

MINNESOTA

North Star Chapter

The leading grassroots voice to preserve and protect Minnesota's environment.



JOURNAL

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Threat of Tar Sands in Minnesota

Rachel Yucuis

An energy and environmental crisis potentially larger than Keystone XL is brewing in Minnesota. The Canadian company Enbridge Energy Inc. is advancing a plan to expand a network of pipelines in the state. Of particular concern to residents is the Alberta Clipper pipeline that runs across the state from northwest Minnesota to Superior, Wisconsin. This line currently transports 450,000 barrels per day (bpd) of tar sands oil, and the expansion would bring the line up to its capacity of 800,000 bpd. In addition, Enbridge plans to replace portions of its leaky 46 year-old Line 3 pipeline. Line 3 starts in Edmonton, Alberta, runs down through

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North Star Chapter leaders organized Hands Across the Land with MN350 to urge the rejection of tar sands pipelines. Photo credit: Alex Vagac



What's Next on the Horizon for Clean Energy in Minnesota?

Julie Drennen

The Sierra Club's Beyond Coal to Clean Energy team is currently working hard to move Minnesota away from burning dirty coal and towards clean energy, at both the state and federal level.

Burning coal costs us more than the price we pay on our electricity bills. Coal pollution takes a major toll on human and environmental health—in fact, this toll costs us about 2.1 billion dollars in impacts. Coal is the number one source of mercury pollution, a leading trigger of asthma attacks, and its pollution disproportionately affects children's health. Communities of color, especially, have been paying for our fossil fuel economy with their

health: seventy-eight percent of African-Americans live within 30 miles of a coal plant, as opposed to fifty-six percent of white Americans.

This year we asked Minnesota's Public Utilities Commissions to update the pollution costs utilities are required to consider when making long-term energy decisions. In May, we presented "bills" to Xcel Energy and Minnesota Power for the cost of their pollution from burning coal to Minnesotans. Later this year, the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission will have hearings and accept public comment on this issue, and we will be ready to tell them exactly

"Clean Energy" continues on page 5

Director's note

Margaret Levin, North Star Chapter Director



It's been an eventful year so far! This January, thousands of concerned citizens attended hearings and submitted comments about the environmental impacts of the proposed PolyMet sulfide mine. The response demonstrated that Minnesotans understand what's at

stake. The fate of PolyMet will determine whether the Boundary Waters and Lake Superior can be protected from long term, toxic water pollution.

Sierra Club Executive Director Michael Brune visited in March to speak at the Westminster Town Hall Forum to a live audience of 600 and a radio audience of more than 50,000 about the importance of protecting our wilderness and wild places, and the promise of expanding clean, renewable energy.

On Earth Day, we rallied at the Capitol to recognize the leadership of state officials who have worked with us to advance an ambitious clean energy and jobs agenda. Because of your support this session, we expanded renewable energy and efficiency programs,

advanced support for transit funding, defended Minnesota's wetlands protections and improved safety measures to prevent oil spills.

In early June we applauded the Environmental Protection Agency's historic announcement of first-ever national protections from dangerous carbon pollution from existing power plants. Strong standards will clean up our air, improve our health, strengthen our economy, and help to curb the worst effects of climate disruption.

We're looking forward to an exciting summer and fall. Check the updated schedule of actions, events and outings at our web site, northstar.sierraclub.org, and please join us for our 19th annual Bike Tour on September 20. Thanks for all that you do. It's a privilege to work on your behalf.

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St. Croix Interstate Valley Group – Notice of Chapter Intent to Dissolve

The Sierra Club's St. Croix Interstate Valley Group encompasses members from the Minnesota and Wisconsin side of the St. Croix Valley, including Chisago, Pine and eastern Washington counties, plus the city of Hastings in Minnesota and Burnett, Pierce, Polk and St. Croix counties in Wisconsin.

In early fall 2013, the John Muir Chapter voted to dissolve the Wisconsin side of the St. Croix Group due to a reorganization of group boundaries in Wisconsin. As a result, the group's status is ambiguous. Therefore, the North Star Chapter will vote on a proposal to officially dissolve the group at its meeting on Tuesday, August 19 at 7 p.m. at the Sierra Club office, 2327 E. Franklin Avenue, Minneapolis. There will be an opportunity to comment at the meeting. If this action is approved, the North Star Chapter will continue to support activities of its Minnesota members in the St. Croix Valley according to their interests, and will explore options for a new organizing structure.

Correction: In our article "Dirty Coal or Clean Energy Future?" (pages 1 & 3, Fall 2013 / Winter 2014 issue) we stated that the Sherco coal plant "devours about 60 billion pounds of coal every day." This was a typographical error, the correct amount is 60 million pounds.



The North Star Journal

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The Sierra Club North Star Chapter, a 501(c)4 non-profit organization, is the leading grassroots voice working to preserve and protect Minnesota's environment. Since 1968 we have involved volunteer leaders to act through environmental advocacy, community organizing and outdoor exploration. We are committed to becoming a diverse and inclusive organization working to protect Minnesota's environment and the health of our communities.

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The North Star Journal welcomes submissions and photographs on environmental and related issues. Articles of less than a thousand words will be given preference. E-mail submissions only. We reserve the right to edit all copy for clarity and concision. Photos can be color and should be a jpeg format of 5x7 size at 300 dpi. Please send all submission materials and requests to the editor.

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Sulfide Mining Update:

Lori Andresen and Elanne Palcich

Acid Mine Drainage at Carpenter Snow Creek Mining District Superfund Site, Montana. Photo Credit: EPA



Who will save Minnesota's Arrowhead?

Superior National Forest, Lake County, Minnesota. Photo Credit: Lori Andresen

The First Sulfide Mine – The PolyMet Precedent

Between Lake Superior and the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) in northeast Minnesota, PolyMet is seeking a permit to open-pit mine and process copper-nickel sulfide ore at the headwaters of the Great Lakes. This is a toxic type of mining never before permitted in our state. When sulfide-bearing rock is brought to the surface and crushed, the sulfides are exposed to air and water. This results in a chemical reaction that produces sulfuric acid (H₂SO₄). The acid and toxic heavy metals produced from this type of mining can pollute rivers and groundwater for hundreds of years.

A decision on PolyMet will open a floodgate for more sulfide mining in a large area across northeastern Minnesota, including the Superior National Forest and surrounding the BWCAW.

In early 2014, Sierra Club North Star Chapter volunteers combined efforts in order to submit substantive comments on the PolyMet Supplementary Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) and concluded the following: (1) that the 90 day comment period was not adequate for the complexity and scope of material to be analyzed; and (2) that the SDEIS is inadequate in many areas, including water flow modeling, mercury impacts, analysis of wetland loss, analysis of impacts upon wildlife and wildlife corridors, cumulative impacts to the region from all mining, potential for release of asbestos-like fibers from crushed rock and reliability of long-term water treatment plans. The Sierra Club also submitted technical comments with a coalition of other organizations.

During the comment period, the North Star Chapter recruited 400 citizens to attend public hearings and generated more than 13,000 individual comments raising concerns about the project—approximately one quarter of the total received by the permitting agencies.

Perpetual Pollution

The SDEIS acknowledged that water will need to be treated at the mine site for at least 200 years and the plant site for at least 500 years.

The PolyMet SDEIS generated more than 50,000 comments, more than ever received on any single project, demonstrating the huge public concern with the controversial project. The Department of Natural Resources indicated it will take many months to address major issues before releasing an additional supplemental or final EIS. Sierra Club members should continue contacting their legislators to express their opposition to copper-nickel sulfide mining in the headwaters of the Lake Superior and Rainy River watersheds. Our clean fresh water, our most valuable resource, is at stake.

Sulfide Mining Moratorium

The Sierra Club North Star Chapter supports adopting "prove-it-first" legislation like in Wisconsin. "Prove-it-first" legislation would prohibit the establishment of sulfide mines until they have been proven safe through long-term operation. It also would close similar mines elsewhere and prohibit mines requiring long-term treatment of surface runoff or groundwater after the mine's closure. There is no way to predict closure/clean-up costs for mines requiring "perpetual treatment". PolyMet has never operated a mine and has no financial reserves. The burden becomes the taxpayers!

PolyMet's Inescapable Link to Other Sulfide Mining Projects

PolyMet is the only copper-nickel mining company with a mill and tailings basin and will utilize only one-third of the processing capacity of its Hoyt Lakes plant for its NorthMet project located upstream of Duluth. PolyMet is projected to process ore for other sulfide projects with the other two-thirds of its capacity. The massive Twin Metals project near the BWCAW plans to put mine waste in the Lake Superior watershed under the pretense of protecting the Boundary Waters. It is immoral to put toxic mine waste from the projects near the Boundary Waters into the Lake Superior basin under the misguided premise it will protect the BWCAW—it will not. If this is allowed, it will compromise and degrade both the Lake Superior and Rainy River (Boundary Waters) watersheds.

Land Exchange

The PolyMet project proposes a land exchange of 6,700 acres of federal land within the Superior National Forest. The U.S. Forest Service is under no obligation to make such an exchange. According to current federal law, it is illegal to strip mine land purchased under the Weeks Act for watershed protection. A land exchange circumvents this law and is being prepared as part of the SDEIS, this is not in the public interest and must be denied.

Unacceptable Risks

PolyMet's SDEIS doesn't indicate that metallic sulfide mining can be done in the water rich environment of northern Minnesota without polluting waterways for centuries to come. The environmental review process has not adequately addressed cumulative impacts to water, land, wildlife or air and the degradation of these natural resources for future generations. The proposed mine poses unacceptable risks to our land, wildlife, water and communities.

To get involved, request a speaker or organize a film showing about the sulfide mining threat, contact the North Star Chapter at north.star.chapter@sierraclub.org or 612-659-9124.

Lori Andresen is Chair of the Mining Committee. Elanne Palcich is a volunteer leader with the Mining Committee.





Youth Meeting with Dayton - Youth Environmental Advocates of Minnesota, MPIRG, MN Youth Environmental Network, Will Steger Foundation and the Sierra Club participated in a youth meeting with Governor Dayton on the Clean Energy & Jobs campaign. Photo Credit: Office of the Governor

At the Capitol: Legislative Update

The 2014 session of the Minnesota Legislature was fast and furious! The North Star Chapter's Legislative Committee once again worked very hard to ensure that Minnesota's environment was an important priority for state lawmakers this year.

Some of the highlights from the Chapter's 2014 legislative agenda include:

- Significant new statewide investment in all modes of transportation, including transit, biking and walking. The Chapter joined the "Move MN" campaign along with hundreds of organizations and stakeholders representing a broad range of perspectives. While this legislation did not pass in 2014, important groundwork was laid for a significant push in 2015.
- A suite of policy proposals to remove existing barriers to implementation of clean energy and energy efficiency. Working with our partners in the Clean Energy and Jobs campaign, the Chapter successfully passed an energy omnibus bill that makes modest but important steps toward a cleaner energy future. Some of the specific provisions we supported include new tools for financing

renewable energy and efficiency projects, reducing regulatory barriers to new clean energy development and preventing homeowner's associations from restricting access to solar.

- Vigilant defense of existing environmental laws, particularly those at risk of attack by proponents of sulfide mining. The Chapter successfully helped to defend mining industry attacks on Minnesota's bedrock Wetlands Conservation Act and ensured smooth and full implementation of Minnesota's 2013 Solar Energy Jobs Act.

With the 2014 session now in the books, it's already time to start planning for next year! The 2015 legislative session is a critical year for Minnesota to take significant steps forward with investments in real transportation choices and a renewed commitment to combating climate change through smart, forward-looking energy policies. Stay tuned – we're just getting started!

Clean Energy & Jobs - Earth Day and Beyond

Bruce D. Snyder, MD

On April 22nd, Earth Day, the Clean Energy and Jobs Campaign held a rally in the Minnesota State Capitol Rotunda. The North Star Chapter of the Sierra Club has been a key member of the coalition which boasts over 65 member organizations. The rally gave clean energy supporters an opportunity to recognize Governor Dayton and legislative leaders who have worked with us to press forward an ambitious agenda to move towards a sustainable energy economy. Sierra volunteers, coordinated by intern Julie Drennen, made hundreds of phone calls to ensure a good turnout and the result was impressive with over 500 attendees.

The rally was emceed by Javier Morillo-Alicea, President of SEIU Local 26. We heard remarks from Governor Dayton, Congresswoman Betty McCollum and the Rev. Peg Chamberlin, Executive Director of the Minnesota Council of Churches. Tim Gulden discussed the growth and success of Winona Renewable Energy, his solar contracting company. Sen. John Marty and Rep. Melissa Hortman were recognized for their effective leadership authoring and passing important clean energy legislation last session. Explorer Will Steger made a plea for action on climate. And Priyanka Zylstra (Minneapolis South High student) expressed the concerns of young Minnesotans who will be facing the consequences of climate change in their lifetimes.

This was a very successful demonstration of the support of Minnesotans for clean energy. The Sierra Club North Star Chapter's Clean Air and Renewable Energy (CARE) Committee will be joining the Clean Energy & Jobs campaign in building support for policies that make sure Minnesota gets at least half of its electricity from renewable energy by 2030 and scales up energy programs that work! This will ensure family-supporting jobs, clean air to breathe, clean water to drink and attainment of Minnesota's carbon pollution reduction goals.



North Star Chapter volunteer leader Boise Jones at the Capitol rally on Earth Day.

Bruce Snyder is a volunteer leader with the Clean Air and Renewable Energy Committee.

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what using coal as an energy source costs us.

We are also working to support strong health protections by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This June, the EPA is expected to propose new rules that will limit greenhouse gas pollution from existing power plants across the country. There are currently no limits for greenhouse gas pollution from power plants, so this will be a critical step to protect our climate.

We will also continue to call on our utilities to replace their coal units with clean energy. Xcel Energy's Sherco coal plant is Minnesota's top climate polluter and a huge contributor to soot, smog, mercury and many other pollutants. Xcel must submit its long-term energy plan to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency in January 2015, and we need to make sure that plan includes replacing Sherco Units 1 and 2. Minnesota Power, the utility in northeastern Minnesota, still operates two old, dirty coal plants—Taconite Harbor in Schroeder and Clay Boswell in Cohasset. Sierra Club recently found that Minnesota Power's coal plants violated the clean air act more than 12,500 times over the past five years. As Minnesota Power also moves forward with its long term energy plan, we caution them and all Minnesotans that continuing to sink money into coal plants is a bad investment.

As you can see, there are many decisions being made this year that will impact our energy future for the coming decades! The more Minnesotans are involved in



A group of Xcel Energy customers delivered a "bill" for the health and environmental costs of pollution to Xcel's Headquarters in Minneapolis.



Ann Miller addresses the media to explain why customers delivered a "bill" for the health and environmental costs of pollution to Minnesota Power's headquarters in Duluth. Photo Credit: Julie Drennen

demonstrating support for a transition from coal to clean energy, the better! So how can you help? We always welcome volunteer support on these issues—in many different capacities—but one important way you can help is to sign up to be a Climate Avenger!

Climate Avengers are volunteers who commit to taking two or more actions each month to move our state beyond coal to clean energy. For example, this summer's actions include collecting petitions to hold utilities accountable for the true cost of coal pollution, demonstrating support for the EPA Carbon Rules, and continuing to call on our utilities to replace coal with clean energy. We'll hold events, write letters to the editor, gather signatures, visit clean energy sites, and more. But we need YOU to make this a success!

Sign up to help Minnesota move to a clean energy future! To become a Climate Avenger or to express general interest in volunteering, contact Jessica Tritsch by emailing jessica.tritsch@sierraclub.org.

Julie Drennen is a Clean Energy Intern with the Sierra Club North Star Chapter.

No More Band-Aid Solutions for Transportation



Photo Credit Metro Transit

Sometimes a band-aid is not enough. This is the case with maintaining Minnesota's expansive transportation system. Costs are increasing faster than available funding and cannot sufficiently meet the needs of local communities like yours. Meanwhile, our outdated infrastructure has not kept pace with the changing needs of our growing population.

We appreciate the Minnesota Legislature's attempt last session to provide additional funding for filling in potholes and making minor transit improvements, but this was only a small financial patch. Our state's aging roads, crumbling bridges, and inadequately connected transit and bike/pedestrian ways require sustainable, long-term funding, not band-aid solutions.



We are falling behind on the critical investments that make our communities competitive for jobs and talent. If we do not address the underlying needs with permanent repairs and more convenient and efficient transportation options, we will lose out to competing regions like Portland and Denver. We will also breathe more air pollution and emit more greenhouse gas emissions while we sit in traffic.

If you agree that our state needs more than a band-aid solution to fix our transportation system, take action now. Check out MoveMN.org and stop by a Land Use and Transportation Committee meeting, first Monday of the month, 6:00 p.m. at the Sierra Club office: 2327 E. Franklin Avenue, Minneapolis.

Environmental Justice Leaders Achieve Steps Forward for Minnesota

So far in 2014, two news stories have provided new data for what environmental justice advocates have known for a long time: where you live really does affect your health. In January, the Minnesota Department of Health released a report on health disparities, which found race-based disparities in almost every major disease tracked. The report included maps of Minneapolis showing a correlation of higher infant mortality rates between 2001 and 2010 and financial under-investments in communities of color and low income communities between 1930 and 1970, known as "redlining".

In April, the University of Minnesota released a study highlighting how people of color are disproportionately harmed by air pollution, finding that 7,000 deaths from heart disease each year could be prevented if people of color were exposed to the same air quality as their white counterparts. Increased awareness of disparities is a good thing, but action to remedy them is needed, which is what our environmental justice work aims to do.

In 2012, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) denied an environmental justice request and allowed an auto shredder in North Minneapolis to increase its pollution, which left community members feeling pretty defeated and discouraged. The MPCA Citizens' Board noted what the community had long known: that there was no real structure in place to deal with the cumulative and disproportionate impacts that low income communities and communities of color face across the state, with the exception of an environmental justice pilot project in South Minneapolis that was established by the State Legislature. Rather than give up, community members decided to start a campaign to build an environmental justice infrastructure at the MPCA.

Environmental justice advocates met with Commissioner Stine and other MPCA officials at the Minneapolis Urban League to discuss their letter, which highlighted concerns and proposed solutions. Specifically, community and environmental justice organizations asked for: (1) ongoing dialogue with quarterly meetings in environmental justice communities, stakeholder input in advance

of formal decision making processes, and training opportunities for staff; (2) an environmental justice action plan with benchmarks to measure progress; (3) recruitment and hiring of interns from disproportionately impacted communities; (4) environmental justice programs in schools; (5) the advertisement of open citizen seats on decision-making boards; and (6) the counseling and advocating for people of color to serve on those boards.

In the past year and a half, the MPCA has taken steps to adopt all of the requests in the environmental justice letter, giving people hope that things will get better. The MPCA hopes to finalize the environmental justice action plan and budget by September and to start implementing it by the end of 2014, and has made an effort to receive input from community stakeholders at quarterly meetings. Additionally, the MPCA is working with community partners to encourage students of color to apply and is in the process of interviewing them for internship positions.

We also commend the MPCA for creating learning opportunities for its staff to better understand environmental justice and racism. As part of this effort, Sierra Club's environmental justice organizer Karen Monahan provided a training to MPCA staff on community organizing and environmental justice. The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Regional office also did an environmental justice training for MPCA managers. It was pleasantly surprising to see MPCA's environmental justice coordinator at the White Privilege conference.

We have a long way to go when it comes to addressing systemic environmental injustices related to pollution, access to parks and green space, healthy foods, and transit in the state of Minnesota. We sincerely believe that because of the tenacious efforts of community and environmental justice leaders, Minnesota is on the right track. We have the ability to correct course in this country. We have done it before and we believe we are beginning to head in that direction now when it comes to environmental justice in the state of Minnesota.

Climate Justice Now, a public forum on May 15, addressed the impact of climate disruption on communities of color and low-income communities.



Top left: Nikki Silvestri and Julian Mocine-McQueen of Green for All with Karen Monahan, Sierra Club. Right and bottom left: Panels included, from right, Representative Keith Ellison; Jacqui Patterson, NAACP; Nikki Silvestri, Green for All; Marty Cobenais, formerly Indigenous Environmental Network and North Star Chapter ExCom member, and Sam Grant, Movement Center for Deep Democracy and North Star Chapter ExCom member. Photo Credit: Les Barry

"Threat of Tar Sands" continuation from page 1...

Clearbrook, Minnesota, and on to Superior. This line has purportedly been "weeping" oil for years, and it is unclear if the partial replacement will fix the problem. If renovated, Line 3 would move from carrying 390,000 bpd to 760,000 bpd. If both of these projects go to completion, then they will carry nearly double the capacity of the proposed Keystone XL pipeline through the state. Along with partner MN350, the Sierra Club is working to challenge the Alberta Clipper expansion before the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (PUC), which must make a decision on the environmental impact statement for the proposed expansion.

Another Enbridge pipeline project, the Sandpiper pipeline, is proposed to transport North Dakota crude from the Bakken oil fields to Superior. The Sierra Club is monitoring this proposal and concerns including impacts on groundwater, lakes, wetlands, rivers and tribal lands.

The risk from these expansion projects is enormous. If completed, the increase in capacity will encourage the growth of tar sands extraction in Canada, increase the health and environmental risks for those living along the pipeline, and exacerbate the harm done to those who live near refineries, all of which have disproportionate impacts on Indigenous communities. Upstream, tar sands extraction requires the



Minnesotans joined hands over the Mississippi River to symbolize the need to protect waters from tar sands pollution, in solidarity with more than 100 actions nationwide. Photo credit: Stephanie Spitzer

clear-cutting and strip-mining of Alberta's boreal forest and the use of millions of gallons of fresh water. The process leaves behind gigantic pools of toxic waste, which threaten the health of the communities in the surrounding area. Along the pipeline, a spill or leakage would contaminate drinking water and

devastate important natural areas. A 2010 rupture of one of Enbridge's tar sands lines resulted in the spillage of greater than one million gallons of oil into the Kalamazoo River in Michigan. Tar sands contain heavy metals, acute toxins, and carcinogens including mercury, arsenic, benzene, and cyanide. The long-term effects of exposure to spilled tar sands oil is yet to be determined. However, it is certain that the more tar sands that flow through Minnesota, the greater the risk of permanent damage to our communities and the natural resources we depend on.

In response to this crisis, the North Star Chapter is forming a Beyond Oil and Tar Sands Committee. The official kick-off meeting occurred on April 28th at the North Star headquarters. The state of the crisis was discussed, along with ways to take action. One of our first actions was to help organize a Hands Across the Land event to participate in a national protest of tar sands pipelines and other dirty fuels. If you are interested in participating in future events, or attending our monthly meeting please contact Brian Anderson at brian.anderson@northstar.sierraclub.org or Lois Norrgard at lois.norrgard@northstar.sierraclub.org.

Rachel Yucuis is a volunteer leader with the Beyond Oil and Tar Sands Committee.



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If you don't have an MEF giving option in your workplace, please contact Margaret Levin at 612-659-9124 or margaret.levin@sierraclub.org for more information.

Upcoming Outings – Get Outdoors!

We are in the process of finalizing our schedule and more outings will be posted soon! Please check out the website at northstar.sierraclub.org/outings or join our MN Sierra Club Outings "meetup" at www.meetup.com.

Contact the outing leader by Friday via email (preferred) or phone if you would like to attend. You will be instructed as to what you need to bring, meeting location and time. As much as possible, the Sierra Club encourages carpooling, and we generally limit our group size to 12 people.

Join us to get out and explore, enjoy and protect the planet!

Saturday, June 21st

Hike, 5-10 miles

Lebanon Hills Regional Park

Lebanon Hills Regional Park is the largest park in the Dakota County park system. Containing almost 2,000 acres, the park offers miles of trails and many lakes for year-round outdoor sports, recreation and environmental education.

Leader: Margaret Elkins, margaret.elkins@gmail.com

Sunday, June 29th

Hike, 4+ miles

Jay Cooke State Park

The rugged land formations of Jay Cooke State Park enhance the beauty of the hardwood forests. The water-eroded gorge, steep valleys, and massive rock formations are seen throughout the park. Check out the re-opened iconic swinging bridge.

Leader: Greg Allison, greg_allison@ymail.com

Saturday, July 12th

Bike, 30+ miles

Dakota Rail Trail

This 13-mile paved trail offers a spectacular view of Lake Minnetonka and follows the route of the former Dakota Rail Corridor through St. Bonifacius, Minnetrista, Mound, Spring Park, Minnetonka Beach, Orono and Wayzata. In Carver County, an additional 12.5 miles of paved trail extends west of St. Bonifacius to Mayer.

Leader: Greg Allison, greg_allison@ymail.com



Photo Credit: Jill Boogren

Saturday, July 26th

Bike, 20+ miles

Grand Rounds (southern sections)

We will connect the southern sections of the Grand Rounds using the Midtown Greenway. This route includes the scenic Chain of Lakes, Minnehaha Parkway, and Mississippi River sections of the Grand Rounds.

Leader: Greg Allison, greg_allison@ymail.com

Sunday, August 10th

Hike, 6+ miles

Wild River State Park

Wild River State Park is located along 18 miles of the beautiful St. Croix River and includes thirty-five miles of hiking trails. The trails go through diverse habitats that may bring you within close range of wildlife.

Leader: Greg Allison, greg_allison@ymail.com

Rochester Clean Energy Campaign Ramping Up

Thanks to several successful local meetings and an outpouring of interest from members, the Sierra Club North Star Chapter is increasing our activities in the Rochester area this year! With a focus on key issues like renewable energy, transitioning away from fossil fuels and promoting energy-efficient buildings, Rochester-area members will be able to get active at the municipal level.

New staff organizer Andrea Kiepe will support volunteer leaders in Rochester and provide a connection with the state Chapter and its campaigns. "I'm really pleased to be working on clean energy issues again, especially with the Sierra Club," says Andrea. "Rochester has so much potential to be a regional or even national leader on clean, renewable energy and green, efficient buildings. This is a great opportunity for the city and the Club to show how much we have to gain from making better energy choices."

Andrea spent her early career with Clean Water Action, moving a variety of environmental issues -- including renewable energy, sustainable farming, water quality protections, chemical policy reform and stewarding the Great Lakes -- and working on campaigns including the successful effort to prevent the construction of a tire burning incinerator in Preston, Minnesota. Most recently she worked with

Transportation for America advocating for a robust, multi-modal transportation network in the federal transportation bill. Andrea grew up on a small family farm in southeast Missouri and graduated from Saint Olaf College in Northfield.

The Rochester community has a history of strong support for the Sierra Club's clean energy work, rallying to ensure the closure of the Silver Lake coal burning power plant and working for nearly a decade to prevent the expansion of the Dakota, Minnesota, and Eastern rail line, which would have helped speed export of coal from the Powder River Basin coal mining region to points east. Sierra Club members recently highlighted their interest in renewable energy and green buildings at a constituent meeting in Rochester with State Representative Kim Norton and State Senator David Senjem in March 2014.

"I was really impressed with how well informed and engaged our local members were on these issues," said Sierra Club Political Director Justin Fay. "They really asked fantastic questions of their legislators and spoke eloquently on complex issues. I think it shows how passionate our Rochester members are and how ready they are for an opportunity to make change at the state and local levels."

An Earth Day Trip

Mathews Hollinshead, Conservation Chair



Two days before Earth Day last month my wife and I boarded Amtrak for a 10-day vacation to four destinations – Chicago, Washington D.C., New York, and southeastern Massachusetts.

In southern Wisconsin, our train passed close by a brand new rail yard and vast processing plant surrounded by an enormous frac sand strip mine in what had been, less than two years ago, a pastoral valley east of LaCrosse. Elsewhere we passed 110 tank cars of explosive Bakken crude oil on its way to eastern refineries. So busy with oil and sand are these rails now that Amtrak's on-time performance has dropped dramatically (Please continue to use Amtrak – we need it. I just think of it as being on Amtrak Time). How striking that rail freight, the most energy-efficient form of ground freight shipment, is also the delivery system for vast amounts of coal and now oil, the two worst polluters on earth.

On Earth Day itself, we stood overlooking East Lakeshore Park, a brand new gem-like oasis tucked among 40-70-story buildings in sight of Lake Michigan. I joked, "This must be our lake cabin."

In DC we went to the National Botanical Garden, a little-known oasis under glass at the foot of Capitol Hill. The contrast between this botanical refuge and the vast, cold stone capitol building looming so large nearby was stark. We also saw a standing

exhibit of the city's history at its former Carnegie Library, now home to the Washington D.C. Historical Society. The irony of Washington's European design, representing to diplomats from around the world a country so utterly different from that very aesthetic, was inescapable.

In New York we walked the High Line, a truly unique linear pedestrian park recently completed on the lower west side of Manhattan using an old elevated freight rail line. This was the reason for our trip. The High Line was, on a blustery but sunny Friday in America's most densely populated city, a transcendent experience. Its designers have recently been hired to remake Nicollet Mall in Minneapolis. If only they could, while here, also remake our own Southwest Light Rail right-of-way, currently a political standoff between cyclists, freight rail, and transit.

In New Bedford, I marveled at the diminutive temple-like federal Customs House, a gem of Greek Revival style from the early 1800s, whose customs revenues from America's worldwide whale harvest were, at whaling's peak, out of all proportion to the miniature size of this building so crucial to federal solvency. A world map we got for making a modest donation to the whaling museum featured thousands of red and blue dots all over the oceans representing the vast scale of the annual whale kill.

In that time, before petroleum was discovered, this was America's Big Oil capital. It was also a terminus of the Underground Railroad, abolitionist center and, through whaling voyages, a chance at isolated protection and skilled pay for African and Native Americans.

It has become difficult to comprehend the yawning disconnect between human intelligence and human behavior. New York's most renowned cultural institutions are heavily funded by a resident, David Koch, who at the same time funds the world's most aggressive campaign to stop any effort to limit sea level rise, a mortal threat to much of Manhattan's most valuable real estate and infrastructure. In Minnesota and Wisconsin, we face the very end of our land and water, due to Americans' apparent political impotence against extreme and rapacious new mines.

We, in the Sierra Club, are guardians of a gossamer film stretched taut between the unforgiving void and dust of the universe and the equally inorganic rock and lava of the planet itself. Unlike the sites just visited on our Amtrak trip, Earth's ecosphere has no legal status as a park or museum, no Bill of Rights against human greed. It should – for our own sake.

Don't Like Biking in Traffic? Protected Bikeways are For You!

Erin Daly



A better bike lane: Protected bikeways separate cars and bicycles. Photo credit: Ethan Fawley

Through my work as a student researcher I have encountered many barriers to why people do not feel safe riding a bicycle. In particular, city biking can be a harrowing experience – car doors open in your path, distracted drivers pass too close – just one narrow escape can be enough to make a person swear off riding on city streets forever.

But there is good news for the majority of us who don't feel we fit the stereotype of a "cyclist" in spandex on fancy bikes: a movement for building networks of protected bikeways. Networks of trails, greenways, and protected bike lanes offer a low-stress riding environment and help open up bicycling opportunities for everyone - including children, recreational riders, aspiring bike commuters, and grandparents. Protected bikeways encourage more people to use their bicycles for running errands, commuting, or simply visiting their neighbors.

Protected lanes include on-street barriers which separate and shield cyclists from car traffic, making all commuters feel safe as they use our roadways. They are also necessary for a well-connected, citywide bike network. They attract people to the city, enhance businesses, and provide opportunities for improved equity and public health. Especially important to the Sierra Club are the reduced pollution, added green space, and enhanced quality of life benefits that come from facilitating easier bicycle transportation.

The Sierra Club is working with the Minneapolis Bicycle Coalition as part of the Bikeways for Everyone Coalition, uniting community partners, businesses and individuals to bring these benefits to the forefront of planning discussions. Our goal, which is also part of the Minneapolis Climate Action Plan, is to secure 30 miles of protected bike lanes in the city by 2020. We hope to replicate this initiative in other municipalities across the state.



The Coalition is hosting a number of events to get more local communities involved in the campaign for better bicycle facilities. Keep an eye out at bikewaysforeveryone.org and openstreetsmpls.org to see how you can join in promoting safer bicycle access across Minneapolis.

Would you like to bike more? Or do you already ride your bike on a regular basis? No matter where you live, if your answer is yes to either of these questions, then the North Star Chapter's Land Use and Transportation Committee is a perfect fit for you! To learn more, contact Joshua at 612-259-2447 or joshua.houdek@sierraclub.org.

Erin Daly is a Green Transportation Intern at the Sierra Club North Star Chapter.



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For the schedule of committee meetings and other volunteer opportunities, please check the North Star Chapter calendar at northstar.sierraclub.org or call the office at 612-629-9124.

Chapter Executive Committee - Call for Nominations

The Executive Committee (ExCom) is the governing committee of the Sierra Club North Star Chapter. The ExCom has overall responsibility for strategic planning and budgeting. It also establishes and oversees the subcommittees that plan and implement the conservation campaigns, electoral efforts, communications, and outdoor activities of the Sierra Club in Minnesota; and hires and oversees the State Director.

Nominations Accepted for Terms Beginning 2015

The ExCom is made up of fifteen at-large elected Sierra Club members in Minnesota. Any current member is eligible to run. Members are elected for a rotating three-year term, and those elected at the end of this year will begin their terms in January 2015. The Nominations Committee invites you to submit names for consideration for ExCom election. Members who are not nominated by the Nominations Committee can petition for candidacy with the signature of 25 members submitted by the petition deadline.

Election timeline:

August 1, 2014 – Deadline to submit names to Nominating Committee for consideration

August 19, 2014 – Nominating Committee reports nominees to Executive Committee

September 8, 2014 – Deadline to submit petitions to Secretary

October 13, 2014 – Week of ballot mailing

January 5, 2015 – Closing date of election

If you are interested in running for the ExCom or for more information, please contact Chapter Chair C. Scott Cooper at c.scott.cooper@northstar.sierraclub.org or the office at 612-659-9124.

List of Current ExCom Members

See bios online at: northstar.sierraclub.org/about/executive_committee

Name	Residence	End of term
Louis Alemayehu	Minneapolis	2015
Jason Bender	Minneapolis	2015
Marty Cobenais	Bemidji	2015
C. Scott Cooper	St. Paul	2014
Luther Dale	Shoreview	2016
John Doberstein	Duluth	2014
Katie Eukel	Minneapolis	2015
Mat Hollinshead	St. Paul	2016
John Hottinger	St. Paul	2015
Joyce Icardo	White Bear Lake	2014
Sam Grant	St. Paul	2014
Javier Morillo-Alicea	Minneapolis	2016
Christy Newell	Minneapolis	2014
Lois Norrgard	Bloomington	2016
Tom Thompson	Duluth	2016



MINNESOTA

North Star Chapter

The leading grassroots voice to preserve and protect Minnesota's environment.



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