year early! Outing dependent on snow. Contact John Wilson at 734-954-0429 (734-355-3822 cell day of outing) or john.wilson@michigan.sierraclub.org.





Sierra Club—Crossroads Group
P.O. Box 306
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Livingston County Land Leased for Oil/Gas Leases

All darkened blocks of land have been leased.