



MACKINAC

SPRING/SUMMER 2024

Michigan's Clean Energy Future

How the Great Lakes state is
moving towards 100% clean energy

See Page 8

Industrial Decarbonization

What is it, exactly?

See Page 11

SIERRA CLUB MICHIGAN CHAPTER

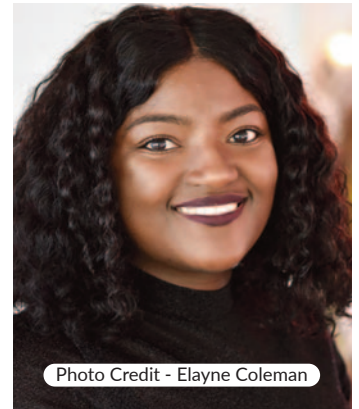
Michiganders Have the Power to Drive Climate Wins

By Elayne Coleman

Michigan passed one of the nation's most progressive clean energy packages this fall, and members like you made it happen. Sierra Club members and supporters sent over 1,000 emails, attended more than 25 in-district meetings with their legislators and made over 3,000 phone calls. We showed up, showed out, and made our message clear - we want clean, renewable energy in Michigan. That's grassroots power in action!

You can read more about our victory on page 8. But the work isn't over; we must keep moving the needle to address climate challenges in our home state. Federal funds are available to facilitate the implementation of the clean energy package. To support this, the Sierra Club launched the Community Advocates program to mobilize volunteers and help local governments take advantage of federal funds. Visit sierraclub.org/community-advocates-program to learn more.

We're often so busy pushing the envelope that we don't take moments to celebrate our accomplishments. Here are a couple of noteworthy moments to relish in during 2024:



Elayne Coleman - State Director

Chapter Executive Committee

In January, we welcomed four at-large members to the Chapter Executive Committee - Rhonda Anderson (Detroit), Ebony Elmore (River Rouge), Will Garcia (Jackson), and Mark Meadows (East Lansing). Rhonda, Ebony and Will bring extensive experience in justice-centered advocacy that will be an asset in our fight to protect Michigan's air, land, water and wildlife. Mark will continue to leverage his political expertise to strengthen the Chapter as an ExCom member and Chair of the Chapter's Political Committee.

We also celebrated Anne Woiwode and Abby Clark as they concluded their terms as Chapter Chair and Vice Chair, respectively. We look forward to the leadership of Yousef Rabhi and Will Garcia, who will serve as co-chairs from 2024 to 2025. You can read more about Yousef and Will on page 4.

Chapter Awards

Save the Date! On May 15th, we will honor two legislators - Senator Ericka Giess and Senator Sue Shink - with the Jane Elder Environmentalist of the Year award at our annual Chapter awards ceremony. Senators Giess and Shink championed the clean energy legislation passed this fall. Their leadership helped move Michigan closer to a 100% clean energy future.



Sierra Club volunteers and advocates pose with a Sierra Club Michigan Chapter banner during Sierra Club's spring lobby day in 2023

Volunteers are at the heart of our work, and we are excited to honor an additional 7 awardees for their dedication to the Sierra Club Michigan Chapter. Please see the full list of awardees on page 5 and visit sierraclub.org/michigan/chapter-awards for more details.

Every day, members like you help move us a little closer to "big" climate wins. Each time you read *The Mackinac*, respond to an email, contact your legislator, or host a group meeting, you contribute to our collective power. Big wins at the local level drive big wins for our state. Keep it up!

In this edition of *The Mackinac*, you can read more about the importance of the 30x30 initiative on page 10, urban greenspace on page 7, electric buses on page 6, a just transition on page 11, and ways to support the Chapter on page 15.

Chapter Staff

Elayne Coleman, State Director
Cecilia Garcia-Linz, Administrative Assistant
Erma Leaphart-Gouch, Healing Our Waters Coalition Michigan Co-Lead
Christy McGillivray, Legislative and Political Director
Tim Minotas, Deputy Legislative and Political Director
Jan O'Connell, Senior Energy Issues Organizer
Marvin Roberson, Forest Ecologist
Tamara Horne, West Michigan Organizer
Cara Beld, Development Manager
Erin Preston Johnson, Community Organizer

National Staff:

Andrew Sarpolis, Michigan Field Manager
Garrett Dempsey, Inspiring Connections Outdoors, Detroit

Executive Committee

Yousef Rabhi, Co-Chair	EMERITUS MEMBERS
Will Garcia, Co-Chair	Craig Brainard
Rhonda Anderson	Pat Egan
Mark Meadows	David Holtz
Ebony Elmore, Council Delegate	Helen LeBlanc
Felicia Eshragh, Treasurer	Nancy Shiffler
Marty Habalewsky	Deitra Covington
Randy Young, Alt. Council Delegate	Vicki Dobbins
Erica Ackerman (HVG)	Abby Clark
Lee Anzicek (CG)	Anne Woiwode, Secretary
Jerry Hasspacher (SEMG)	
Mike Buza (N5RG)	
Kathy English (TLG)	

Local Groups

Sierra Club groups are run by local volunteers who host educational programs, outings, political and conservation activities, and general meetings. Group activities are tied to current environmental issues important to the community and family health. Sierra Club outings and group programs are open to the public -- everyone is welcome and you don't have to belong to that group to participate.

To get involved in your local Sierra Club group or learn more about outings, please contact one of the volunteer leaders in your area. If you live in an area that does not have a local group and you're interested in starting one, please email volunteer@michigan.sierraclub.org

Learn more about our local groups by visiting sierraclub.org/michigan/local-groups

Connect with your Local Groups

Clearwater Conservation Network / CCN: serving Antrim, Benzie, Crawford, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Manistee, Missaukee, Otsego, Roscommon and Wexford counties. Connect with CCN: Vicki Olsen (cvolsen17@yahoo.com)

Crossroads Group / CG: serving Livingston and Western Oakland counties. Connect with CG: Lee Anzicek (leeanzicek@gmail.com) & Lee Burton (lee.burton@michigan.sierraclub.org)

Growing Green Grand Rapids Network: serving Kent County. Connect with GGR: growinggreen@michigan.sierraclub.org

Huron Valley Group / HVG: serving Washtenaw, Lenawee and Monroe counties. Connect with HVG: HVGSierraClub@gmail.com or Jason Frenzel (a2jasonfrenzel@gmail.com)

Nepessing Group / NG: serving Genesee, Lapeer, North Oakland, Shiawassee, Midland, Bay, Saginaw, and Tuscola counties. Connect with NG: Mike Buza (theoriginalzuba@yahoo.com) and Suzanne Lossing (slossing@hotmail.com)

Southeast Michigan Group / SEMG: serving Wayne, St. Clair, Macomb, and Oakland counties. Connect with SEMG: Garrett Dempsey (garrett.dempsey@sierraclub.org) and Jerry Hasspacher (jhasspac@gmail.com)

Three Lakes Group / TLG: serving Chippewa, Mackinac, Luce and Schoolcraft counties. Connect with TLG: Roger Blanchard (blanchardclimate@gmail.com)

SPRING/SUMMER
2024

THE MACKINAC

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New Ex Comm Leaders

Will Garcia brings a unique and often unheard perspective to the Michigan Chapter Executive Committee - the perspective of environmental workers.

As a former Solid Waste Program Specialist for Washtenaw County, Will was responsible for managing over 2 million pounds of hazardous household waste. In addition to program management, Will physically collected people's unwanted pesticides, mercury, and other hazardous materials for end-of-life management. Environmental activism must be anti-racist, coalition-building, and rooted in solidarity to work for all of us.

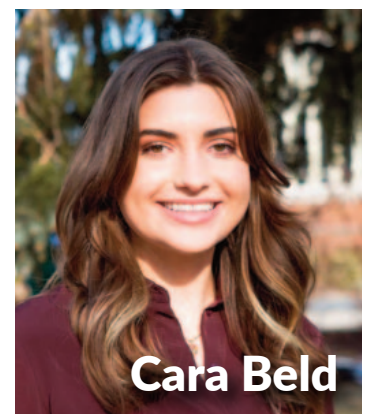


Yousef Rabhi is a long-time Sierra Club member and lifelong environmental activist. He has devoted his life to the struggle for a better and more just planet. Previously, he worked as the Democratic floor leader in the Michigan House of Representatives and was a consistent progressive voice at the Capitol with a track record of putting the interests of the people before lobbyists and corporations. Among other initiatives, he drafted and introduced legislation to put all groundwater in the public trust, force polluters to pay, increase access to home solar, set aggressive renewable energy standards and ban chemicals like PFAS in consumer products. He continues to serve the public as a Washtenaw County as County Commissioner

Spotlight on New Staff Cara Beld

Cara Beld (she/her) is the new Development Manager for the Sierra Club Michigan Chapter. She is responsible for managing all aspects of the Chapter's development program, including direct mail, digital fundraising, donor events, and individual donor fundraising. Cara joined the Chapter in December 2023, bringing experience in fundraising, operations, and communications from working and volunteering with several nonprofit organizations based in southeast Michigan.

Prior to joining the Sierra Club, Cara was the Operations & Membership Assistant for Friends of the Rouge, and she currently serves as a board trustee for Friends of Rouge Park. Cara's passion for nature and interest in issues pertaining to the environment began as she grew up near Lake Michigan. She received her B.A. in Comparative Cultures & Politics from Michigan State University, where she worked as a teaching assistant and at a Lansing-based lobbying firm. In her free time, Cara enjoys exploring new trails with her dog, kayaking, and rock hunting.



Senators Erika Geiss and Sue Shink named Environmentalists of the Year

By Elayne Coleman

The Sierra Club Michigan Chapter is proud to recognize Senators Erika Geiss and Sue Shink as the 2023 Jane Elder Environmentalists of the Year for their exceptional leadership in environmental protection in Michigan. Senator Shink was an unparalleled clean energy champion in the State Senate this past fall and is the force behind Michigan's 30x30 legislation. Senator Geiss was the lead sponsor of the legislation that requires Michigan utilities to meet the 100% clean energy mandate for electricity generation by 2040, and has spent her time in the State Legislature advocating for strong public health protections—especially for overly burdened communities that bear the brunt of environmental pollution. Thanks to their persistence, Michigan is now committed to transitioning to a clean energy economy.

We hope you can join us as Senators Geiss and Shink and community leaders across the state at our Chapter Awards Ceremony on May 15, 2024 in Lansing, MI. For more information, please visit www.sierraclub.org/michigan/chapter-awards.

Michigan Chapter will recognize seven additional awardees for their outstanding commitments to the organization:

Bunyan Bryant Award Rep. Donovan McKinney

Awarded to recognize outstanding leadership in the field of environmental justice.

Environmental Journalism Award (2) Tracy Samilton (Broadcast) & Tom Perkins (Print)
For environmental reporting or editorials.

White Pine Award (2) Oil and Water Don't Mix Coalition & Marta Johnson

Given to a non-member, organization or group that has shown extraordinary dedication to protection of the environment.

Sylvania Award Cheryl Ruble

Established in 1990, this award recognizes a Sierra Club volunteer who is new on the scene but who has already demonstrated great enthusiasm, hard work and dedication

Service Award Ron Kardos

This is given to Chapter and Group volunteers and/or leaders who have contributed a significant amount of time and effort to the Club

Volunteer Activist Spotlight: Marta Johnson

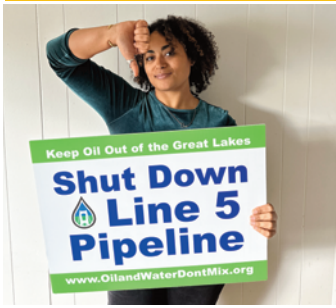
Marta is a key activist in Grand Rapids, who restarted conversations with us in particular around the energy package. Over the summer, Marta delved into student and teacher concerns about air quality. When Kent County folks discovered that trash incineration was classified as renewable energy in the climate package, Marta sprang into action. We would not have gotten the energy package across the finish line without the outside agitation that Marta played a key role in generating in partnership with Jan and other leaders in Kent County. To put a finer point on it, our inside track negotiators had what they needed to say, "hell no!" to last-minute demands for further cuts BECAUSE of how strategic and strong Marta's organizing was in Kent County in partnership with staffers Jan and Tamara.



Marta Johnson

Enbridge Line 5

By Anne Woiwode



Erica Bouldin



Sarah Tresedder



Cathy Collentine and Mahyar Sororu



Julie Geisinger

The fight to shut down Enbridge Line 5 is building momentum across the U.S. and Canada, as the 71-year-old pipeline has been named the most dangerous pipeline in North America. Line 5 has leaked 34 times and threatens Lakes Superior, Michigan, and Huron with catastrophic damage when an inevitable breach occurs in the Mackinac Straits, the northern shore of Lake Michigan, or the Bad River Band reservation lands. Two efforts to force Enbridge to comply with orders to shut down are in federal appeals courts this winter. Simultaneously, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is preparing environmental reviews of permits Enbridge seeks to keep the oil flowing for many more decades. President Biden holds the key to protecting the Great Lakes: The Sierra Club and our many partners are calling on him to act to end the threat posed by Enbridge and Line 5. Find the most current updates and how to take action online here: <https://www.sierraclub.org/michigan/2024springmackinac>

Let's Bring More Electric School Buses to Michigan

By Tamara Home

Now is the perfect time to start advocating for clean school buses in your community. Here are a few reasons why:

- 1 Replacing diesel buses in your community is good for student's and school staff's health. Diesel exhaust is harmful to human health, exacerbating conditions like asthma.
- 2 Electric school buses have reduced maintenance and fuel costs compared to diesel, which can save school districts thousands of dollars per year.
- 3 Electric school buses have zero-to-low tailpipe carbon pollution, which contributes to the climate crisis. Replacing a diesel-engine school bus with an electric one equals taking 27 cars off the road.
- 4 The federal Clean School Bus Program provides funding to replace diesel school buses with electric buses. And the Michigan legislature passed \$125 million in state funding to help communities transition to electric school buses. These funds can pay for more than the cost of buses: They can pay for charging infrastructure, as well as workforce training for drivers, mechanics, and electricians.



All-Electric school bus

Photo Credit -Brian Fould

Many school districts have limited capacity, so sharing the Clean School Bus Program information is one way you can help your local school system leverage available grants. Here's how to start!

1. Contact your school district's transportation supervisor and ask if they're interested in applying and what help they might need.
 - a. Are they on the EPA's priority school districts list?
 - b. Do they need community, political, technical, or utility support to apply?
2. Talk to your local and state decision-makers and ask if they will promote this opportunity for schools.

Volunteers in Muskegon County started advocating for electric buses last fall. If you contact your school district, let Tamara Horne know how the conversation goes at tamara.horne@sierraclub.org.

Urban Green Space

By Erma Leaphart

Green spaces in urban settings provide valuable opportunities to protect water quality. Some examples include all-sized parks, urban farms and backyard food and flower gardens, pollinator gardens, street trees and urban forests, meadows, prairies, wetlands, and marshes, green roofs, botanical gardens, cemeteries, green alleys, and green streets, green walls, pocket parks, open (vacant) spaces, and rain gardens. Wow! When you think about it, there is a wealth of green and open space around us or the opportunity to create it. In addition to the beauty and wonderment of these spaces is their ability to improve air quality, water quality, and our overall quality of life. Another considerable advantage is many of these practices are things anyone can do.

Their ability to infiltrate and manage stormwater is an advantage that is becoming more and more important as we experience more intense rainfall due to warming temperatures from climate change. Where I live, in Detroit, these spaces are being curated and developed as part of a growing passion for protecting waters in the Great Lakes basin from combined sewer overflows, stormwater pollution, toxic algal blooms, and flooding. It feels like just a few years ago, the term Green Infrastructure or Green Stormwater Infrastructure was used by a handful of people. But now, rain garden workshops and plantings, master rain garden programs, tree plantings, green roofs, constructed wetlands/marshes, and “engineering with nature” have become common terminology and practices.

An excellent example is Rain Gardens to the Rescue, a ten-year+ partnership between the Sierra Club Michigan Chapter and the Friends of the Rouge watershed council. Over a hundred rain gardens have been installed in the City of Detroit through this partnership. Many more have learned and benefited from attending rain garden workshops and volunteering at plantings. The network of rain gardeners is growing and supporting the work of others. Rain garden programs are ongoing. For more information, visit: www.therouge.org.

And the best news is that these practices and programs are occurring, not just in Michigan but across the nation and the world because we are learning that healthy green (and blue) spaces are essential for our well-being and future.

We have come to call it a “movement,” so grab a neighbor, a shovel, or a trowel! Have a rain garden planting party, or plant a tree and encourage someone else to do the same. It’s important to remember that maintaining green spaces is also critical to their functioning and long-term benefits. Consider volunteering with the Sierra Club, a watershed group, a garden club, or any other network of outdoor enthusiasts who care for the environment. It’s a great way to pitch in, have fun, and protect the spaces we cherish! We love it and think you will too!



Participants from the Rain Gardens to the Rescue program

Michigan's Clean Energy Future

By Tim Minotas

Michigan's new clean energy law is a significant milestone and beacon of progress in the state's commitment to a sustainable future. The law passed at the end of 2023 puts our state on a bold path for 100% clean energy generation by 2040, including nation-leading labor and energy efficiency standards, while broadening the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) authority to hold utilities accountable. These changes reflect Michigan's commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and signal a paradigm shift in the state's leadership toward a more sustainable, equitable, and resilient energy future.

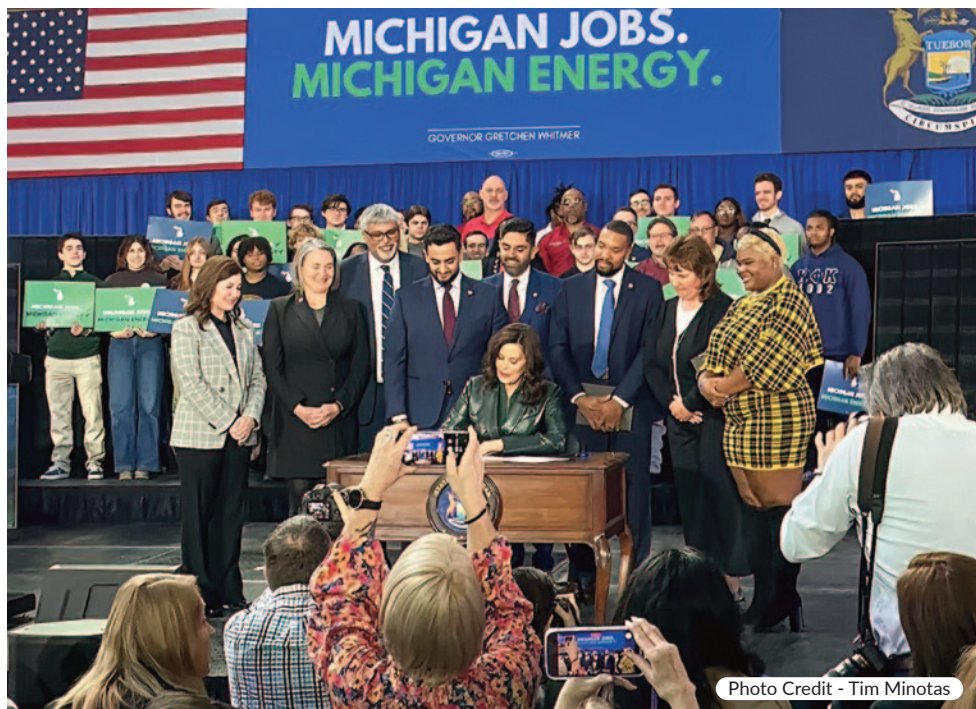


Photo Credit - Tim Minotas
Governor Gretchen Whitmer signing the new clean energy legislation into law

Moreover, the new law fosters innovation, investment, community benefits, and regulatory support for renewable energy projects that will lead to the development of a vibrant clean energy industry in the state. This legislation, combined with the Clean Energy Future package, will enable economic opportunities, create jobs, lower household energy costs, and provide clean air and climate benefits. A recent report from Michigan EIBC and 5 Lakes Energy for Evergreen Action concluded that these policies will create 160,000 jobs for the state, save Michigan families at least \$145 on their annual energy bills, and avoid nearly 1,000 premature deaths by 2050 by accelerating the transition to cleaner, cheaper energy. Michigan is lowering energy costs for families and charting a more sustainable path for itself and inspiring other states to follow suit in the global fight against climate change.

The Sierra Club has long been at the forefront of efforts to transition away from fossil fuels. The Michigan Chapter, in particular, played a pivotal role in the passage of Michigan's new clean energy law, leveraging its advocacy expertise and grassroots network to champion renewable energy. Through community organizing, public education campaigns, and strategic lobbying efforts, the Sierra Club helped galvanize public and lawmaker support for clean energy legislation and build momentum for its passage.

The Sierra Club's and its members' involvement in passing Michigan's clean energy law underscores the power of grassroots activism and collaborative advocacy in driving positive change. By mobilizing public support, engaging with stakeholders, working with and lobbying lawmakers, and providing leadership on environmental issues, the Sierra Club helped shape Michigan's clean energy future.

While the 100 percent clean energy law is a huge success for Michigan, there's still more work to combat the climate crisis and protect our environment. It was essential to pass 100 percent clean energy as soon as possible to jumpstart further climate action. Now, Michigan is ready to use federal funding to supercharge our transition to renewable energy generation. But climate change is a big problem, and we've got more to do—especially when it comes to tackling greenhouse gas emissions from transportation, agriculture and the solid waste industry, enabling community solar, and holding polluters accountable. The partnerships and power the Sierra Club built to get our clean energy package across the finish line means we are ready for the next fight.

Future Grid Project in Michigan

By Jan O'Connell

One of the Sierra Club Michigan Chapter's top priorities is advancing climate solutions and air quality. This needs to be done by transitioning the remaining Michigan-based coal plant fleet and moving to renewable energy generation by 2030, as well as blocking the electric sector's rush to fossil gas. So how do we get there?

New transmission projects are planned across much of the Midwest, including Michigan. Although climate advocates have often focused on stopping infrastructure projects like power plants and pipelines, Sierra Club and others have increasingly realized the need and importance of putting up new infrastructure—not only solar and wind farms, but the transmission lines that are needed to bring the energy produced to everywhere it is needed.

It will be impossible for Michigan to move beyond fossil fuels without updating our power grid to new high voltage transmission. This will make it viable for the grid operators to deal with 'intermittent' resources like solar and wind. With a good transmission network, we can ensure that energy will be reliable even with coal plants retiring quickly across Michigan and the U.S.

The good news is that back in July of 2022, the grid operators for much of the Midwest, which includes Michigan, approved a Long-Range Transmission Plan that is intended to move forward clean energy goals, reduce costs to consumers, and help with the retirement of coal-fired power plants. Here is the link to the Midwest Transmission lines: <https://www.itc-holdings.com/projects/long-range-transmission-plan-lrtp/>. This \$10.3 billion transmission plan is expected to have about 53 gigawatts (GW) of solar, wind, hybrid, and stand-alone projects through the construction of 18 transmission projects.

Two of these transmission projects are here in Michigan, where they will install 110 miles of new power generation and 95 miles of upgrades to the existing lines. See the attached map showing the path of transmission updates. The Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) estimates the projects' benefits to be more than twice their costs as the lines will allow access to lower-cost energy production and avoid congestion costs.

“One of the Sierra Club Michigan Chapter's top priorities is advancing climate solutions and air quality.”



Photo Credit - Mike Buza

Small solar farm installed in Michigan

30 x 30

By Christine McGillivray



The 30x30 policy agenda is simple, but not easy. In short, it's the policy recognition that we must protect 30% of our land and waters by 2030 in order to mitigate the worst impacts of climate change and maintain the basic functioning of the ecological systems that make life on Earth possible. Although we are saying we must act to protect land and water - it's more accurate to say that we must act to protect people.

It is impossible to overstate the importance of these actions. Our forests clean the air we breathe, our wetlands filter our water—both for habitat and for drinking water, pollinators require biodiversity to thrive and uphold our entire food system—30x30 is about taking the necessary steps required for our ecological systems to support our life on planet Earth.

Human life is not separate from the rest of life on planet Earth. We regularly talk about conservation as the practices and protections necessary for the conservation of endangered species, and that is important, but it is accurate to say that 30x30 is the minimum required to conserve the human species.

Scientists tell us that to halt mass extinction and solve the climate crisis, we need to not only preserve existing wild spaces, but protect more nature- a lot more. We must protect and connect all natural areas, but we also must restore thriving green spaces to provide habitat in cities and suburbs. Implementation requires coordination across federal agencies, states, and all communities.

State legislative action is key for success. This is why we are thrilled that Senator Sue Shink is working on 30x30 legislation to make sure we are doing everything we can to restore habitat across the state and protect existing wilderness. This effort will bring local communities together with the common purpose of identifying areas that can contribute to the national and state goals for conservation and restoration. As a part of this we must create high-paying, locally based jobs for restoring and caring for the country's natural heritage and identify funding mechanisms for that purpose.

“Human life is not separate from the rest of life on planet Earth. We regularly talk about conservation as the practices and protections necessary for the conservation of endangered species, and that is important, but it is accurate to say that 30x30 is the minimum required to conserve the human species.”

And most importantly - this work sequesters carbon. Here in Michigan, we have a particularly important role to play on that front. That's because we aren't just the Great Lakes state: we are the great forests state. Michigan has perhaps the most exceptional forest makeup in North America. The peat forests in our Upper Peninsula represent only 3% of global forest land - but they store 30% of soil carbon. One square meter of UP peat forest holds FIVE TIMES the carbon as a square meter of the Amazon rainforest.

Standing forests are the only proven system that can remove and store vast amounts of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere at a scale necessary to stabilize the climate. According to the IPCC land processes in a functioning ecosystem sequester 30% of the carbon emissions from industry.

We have a lot of work to do in Michigan, and we can't wait to make strong 30x30 conservation efforts a part of 2024!

Industrial Decarbonization

By Ebony Elmore and Andrew Sarpolis

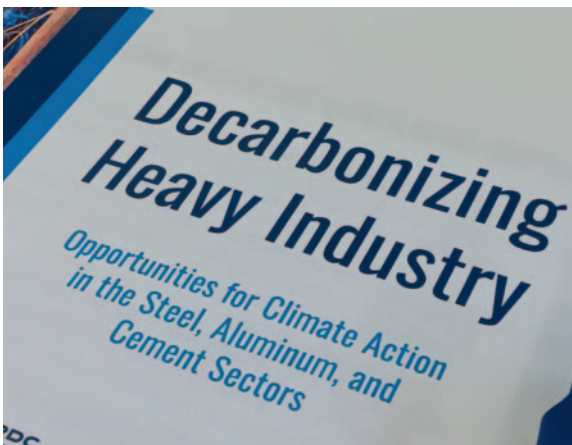
As a bitter cold spell set in over Michigan, staff and volunteers braved a mess of flight cancellations and snow to reach Washington DC to talk with Congress about an emerging issue: industrial decarbonization.

What is it, exactly? Many efforts to fight climate change have focused on the power sector, and getting our energy from sustainable sources like wind and solar. But, as we pass historic bills for our energy transition in Michigan, a big issue remains: what do we do with all the industrial manufacturing that emits carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gasses, such as cement and steel (and the coke facilities that service them). These are facilities that disproportionately fall in low-income and BIPOC communities.

We need materials to build our cities. We must also fight climate change, end environmental injustice, and clean up our air, water, and land. It is possible to do all these things with new technologies and policies. We must get our leaders to take action and avoid false solutions that prolong our use of fossil fuels and other harmful processes to environmental justice communities.



Andrew Sarpolis, Alisha Barnes, and Ebony Elmore posing outside Capitol for industrial decarbonization days



That is why Sierra Club volunteers Alisha Barnes and Sierra Club Excom Member Ebony Elmore made the 500-mile trip to Washington DC. Ebony spoke in front of a packed room in the congressional building alongside strong leaders including Rep. Ro Khanna and Rep. DelBene. As members of the Just Transition Team based in the tri-cities (River Rouge, Ecorse, and 48217 Detroit), they came to Congress to ask for protections for their communities, and to eliminate environmental injustice. Later that same week, Ebony and Alisha lobbied Michigan representatives, urging them to form an industrial decarbonization caucus in Congress. This work is just the beginning of a campaign to create a brighter, cleaner future for Michigan. And, it is just another amazing example of Michigan Sierra Club volunteers getting it done.

Local Group Spotlight: Crossroads

By Sarah Tresedder

The Crossroads Group, nestled in the heart of greater Livingston County, Michigan, is one of several local, volunteer-led groups representing the Sierra Club Michigan Chapter. With a mission to reconnect people with the natural world and instill a deep-seated commitment to its preservation, the group has become a vital force in addressing the unique environmental challenges facing the region. Comprising over 1,200 members affiliated with the Sierra Club, the Crossroads Group was born out of the passion and concern of local residents eager to safeguard the natural beauty that defines their community.

Members of the Crossroads Group come from a diverse array of backgrounds - engineers, educators, healthcare professionals, homemakers, and trades workers. Collectively, they all share a love for Michigan's outdoors and a dedication to preserving our natural environment. Crossroads actively works on statewide issues with the Michigan Chapter and local issues impacting Livingston County, western Oakland County, and the surrounding region.

Get to know the Crossroads Group by visiting their website www.sierraclub.org/michigan/crossroads and learn more about all of our regional groups by checking out www.sierraclub.org/michigan/michigan-groups and get involved in your local community today!



Members of the Crossroads Group present Chapter Director Elayne Coleman with a check for the Michigan Chapter.

Photo Credit - Laurie Mercure

Members of the Crossroads Group trail team posing after a day of volunteering.



Photo Credit - Lee Burton

Risky Resurrection: Re-opening the Palisades Nuclear Plant Would be a Costly Mistake for Michigan

By Sarah Tresedder and Jan O'Connell

Along the shores of Lake Michigan sits the shuttered and contaminated Palisades Nuclear Plant. First opened in 1971, the plant has a troubled and controversial history, marked by radioactive leaks, regulatory reprimands, and, at one point, being labeled the worst-performing reactor in the country. In May 2022, the plan shut down a week before its scheduled closing date due to control rod failures (an essential part of nuclear reactors). It seemed a fitting conclusion for an unreliable and erratic facility.

Fast forward less than two years later, and Palisades is now receiving billions of dollars in federal and state funding to re-open. Solar and wind are less expensive to build and maintain, and they don't produce thousands of tons of radioactive waste. Michigan doesn't need the Palisades Plant or any nuclear energy in order to reach its ambitious clean energy goals.

Holtec, the company that purchased Palisades after its closure, has already received \$150 million from the Whitmer administration and was approved in January to receive a \$1.5 billion loan from the federal government. In her 2025 fiscal year budget proposal, Governor Gretchen Whitmer earmarked another \$150 million for the plant. These funds could enable the 800MW facility to start back up and add two more 300 MW reactors.

Nuclear is unnecessary for Michigan's economy or its clean energy future. There are more effective and equitable ways to invest \$150 million. Our state can harness solar and wind energy, both cheaper than nuclear, to power our grid and invest in energy efficiency for homes and businesses. Prioritizing public transit and investing in essential infrastructure would not only make Michigan more accessible but also appeal to younger populations. We don't need to waste money on a nuclear power plant that is more expensive, dangerous, and unnecessary.

As Michigan moves forward, it's time we leave Palisades in the past and embrace an actual clean energy future.



Map of 50 mile radius around Palisades Nuclear Plant



Photo Credit - Kevin Kamps, Beyond Nuclear

Palisades Nuclear Plant

Annual Report

Thanks to the support of donors, members and supporters like you, we accomplished the following in 2023:

Michigan Chapter Welcomed Ben Jealous, Executive Director

Michigan Chapter staff, volunteers and donors welcomed the Sierra Club's Executive Director, Ben Jealous, last fall. He toured Detroit's 48217 zip code, one of the most polluted in the state, to learn about Sierra Club's legacy of environmental justice organizing in southeast Michigan. Executive Director Jealous also joined a kayak tour through Detroit's Jefferson Chalmers neighborhood, where he learned about the impact climate change has on the Detroit River and the Great Lakes. Through conversations with our donors and volunteers, he learned more about the Chapter's legacy of environmental protection.

Political & Legislative

Michigan passed one of the nation's most progressive clean energy packages and support from Sierra Club members and donors made it happen. We made our voices loud and clear - we want clean energy in Michigan. Most notably, we advocated for a 100% clean energy generation mandate by 2040 and more tools for our utility regulator, the Michigan Public Service Commission, to protect public health and achieve our climate, affordability, and equity goals. Our grassroots members over 3,000 calls to lawmakers' offices and attended more than 300 meetings with lawmakers.

Climate Change & Clean Energy

We escalated our fight against Enbridge's Line 5 following the Michigan Public Service Commission's decision to grant siting approval for the tunnel and helped organize the first-ever fly-in lobby day on this issue. Additionally, Sierra Club and other partners secured a historic settlement agreement with DTE that will accelerate the retirement of the final two units of the Monroe Coal plant. In West Michigan, we continued to push for solar ordinances and support renewable energy projects to move Michigan closer to a clean energy future.

Environmental & Climate Justice

In the fight against climate change, we can't afford to leave anyone behind. Here are a few ways we fought to make Michigan stronger and more equitable in 2023:

- Thanks to our persistence, the clean energy legislative package mandates that the Michigan Public Service Commission must host meetings around the state and locations must be accessible by public transit.
- We moved closer to our goal of diversifying outings leaders and nearby nature opportunities by hosting six Sierra Club supporters in Michigan's Upper Peninsula.
- Launched the community advocates program to help community members harness the power of the Inflation Reduction and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act while uplifting the goals of President Biden's Justice40 initiative.

Protecting Great Lakes

The Stormwater Specialist Training program (SWST) saw record-breaking participation in 2023 with more than 20 participants. The SWST program launched in 2019 and aims to train participants to maintain large-scale green stormwater infrastructure programs.

Through the Healing Our Waters program, we organized citizen lobbying days with federal legislators and reinforced the need for strong policies to protect the Great Lakes. Additionally, we remain active with the Great Lakes Areas of Concern Public Advisory Councils, where we support efforts to increase diversity, recruit new volunteers, and engage community members.

Forests and Biodiversity

Biodiversity and strong forest management practices will help ensure that Michigan remains a beautiful place for current and future generations. In 2023, we supported Michigan's 30x30 initiative, which aims to protect 30% of our home state's land and water by 2030. We also weighed in on the Michigan Wilderness Proposal and the Isle Royale planning process to ensure sound scientific input and advocacy for good forest management.

Giving to Your Local Chapter

By Cara Beld

Your support of the Sierra Club Michigan Chapter goes a long way for our home state! From the forests of the Upper Peninsula to the banks of the Detroit River, you have the power to create a lasting impact for communities and natural spaces across Michigan. Whether you already give to the Michigan Chapter, are looking for new ways to give, or are a first time donor - there are many opportunities for you to strengthen the collective movement of Michiganders taking action against dirty polluters and climate change.

Here are 5 ways you can support the Michigan Sierra Club. For more information on any of these choices, contact Development Manager Cara Beld at giving@michigan.sierraclub.org or 517-484-2372.

1. Donate to support Michigan Chapter citizen engagement work including organizing, volunteer training and advocacy work. Give a Commemorative or Memorial Gift to celebrate important events or remember a loved one. Make checks payable to Sierra Club Michigan Chapter and mail to Sierra Club Michigan Chapter, 602 W. Ionia St. Lansing, MI 48933 OR make a secure gift online by credit card at www.tinyurl.com/supportMISC.
2. Give a tax-deductible donation to The Sierra Club Foundation-Michigan Chapter, in support of the educational and administrative policy work including litigation, protecting forest biodiversity and wild places, safeguarding the Great Lakes and fighting for clean energy. You can become a Sierra Club member or give a gift membership through this option. Make checks payable to 'The Sierra Club Foundation', and be sure to write 'Michigan Chapter' in the memo section to ensure it is credited to the Michigan Chapter. Mail to: Sierra Club Michigan Chapter, 602 W. Ionia St. Lansing, MI 48933 OR give online at SierraClub.org/MISierraClubSupport/SCFoundation.
3. Planned Giving supports the Sierra Club Michigan Chapter and/or national Sierra Club by ensuring the longevity of work being done on the ground. You can be a part of planned giving by including Sierra Club in your will or estate plans or through charitable gift annuities. Contact Cara Beld for more details.
4. Make a tax deductible gift of stock. Donate stock to the Sierra Club Michigan Chapter through the Sierra Club Foundation in three easy steps:
 1. Fill out the Stock Gift Form at sierraclub.tfaforms.net/223.
 2. Important! You must specify the Sierra Club Michigan Chapter under 'Purpose of the Gift' to ensure your contribution benefits Michigan.
 3. Authorize your broker to transfer your shares.
Electronic transfer to:
DTC 0164, Code 40
5. Make a Charitable IRA Rollover. For individuals 70 1/2 years or older, this can be done without incurring tax penalties and can be transferred to the Michigan Chapter via the Sierra Club Foundation. Checks made through your IRA Administrator must be made payable to 'The Sierra Club Foundation' with a note in the memo section for the 'Michigan Chapter'.

The Michigan Chapter volunteers and staff sincerely thank those who generously support the work of the Sierra Club Michigan Chapter.

**For more information on Chapter giving, contact
Cara Beld at giving@michigan.sierraclub.org or 517-484-2372.**

Please note, unless otherwise stated above, contributions to Sierra Club support the Michigan Chapter's effective legislative, political work and membership work and are not tax-deductible.



The Sierra Club's members and supporters are 3.8 million of your friends and neighbors. Inspired by nature, we work together to protect our communities and the planet.

The Club is America's oldest, largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization.

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Supporting Your Chapter

Sierra Club's Michigan Legacy Council

Sierra Club established its Michigan Legacy Council to honor individuals, groups and organizations making significant gifts to the Michigan Chapter. Their partnership and commitment to our work leaves a lasting legacy. This list is current as of our publication date. Please join us in thanking the current listing of Michigan Legacy Council members:

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