



IROQUOIS

MESSENGER

Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

WHY LITTER?

by Natasha Cooper

Each of the past two springs, the Iroquois Group has held a program about litter. Why this topic? Why would the Sierra Club group be interested in litter? The reasons are many.

Reducing litter is really about increasing recycling, and reducing waste. The Sierra Club is a strong supporter of waste reduction initiatives, such as returning e-waste to producers and providers, reducing the need for plastic beverage bottles, and supporting the BBBB (Bigger Better Bottle Bill). The Sierra Club web site is full of ideas for waste reduction and living more simply, <http://sierraclub.typepad.com/greenlife/ask-mr-green/>. Reducing the number of items that could become litter is a big step.

Reducing litter and making our sidewalks, roadsides and natural areas litterless also makes our pathways more inviting for walking and exploring. “Explore, enjoy and protect the planet” is one of the Sierra Club’s phrases, and it fits so well with litter reduction. We can explore our urban parks and sidewalks, as well as our rural natural areas—and protect them by reducing the amount of broken glass, and the number of food wrappers and various items one finds when one cleans up. That includes bags stuck in trees—which are a challenge to remove. The Sierra Club is greatly interested in water protection—from oceans to lakes,



streams, and aquifers, as demonstrated by recent local discussions about Onondaga Lake, and about hydrofracking. Keeping items out of the creeks and streams is a worthy endeavor.

The Group’s recent litter discussions have called attention to several city and county initiatives, including the recommendations of the recent Onondaga Citizens’ League Report: *Community Image: Valuing Our Public Spaces*, 2011 Report Number 31 available at: http://onondagacitizensleague.org/ocl_studies/2010-11/pdfs/Comm_Image_Study2010-11.pdf This report asks “How do we get from having the streets cleaned of litter, to having streets that people don’t want to litter?” (p. 1), and notes the importance of recognizing community efforts, which it supports in 2012 through Cityscape Awards (p. 19).

Which brings me back to the title of this article—why litter? I raise the question in terms of why this Sierra Club Group is interested—but the real question is, why is there litter? The reasons and solutions seem to be complex, and include the thought that litter attracts litter and that there are some areas, such as fast moving highways and overpasses, which are really difficult to get to in order to remove litter. Nonetheless, litter reduction is something we can work on that makes a difference locally—so please consider adopting a roadway or public area, plucking a bag out of a tree, or thinking of ways to encourage waste reduction to begin with. And in addition to exploring and protecting, don’t forget to enjoy! ■

The Iroquois Group launched the Sierra Club Solar Homes program on May 23, 2012. For a link to the program go to the Sierra Club Solar Homes site:

<http://content.sierraclub.org/solar/>

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Have a great solar summer!

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Executive Committee meetings are held on the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at the Jamesville train station. Sierra Iroquois members only, for business and strategy sessions.

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FROM THE CONSERVATION CHAIR

by Linda A. DeStefano

Anti-hydrofracking Campaigns Continue

The groundswell of opposition to hydrofracking for natural gas is unabated. There isn't space to report on the many speakers, rallies, visits to local and state government officials, etc. Just one example is a rally held May 30 in front of the office of Senator John DeFrancisco urging him to use his powerful position as Finance Committee Chair to support a bill to require and fund a fracking health risk assessment. This should be completed before any fracking is done—if it is ever done. A local nurse and physician spoke about the potential health risks, and a large banner saying “Doctor’s Orders: No Frack” was held; many copies of a newspaper against fracking were distributed.

Nuclear Free/Carbon Free NYS by 2050?

I am pleased that both the Atlantic Chapter and national Sierra Club endorsed our participation in a new coalition to work for energy conservation and safe energy in NYS. As a member of the Chapter Energy Committee, I am a delegate to Alliance for a Green Economy (AGREE), allianceforagreeneconomy.org.

AGREE’s office is in Syracuse, and the coalition began out of concern over the three nuclear power plants which are 36 miles from the city, two of which have the same design as the one that exploded and released vast amounts of radiation in Fukushima, Japan, in March, 2011.

Other founding member organizations are Citizens Awareness Network of CNY (CAN in Vermont has a fantastic campaign to try to close Vermont Yankee nuclear plant); Citizens

Environmental Coalition; Center for Health, Environment and Justice (the organization started by Lois Gibbs of Love Canal fame); Peace Action of CNY; Peace Action of NYS; and the Syracuse Peace Council. AGREE hopes to fund a study exploring whether NYS could be nuclear-free and carbon-free by 2050.

Currently, AGREE is trying to convince the Petition Review Board of the NRC (Nuclear Regulatory Commission) to suspend the license for the FitzPatrick nuclear power facility in Oswego County because it is the only nuclear plant with a Mark I design which has not followed the recommendation of the NRC to install a hardened vent to prevent a disastrous explosion, similar to that which occurred in Fukushima, Japan.

A useful handout is “Know Your Nuclear Neighbors,” a concise description of the six nuclear power plants in NYS. You can obtain this handout from me (see contact information at left), or by downloading it from the AGREE website.

Controversy Over Coyotes

The Town of Salina government is weighing a request from some residents to lift a ban on shooting in their residential neighborhood in order to hire someone to shoot coyotes who live in a nearby wood. Other residents fear bullets more than coyotes. An attempt to resolve the controversy is ongoing, including a very informative and lively presentation about the behavior of coyotes by Elise Able of Fox Wood Wildlife Rescue near Buffalo on April 23. She explained that only the alpha pair in a pack mates. If the alpha pair is killed, the hierarchy is destroyed and all the coyotes mate, resulting in an increased population (just what is NOT wanted by those

Continued on page 3

FROM THE CHAIR



Dear Tree Huggers,

I still seem to be waiting for winter, since it is supposed to come before spring. But the green just keeps getting greener so it must be spring and winter just took a vacation this year. I missed it.

My yard bird and critter kill is zero this year, a good thing. Resident skunk and woodchuck family seem to have moved on while the chipmunks have had a bunch of chiplings and are more abundant than squirrels. Very cute but not too bright. Really push the envelope as they scamper under the noses of two laid-back cats. Bailey challenged the behavior and caught one. As I started for the door to

intercede, the “play dead” scheme they do so well worked. Bailey dropped it and off it dashed. Not sure whether either one will learn anything from this.



Now, as the efforts to use native plants grow, it is a good thing I do not get graded on the flora part of my space. I inherited a yard bordered by huge Norwegian Spruce, Lilacs, abundant Buckthorn, and on the fourth side a huge privet hedge. The Spruce stay, lilacs are fewer, Buckthorn mostly gone, and the privet has slowly become a Grey Dogwood hedge (just by encouraging the volunteers that arrived when I axed the privet). These improvements along with the White Pines, Sugar Maples and Shagbark Hickory in the yard add to the native side but at best my score is a wash.

On the ground the plusses are Black-eyed Susan, Little Blue Stem, Drop seed, Yucca, and I count the blue violets in that column. When I abandoned lawn the result was that the

Myrtle came in from the North (Clark Reservation), English Ivy from the East, Pachysandra from the south and like troops of old they just keep marching forward. At this point the myrtle is winning so I have a very green yard and nothing to mow even if I so wished. I try to balance this with a small garden of several varieties of milkweed, Golden Alexander, Cardinal Flowers and Blue Flag in the wet spot from my rain barrel. That is my plus side.

I do wage war on garlic mustard and Buckthorn, but the true confession is I encourage day lilies (I have to admit that because I have some of Linda’s orphans by the road.) Do not judge too harshly, I turn off my phantom power, save water, have a programmable thermostat, good windows and am Housemother to two cats. It just is tough to be a good environmentalist on all levels.

For the Earth and all its Critters,

Martha Loew

CONSERVATION CHAIR

(CONT'D FROM PAGE 2)

who think shooting will solve their problem). She recommends smart behavior by humans, primarily not feeding the coyotes. Inadvertent feeding includes garbage or compost which is not secured, leaving food outside for companion animals, and leaving fruit from trees on the ground. She also advised that cats and dogs should not be left outside unattended.

National Sierra Club encourages non-lethal methods of wildlife management whenever feasible. ■

CAN YOU TAKE A SHIFT AT AN ANTI-FRACKING TABLE?

Green Planet Grocery on West Genesee Street in Fairmount has offered us an anti-fracking table at their open house on Friday, August 3 and Saturday, August 4, from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. We have volunteers to cover Friday but need help for Saturday. The first shift is 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and the second is 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. If you can help, please contact Linda A. DeStefano, Conservation Chair, at (315) 488-2140, between 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m., or LDESTEFANO3@twcny.rr.com.



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SUMMER & FALL EVENTS, 2012

Sierra Club events encourage us to Explore, Enjoy and Protect the Planet. They are free and open to everybody. Parks may charge entry fees.

ExCom meetings are held on the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at the Jamesville train station. Sierra Iroquois members only, for business ad strategy sessions.

INDOOR EVENTS

Indoor programs are held the 4th Wednesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. (unless otherwise noted), at University United Methodist Church, 1085 E. Genesee Street. Park and enter on University Avenue and look for Sierra Club signs.

Updates, cancellations and information at newyork.sierraclub.org/iroquois or 492-4745.

SEPTEMBER 19: WILDLIFE ON THE EDGE, PRESENTED BY BOB GRAHAM

Photos and information gathered from 13 expeditions to many African countries. The focus is on the threat of extinction of the African elephant, the lion, the rhinoceros and the mountain gorilla. Bob is both a well-known

wildlife photographer and proponent of saving endangered species. Come to learn and what can we do.

OCTOBER 24: "EMPOWERED: POWER FROM THE PEOPLE"

Join us for a documentary from the cloudiest, least-windy county in NY State. The film features stories of residents as they take the leap into a sustainable future, as one community embraces renewables from solar and wind to veggie oil and geothermal. The film is directed by Shira Golding Evergreen, empoweredthemovie.com/.

NOVEMBER 28: TENTATIVE: SU SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

Sherburne Abbott, Vice President for Sustainability Initiatives and University Professor of Sustainability Science and Policy at Syracuse University, details to be announced.

OUTDOOR EVENTS

Our focus this season is on local parks or places of special interest.

TUESDAY, JUNE 19: CORPORATE CHALLENGE RECYCLING SERVICE PROJECT

The J.P. Morgan Chase Corporate Challenge is an annual run/walk at Onondaga Lake Park. This is a good event to practice your dumpster diving skills, help the environment, the race and the Iroquois Group. Please call or write Lisa Daly the week before for best times to help: 428-1384 or ldaly@yahoo.com.

SUNDAY, JUNE 17, 2:00 P.M.: CLARK RESERVATION

Come out for a Father's Day Walk with Don Leopold at Clark Reservation State Park in Jamesville. Join the Council of Park Friends for their annual event. Join this well-known expert for a special treat. Non-fathers, dogs on leash and kids welcome.

FALL PREVIEW...

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2:00 P.M.

The Mystery Hidden Solution to the Loop around the Lake led by Lindsay Speer (hint: it starts near the regional market.) ■