

Crossroads Sierra Club

Spring 2013



Livingston County's Deerfield Hills Nature Area

Deerfield Hills Nature area is a nature and conservation park preserve of 374 acres, located in northeast Livingston County at the corners of Cohoctah Rd. and Green Rd. Its natural habitats are many and diverse, providing home territories for special species like the Blandings turtle, the Eastern Box turtle, and the Blanchard's Cricket frog. This past March a Townsend's Solitaire, a member of the thrush family and a casual erratic species from the western mountains, was seen in the park by qualified birders in March 2013. This type of unusual species gives Deerfield Hills a special quality as a bird-watching hot spot in northern Livingston county.

This high quality nature area was purchased by Deerfield Township in 1997 through the State of Michigan Land Acquisition grant and some land-owner donation. The Livingston Land Conservancy aided the township environmental committee through the acquisition process. This special place was saved from a planned condominium development.

An extensive trail system meanders through the entire park property, with access to a Howe Lake fishing and canoeing dock. Visitors to the park enjoy hiking, birding, canoeing/kayaking, wildlife observation, fishing, cross country skiing, outdoor photography, and seasonal bow hunting. The park is open to the public from dawn to dusk. Local volunteers and Boy Scouts have contributed greatly to maintenance, current facilities and native plantings at the park. Over the last 10 years additional grant funds have provided improvements to park property. A boundary fence was constructed, fishing dock and handicap trail was constructed and interpretive educational signs are marked along trails.

The Deerfield Township Recreational Advisory committee has plans for projects such as field burns, native plantings, conservation projects, trail system development, recreation facilities/ activities, maintenance and park outings. Current projects include parking lot fencing to keep out off-road vehicles, a visitors observation deck over Ore Creek and wetlands and the removal of invasive species, namely Autumn Olive shrubs. The goals of the parks committee are to protect important natural wildlife habitat, provide visitors enhanced wildlife viewing opportunities and protect fragile aquatic habitat.

Research on the history of the land, indicates that very little farming was conducted because of steep hills and wetlands. There are still a few concrete foundations from family cottages dating around the mid 1800s.

Extensive wildlife species inventories have been conducted through the many diverse eco-systems, specifically when the property was purchased. Many species of rare amphibians, birds, reptiles, flora and fauna have been found throughout the wetlands, forests and meadows. Seasonal outings are planned to continue inventories for more native species. Special native songbird conservation projects are underway with nearly 500 native hawthorns planted in May 2011. New nesting bird houses are also being established throughout the park through careful placement and maintenance. It is a wonderful place to hear a Scarlet tanager as soon as you step out of your vehicle from the parking area in early May due to an old oak grove nearby, where these beautiful tanagers prefer to nest. So if you haven't done so, please take some time to come enjoy this remarkable place where bird songs are always a constant reminder of how special a place it really is.

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VISIT US AT:

Michigan.SierraClub.org/Crossroads

Crossroads Group Goes to Lansing

Seven of the 92 Sierra Club volunteers who went to Lansing on April 17 to advocate for a moratorium on horizontal hydraulic fracturing and increased energy efficiency were from our own Crossroads Group. As a part of the Michigan Chapter Sierra Club's Spring Lobby Day we visited a total of 14 legislative offices.

All of the legislators we spoke with from both parties were aware of the "fracking" issue. The difference between the parties is that the Democrats support a moratorium on fracking, even a full ban in some cases. While appearing sincerely concerned, the Republicans did not express any opinions on how they would see moving forward to assure this process is done safely in Michigan. We hope that our efforts to educate have helped move our decision makers towards a more focused effort to protect Michigan citizens, water and property values from the consequences of fracking that other states are experiencing.

The other issue we advocated on was ramping up the energy efficiency law that was enacted in 2008. This program has been very successful, both for the utilities and the ratepayers. The Sierra Club position is that we should decrease our energy demand through efficiency efforts and increase incentives and rebates to encourage that. This issue is clearly a win-win and with no serious opposition from either side. Interested in the issues? www.michigan.sierraclub.org/democracy/articles/LobbyDayMaterials.html

Don't hesitate to contact your Michigan legislators and express your support for these issues! You can find your representatives at www.legislature.mi.gov and choose Legislators in the menu on the left.



Jim Delcamp, Lee Burton, Marcus Collins, Rep. Ed Rogers and Sue Kelly

Balloonfest Lemonade Stand

The annual Michigan Challenge Balloonfest, which is held the weekend of June 28-30 in Howell, gives the Crossroads Group its greatest fundraising opportunity. For many years, we have been making hotdogs, brats and our trademark fresh squeezed lemonade to provide for the thirsty crowds that come each year to enjoy all the festivities of the event. Our lemonade stand can raise thousands of dollars over a single weekend and allows Crossroads Group to be one of the best financed groups anywhere, and provides the very necessary money for all our conservation efforts in our community.

But it does not happen without the help of all our Crossroads Group volunteers!

By volunteering to help at the lemonade stand, members get a free pass into the event. It provides a great chance to get involved and meet other members of Sierra Club and see what cool people they are! We have shifts all weekend long to meet anyone's schedule, and people often come early or stay late to enjoy all the activities and spectacles surrounding the festival. And 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 enjoys the best view of the launch field!

But the biggest reward is knowing that by only giving a few hours of your time, you make Crossroads Group such a great active force for local community environmental leadership.

Anyone interested in volunteering or just learning more can call or email me anytime. I look forward to seeing everyone in June! Thanks, Paul Thielking, Fundraising Chairman, 810-588-6077, sierraclublemonade@hotmail.com, or paulthielking@hotmail.com.



Be a Crossroads Leader: Join Pleasure with Community Service

Are you a lover of nature and concerned with the state of the environment? Do you wish to contribute to the betterment of our community? Are you interested in meeting like-minded people and making new friends? Then consider playing a more active role with the Crossroads Group of the Sierra Club.

We invite you to attend one of our monthly meetings where we can get to know each other and you can learn about our organization and what we do. There are many ways you can contribute to Crossroads and our community and we are certain we can accommodate your interests.

To learn more about the Crossroads Group and how you can contribute, call Sue Kelly ([810-599-8803](tel:810-599-8803)) or Lee Burton ([810-231-9045](tel:810-231-9045))

Crossroads Summer Outings, Part One

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. Outings are subject to conditions. Always check with trip leader for cancellations or changes.

Volunteer Opportunity, North Country Trail

Chief Baw Bees Chapter, North County Trail Association
Hillsdale County
Second Saturday of every month, 9:30 AM

Join other Sierra Club members (and non members) doing rewarding trail work on the North Country Trail, in and around the Lost Nation State Game area in Hillsdale County. Contact Kevin Bell at kfb@provide.net or call for information at 734-913-4764

Kensington Spring Bird Count

Kensington Metropark
Saturday May 11, 7 AM
Skill Level: easy, no experience necessary

Join the Crossroads Group of the Sierra Club for the Kensington Spring Bird Count on Saturday May 11, 7 AM. The Spring Bird Count is divided into several groups, led by experienced birders. (People decide which group to join during the 7:00 am meeting, at the Nature Center Building). Dan Minock will be leading a group that will explore the woods and fields around the Farm Center. But any of the groups would be okay for members of Crossroads to join: no particular expertise is required. It is assumed that the count leaders will help the members of their group, whatever their level of birding knowledge. For information contact Dan Minock <minockd@gmail.com> or John Wilson at 734-954-0429 (734-355-3822 cell day of) or john.wilson@michigan.sierraclub.org

Spring Bird Outing Deerfield Hills

Deerfield Hills
Saturday May 18, 8 AM
Skill Level: easy, no experience necessary

Join the Crossroads Group of the Sierra Club for a bird outing at Deerfield Hills Saturday May 18, 8AM. Thomas Schneider will lead us on the lake trails. We can expect to see a variety of wetland species and warblers, scarlet tanagers, other woodland species, some owls possible, even in morning hours. Should be lots of ducks then too and nesting species as well. Possible picnic or lunch nearby after outing. Deerfield Hills Nature Area is at junction of Cohoctah and Green rds in Livingston county. For more information contact Thomas Schneider <wildblueexplorations@GMAIL.COM> or John Wilson at 734-954-0429 (734-355-3822 cell day of) or john.wilson@michigan.sierraclub.org

Huron Meadows Metropark to Zukey Lake Paddle Trip

Huron Meadows Metropark
Saturday June 1, 10 AM
Skill level: Intermediate to expert, Difficulty: Easy to Moderate

Join the Crossroads Group of the Sierra Club for the annual Zukey lake paddle trip. Saturday June 1, Meet at 10 AM at the boat launch parking lot, Huron Meadows Metropark. This is a scenic trip down the Huron river past Ore lake, through Strawberry lake, to Zukey lake. Lunch at Zukey lake tavern. Some paddling experience required. For more information contact Bob Jack <bobjackpmt@gmail.com>; 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.

Crossroads Summer Outings, Part Two

Waterloo Recreation Area Bog Hike and Orchid Outing

Gerald E. Eddy Discovery Center

Saturday June 15, 9 AM

Difficulty: Easy

Join the Crossroads Group of the Sierra Club, Saturday June 15, 9 AM, on a visit to Waterloo State Recreation Area's bog. Open to members and nonmembers. Bring your camera, last year we found Showy Lady's Slippers growing on the side of the road! The floating bog, is located just a short, 1.5 mile hike, from the Discovery Center, at the end of The Bog Trail. After hiking through forest, then wetland, you pass along a boardwalk into the bog, one of a number of unusual wetland formations in the area, and features carnivorous plants, and orchids. After the bog hike, visit the Discovery Center to learn about the fascinating glacial formation of the area. For more information contact Thomas Schneider <wildblueexplorations@GMAIL.COM>; or John Wilson at 734-954-0429 (734-355-3822 cell day of) or john.wilson@michigan.sierraclub.org

Waterloo Recreation Area website: <http://www.michigandnr.com/parksandtrails/details.aspx?id=506&type=SPRK>

Lakeland Trails Linear State Park Bike Ride

Lakeland Trails Parking Lot, Hamburg Township

Sunday, July 21, 1PM

Skill level: novices, Difficulty: Easy. Family Friendly.

Dust off your bike and join the Crossroads Group of the Sierra Club for a family friendly bike ride on the Lakelands Trail paved bike path. Sunday, July 22, 1 PM. Open to members and nonmembers. Meet at the Lakeland Trails parking lot across from Cap'n frosty ice cream on M36 in Pinckney. The paved trail is 8 miles and will begin, and end, at Cap'n Frosty for ice cream after the ride. Contact John Wilson at 734-954-0429 (734-355-3822 cell day of) or john.wilson@michigan.sierraclub.org.

Lakeland Trails website: http://www.hamburg.mi.us/lakelands_trail_state_park

Brighton Recreation Area Summer Hike

Brighton Recreation, Penosha Trail

Sunday, August 11, 1PM

Skill Level: beginner Difficulty: Moderate

Join the Crossroads Group of the Sierra Club for an afternoon summer hike on the Penosha Trail. Sunday August 11, 1PM. The trail is 5 miles, approximately 2-2 ½ hours, through woods and meadows (there is also a 2 mile option). 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) or john.wilson@michigan.sierraclub.org

Outings Initiative and Volunteer Opportunity

Saturday, August 17, 2-4 PM

Outings Committee

No experience required

The outings committee wants to add new leaders to sustain a wider variety of outdoor activities. To learn more about this opportunity, please join the Outings Committee Sat. March 30, 2-4 PM in Pinckney. Learn more about committee functioning, training requirements, leader expectations, and Q & A. We will be planning outing for the spring and summer newsletter and would like to hear from YOU. Call or email for directions. John Wilson at 734-954-0429 or john.wilson@michigan.sierraclub.org

Crossroads Sierra Club Presents

Our Climate Reality and Crisis

A Program by Buthayna Taha

Would you like to learn more about the truth behind the climate crisis? Buthayna Taha is a climate leader in the Climate Reality Project founded by former Vice President Al Gore. She is also an architectural engineer who has studied at the University of Baghdad and Wayne State University. Her presentation will discuss the climate crisis and its science, impacts, and solutions.



Wednesday, May 15 at 7:00 PM
Brighton District Library
Free Admission

For more information on the Crossroads Sierra Club go to:
Michigan.SierraClub.org/Crossroads

Crossroads Sierra Club Presents

**Wild Utah: America's
Red Rock Wilderness
A Program by
Clayton Daughenbaugh**



America's red rock canyonlands wilderness, located in southern Utah, is the largest network of undesignated wilderness lands remaining in the lower 48 states. These lands currently face threats from off-road vehicle activity and oil and gas exploitation. Presenter Clayton Daughenbaugh, conservation organizer with the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance and Chairperson of the Sierra Club's National Wildlands and Wilderness Committee, will provide us with a video journey through red rock splendor, narrated by Robert Redford.

Wednesday, September 18th at 7:00 PM
Brighton District Library
Free Admission

For more information on the Crossroads Sierra Club go to:
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Sierra Club—Crossroads Group
P.O. Box 306
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One Minute Ago: Food for Thought

“Many scientists say the Earth is 4.6 billion years old. For the sake of context, let that represent the life of a 46-year-old woman. She met humans (*homo erectus*) six to seven days ago, the Agricultural Revolution was just 52 minutes ago, and the Industrial Revolution started one minute ago.”

Brian Stoffel and “the Motley Fool” with permission.