



MACKINAC

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FALL 2026/WINTER 2027

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SIERRA CLUB MICHIGAN CHAPTER

By Elayne Coleman

By Elayne Coleman



From data centers that threaten our clean energy future to the Line 5 oil pipeline ticking like a time bomb in the straits of Mackinac, Michiganders have had enough of corporate greed hindering climate solutions. To put it simply: the jig is up.

And yet, there's never been a more perfect time to be a Sierra Club member. From Saline to Marquette, we've been busy answering the call of Michiganders who are fed up. We are pairing the grassroots power of communities with the organizational power of the Sierra Club to help residents across the state tackle corporate interests.

Amid all of this turmoil, we are inspired by people like President Whitney Gravelle of the Bay Mills Indian Community, whom we recognized as our 2026 Environmentalist of the Year. President Gravelle is a steadfast advocate for the Great Lakes who refuses to let tribal treaty rights fall by the wayside in the fight to shut down Enbridge's Line 5 pipeline. Her work reminds us of our responsibility as neighbors of tribal communities and stewards of this planet. You can read more about her impact on page 14.

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Erica Ackerman, Huron Valley Group
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Kathy English, Three Lakes Group

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Mark Meadows
Androni Henry
Will Garcia

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 <https://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 Stephen Colby Brown (brownsc6887@att.net)

Nepessing Five Rivers Group / NSRG: serving Genesee, Lapeer, North Oakland, Shiawassee, Midland, Bay, Saginaw, and Tuscola counties. Connect with NG: Mike Buza (theoriginalzuba@yahoo.com) and Denny Crispell (denny.crispell@yahoo.com) (slossing@hotmail.com)

Southeast Michigan Group / SEMG: serving Wayne, St. Clair, Macomb, and Oakland counties. Connect with SEMG: Jerry Hasspacher (jhasspac@gmail.com) The Southeast Michigan Group is holding an election for the Executive Committee. Visit <https://www.sierraclub.org/michigan/southeast-michigan> for candidate statements and the ballot. Voting deadline is November 14, 2026)

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

FALL 2026
WINTER 2027

THE MACKINAC

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Congratulations, Welcome to our First Unite Through Outings Cohort

By Cecilia Garcia-Linz

Three new volunteers participated in a four-month training program that empowers and equips outings leaders to deliver enjoyable, inclusive and purposeful experiences. As part of their training the cohort earned certificates from the National Association for Interpretation, gaining skills to engage in meaningful communication with participants about the most critical environmental issues affecting Michiganders.

Catherine Gillis

Catherine is a volunteer with the Huron Valley Group. In June she led a hike to a vernal pond where participants learned about the phases of seasonal pools and the critical role they play in species survival for frogs and salamanders.

"I became involved with the Sierra Club because I want to stay informed about local, state and federal policies that impact our environment and build relationships with Michiganders who care about environmental justice. I care about the issues the Michigan Chapter is working on and want to take meaningful action to address them. I saw information about a virtual volunteer hour, attended and learned about the outings program, which felt like a great fit! I enjoy exploring, learning about new places and sharing those experiences and knowledge with others. Connection to a place, and all the life that inhabits a place, can be a powerful motivator for conservation."



Mary Jane Bauer

Mary Jane is a recent graduate from Northern Michigan University's Environmental Science and Biology programs who is inspired by the natural areas around Marquette. When the NMU Conservation Crew hosted a Sierra Club presentation about Line 5 and youth engagement opportunities, Mary Jane decided to sign up to lead outings.

"I hope to make protecting our environment my life's work. I've combined my passion for environmental stewardship and outdoor exploration by becoming a professional rock climbing guide and am an avid mountain biker, hiker, and camper. As an educator, I love sharing knowledge with others about outdoor recreation and the responsibility to protect and appreciate the lands we recreate on".

She is currently working at a wildlife rehabilitation center in Duluth, MN and will return to Marquette to lead birding hikes and other adventures in the fall.



Rob Wyngard

Rob is community leader in Muskegon who advocates for outdoor access and conservation. In July he led a hike at Pigeon Lake in West Olive with clean energy organizers, discussing the risks posed by the federal administration forcing the J.H. Campbell Coal Plant to remain open after Sierra Club and other activists succeeded in getting it scheduled for closure.

"I first started leading backpacking and kayaking trips in college. I loved being in nature and sharing the unique experiences back country trips allowed me. Now in my 40's I still love being out in nature but strive to give back to the natural world through education and advocating for policy change. I believe that through connecting personal stories and shared outings, we can create meaningful experiences that help shape our world. I am so grateful for the opportunity to share my love of nature with the West Michigan community."

More outings leaders means more shared adventures! We need more volunteers to help provide opportunities to connect with nature in Michigan. If you're interested in learning about this volunteer position, please fill out this form <https://bit.ly/4x5DWGE>.



Sierra Club Michigan Chapter Welcomes New Political & Legislative Organizer

Sierra Club Michigan Chapter welcomes new Political & Legislative Organizer

Sierra Club Michigan is thrilled to announce a new member of our chapter staff. Marta Johnson, who previously served as the Michigan state lead for the Climate Cabinet Action, started in April as our new Political & Legislative Organizer.

Marta has hit the ground running, bringing energy and enthusiasm to all of her campaigns. This summer, she piloted a series of data center organizing programs, including bi-weekly meetings with activists and data center postcard parties.

Marta is a long-time organizer, working on issues ranging from climate change and education justice to reproductive rights. She's passionate about building people-power for policy change that can deliver tangible wins to communities. She lives in Grand Rapids, Michigan with her husband and two amazing kids.



Marta Johnson

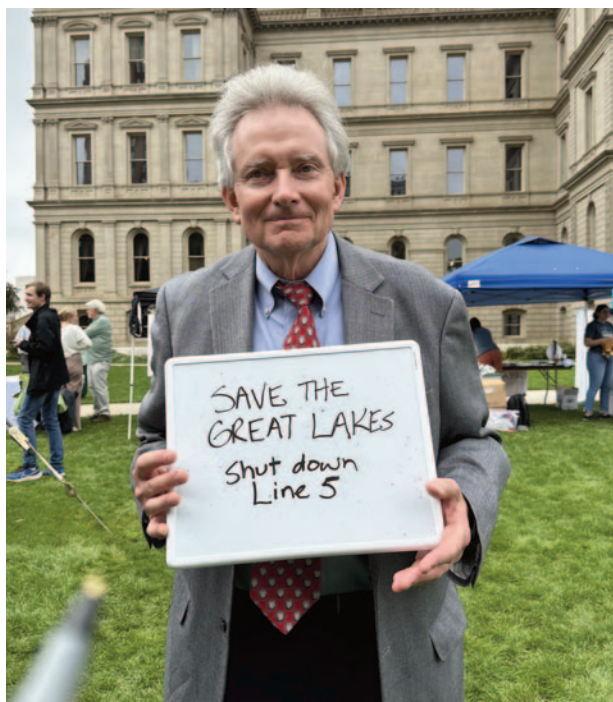
Remembering Martin “Marty” Habalewsky, June 8, 1953 - Aug. 27, 2026

The Michigan Sierra Club is mourning the loss of a “happy warrior” for our state, the planet and all people. Martin “Marty” Habalewsky brought joy and compassion to everything he did. He was universally loved as a dedicated and thoughtful advocate for leaving everything, from the Great Lakes to his own home community of Port Huron, better off.

As a leader of the Sierra Club Blue Water Committee of the Southeast Michigan Group and an at-large member of the Michigan Chapter Executive Committee, Marty always stepped up to volunteer, often bringing his background as a public relations professional into play.

Marty made a point of participating in every Michigan Chapter Lobby Day that he was able to attend, and radiated warmth and caring to the participants as well as to the elected officials he met. Many of our Michigan Sierra Club leaders have shared their thoughts in the days since Marty passed, and we share them here so that others can get to know this amazing man who is gone too soon.

You can read more about Marty’s impact online at <https://bit.ly/4yJdSme>. To share additional reflections, please email Elayne Coleman at elayne.coleman@sierraclub.org.



Martin “Marty” Habalewsky
June 8, 1953 - Aug. 27, 2026

People Power at the Capitol: Standing Strong for Michigan's Climate and Communities

By Marta Johnson & Tim Minotas

This spring, we expanded our Legislative and Political team with the addition of Marta Johnson, who brings years of climate policy and organizing experience. Since joining the Chapter, Marta has helped strengthen our grassroots organizing and member engagement around key legislative priorities.

We hosted our annual lobby day in May, where we focused largely on the issues of community solar and data center regulations and moratoriums. With members and supporters from all over the state, we were able to facilitate several productive conversations with legislators from both sides of the aisle throughout the day.

Many of the lawmakers we spoke with emphasized a commitment to moving forward with pro-ratepayer and pro-community approaches to our energy grid once we have a new legislature in place next year. Additionally, many seem eager to codify regulations for data center development – and even support our call for a pause on their development until such safeguards are put into place.

When it comes to data centers, Sierra Club helped lay the foundation for Michigan's first comprehensive data center legislation package by developing policy recommendations, testifying before the House Oversight Committee, and working with members of the Michigan legislature. A newly introduced bill package that resulted from this work will be a major focus of our advocacy this fall.

Other areas of focus this year include championing the restoration of EGLE's rulemaking authority under Part 31, strengthening support for statewide microplastics legislation through the Michigan Microplastics Coalition, and following more than 100 bills affecting clean energy, clean water, public health, housing, conservation, transportation, and environmental justice.

While division in the state Capitol continues to hamper progress, one notable exception has emerged with housing policy. With our support, Smart Stair Reform made it across the finish line as a part of the budget deal this June.



Sierra Club staff and members gathered at the Michigan Capitol this spring to lobby lawmakers on data centers and community solar legislation.

Continued next page

People Power

Continued from previous page

Even with this win, we know agreements will be difficult to come by before the end of this year, especially as we are facing the most powerful corporate interests we've ever encountered on the issue of data centers. That's why we launched a summer of action to grow new volunteer leaders and deepen our member engagement across the state.

This initiative included a series of Data Center Postcard Parties to help build momentum for strong legislative protections, biweekly Data Center Organizing Calls, and the work of our local groups to help shape our strategy for advancing meaningful data center legislation.

The work we put in over the summer was critical as we enter the Legislature's "lame duck" session in November, when major legislation often moves quickly after the election. That could create opportunities to advance priorities like water affordability and microplastics legislation, but it could also bring proposals that fall short on protecting Michigan from the impacts of unchecked data center development or weak carbon capture policies.

The organizing we do now will determine how prepared we are for those debates. As you enjoy the rest of 2026, we hope you'll take the next step with us and sign up to take action with us. Together, we can build the people power needed to protect Michigan's air, water, climate, and communities for generations to come.



Vote For Michigan Chapter Executive Committee Members

The **eight** Michigan Chapter Sierra Club members listed are running for five at-large spots on the Michigan Chapter Executive Committee. ExCom members set Chapter priorities and policies, ensure financial stability and solvency, and monitor and evaluate Chapter and Club activities. Their willingness to serve illustrates the strong commitment to grassroots activism that makes the Sierra Club the most effective environmental group in the country. Please note that due to space constraints, we asked the candidates to limit their statements to 75 words or less. If a statement runs longer than 75 words, the full statement can be found online at sierraclub.org/mi/ExComElections.

Vote for no more than **five** candidates. You can cast your vote in one of two ways:

- Go online to our election web page and ballot at sierraclub.org/mi/ExComElections
- Mail in the ballot in this newsletter on page 9.

If you're voting by snail mail, you must write your Sierra Club membership number on the outside of the envelope in which you return your ballot or your vote will be disqualified. Your membership number is above your address on the back cover of this newsletter. You will also need this information for online voting. **Return paper ballots to the Michigan Chapter office by December 1, 2026 (the online voting deadline is the same).**

Jamie Simmons

Jamie is an environmental activist, social worker, and restorative justice advocate with seven years in the just energy transition movement. She initially worked with the Sierra Club during the Build Back Better Campaign while working for MICAN and held roles with NPR's Michigan Radio. Now, Jamie is a program manager at Elevate. She centers the Jemez Principles, believes in bottom-up organizing and understands that environmental justice intersects with the social and systemic issues affecting Michiganders.



Dr. Nicole Keway Biber

Nichole is a tribal citizen of the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians, Mishiike Dodem (turtle clan). A longtime grassroots activist uplifting environmental justice as the foundation of healing, she is a Water Protector, jingle dress dancer, and gardener. Nichole works at Clean Water Action, organizes to Shut Down Line 5, and serves on the Board of the Endangered Species Coalition. Her motivating vision is the restoration of biodiverse habitat..



Nazma Begum

Nazma is a Michigan State University student passionate about environmental advocacy, community organizing, and youth engagement. Through Sierra Club's Student Coalition, Summer Program and Inspiring Connections Outdoors, she has worked alongside youth leaders to advance climate action and build stronger communities. As a first-generation college student, she brings a perspective shaped by inclusion and community. "I want to grow Sierra Club Michigan by engaging students, volunteers, and communities while strengthening our movement for environmental justice".



Molly Moening

Molly Moening is a bar-licensed attorney with a bachelor's degree in environmental science. She currently serves as a Policing Practices Fellow with Wayne Law, where her work involves research, stakeholder collaboration, and event coordination. In her career and personal life, she emphasizes centering community voices and advancing sustainability and civil rights. While working towards her law degree, she worked at multiple National Parks, leading educational programs about natural resources, the environment, and climate change.



Vote For Michigan Chapter Executive Committee Members

Galen Hardy

Galen serves as a Michigan Environmental Council Program Director where he brings Detroiters, their needs, and their ingenious solutions to the state legislation, budgets, and administrative work that shapes their city and Michigan. He does this by connecting Detroit's grassroots and civic leaders, collaborating with them to create good policies, channeling them to the Capitol, and leveraging statewide opportunities to benefit Michigan's largest city.



Tina Catron

Tina lives in Troy, Michigan, and is the State Field Manager for EDF Action, the advocacy partner of the Environmental Defense Fund. After a career in marketing and communications, she transitioned to environmental advocacy in 2020. Since then, she has led statewide climate campaigns, engaged hundreds of volunteers, and helped build support for climate policies. Tina is most passionate about protecting Michigan's natural landscapes and advancing conservation efforts across the state.



Jenn Hill

Jenn has 30 years' experience in community service, getting her start with the Sierra Club. Jenn has a master's degree from MIT, studying how communities can make sustainable decisions. She served on the Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance board and Citizens Utility Board of Michigan. Jenn was previously elected as Marquette City Commissioner and MI State Representative for House 109th District, serving on the State's Natural Resources, Local Government and Energy and Technology Committees.



Mary Rouleau

Mary grew up in Oakland County, returned to the Mitten in 2016, after 30 years in the Washington DC bubble. She has experience in lobbying (UAW, Consumer Federation of America) and non-profit management, both large (AARP) and small (Alliance for Housing Solutions). She spent her happiest working years as a high school social studies teacher. She currently serves on the Legislative and Political Committees of the Michigan Chapter and has done other volunteer work.



Please include your name and membership number in the space below.

Name:

Membership Number:

SIERRA CLUB MICHIGAN CHAPTER 2026 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE BALLOT

Vote for no more than five (5) candidates. The second column of boxes is for the second member of joint membership only.

GALEN HARDY



DR. NICOLE KEWAY BIBER



JAMIE SIMMONS



MOLLY MOENING



MARY ROULEAU



NAZMA BEGUM



JENN HILL



TINA CATRON



Clip out and mail your ballot to:

Michigan Chapter Sierra Club
Attn: Chapter Elections
602 W. Ionia Street
Lansing, MI 48933

Write your Sierra Club Membership number on the outside of your envelope to validate your ballot. Please visit sierraclub.org/mi/ExComElections or contact member.care@sierraclub.org if you need help finding your membership number.

**Your ballot must be received on or before
December 1, 2026**

Yoopers come together to defend Roadless forests

By Emma Shedd

This summer, Sierra Club Michigan helped to organize and participate in a People's Hearing in support of preserving the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule, also known as the Roadless Rule.

On a particularly hot day for the Keweenaw Peninsula, a large crowd gathered to defend the UP's forests and advocate for the preservation of the Roadless Rule, which protects vast portions of our National Forests from road construction and logging, and is now in danger of being repealed by the U.S. Forest Service. The Roadless Rule was enacted in 2001 following an extensive public participation process that included more than 600 public hearings across the country and prompted 1.6 million public comments, 95% of which were in favor of protecting roadless areas.

When the Trump administration proposed rescinding the Roadless Rule last fall, the initial comment period was remarkably short, lasting only three weeks rather than the more common 30 to 90 day window. Despite this truncated timeline, more than 200,000 comments were submitted with more than 99% opposing the repeal.

All testimonies were recorded and submitted once the next comment period opened.

Mariana Grohowski of Hancock spoke about our species ability to survive through adaptation, but questioned our ability to thrive.

"I personally have been able to thrive here in the UP because of the wildness and the roadlessness," Grohowski said. "I grew up in a city. I grew up on a highway. I never knew what silence was, and to be able to hear the birds, and the rain, and the wind in the trees is an absolute privilege."

Michigan contains roughly 16,000 acres of beautiful roadless forests. Jeff Noble of Marquette, who spent 29 years as a wildland firefighter, said his profession gave him a sense of appreciation for the fragility of our forest ecosystems.

"I did the best work of my life protecting, defending, and managing the natural land for all of us, and for future generations," Noble said. "These precious natural resources – clean air and water, undisturbed forests and wild spaces, unimpeded vistas stretching to the horizon – are even more valuable because they require deliberate, thoughtful effort to be experienced in full."

The Forest Service still boasts a multi-billion dollar maintenance deficit, and yet wants to open these areas to road-building and timber harvest. Roadless areas allow virtually all recreational uses, harvest for fuels management, and livestock grazing. They insulate forests from invasive species, as three crew members working for the Keweenaw Invasive Species Management Area pointed out.

All comments gathered during the event have now been submitted to the public comment period ending October 6. For more info on how to submit your comment, email: emma.shedd@sierraclub.org



Bethany Teeters of Hancock, MI describes how important having quiet places is to her and her daughter's ability to thrive, and the need to keep wild areas wild.

A Detroit's Legendary Career with the National Park Service

By Garrett Dempsey

National Park Ranger Shelton Johnson was just a few days from retirement this past July when a small group of Detroit high school students, teachers, and Detroit Outdoors leaders sat and listened to him convey the wonder of Yosemite park one more time. The group was enraptured, and at one point he pulled out a small bone flute that had been hanging around his neck. He proceeded to play a beautiful little tune filled with joy, sadness, and hope. One of the students called out, "Where did you learn to do that?"

Shelton responded, "When I was a student at Cass Tech."

He explained that his academic focus in high school was Music and Performing Arts. That's where he learned to play woodwinds. He knew these students would understand what he meant because seven of them are current students at his high school alma mater. That connection, and Shelton's Detroit roots, were the reason for this visit in the first place. This July was the third annual "Detroit to Gloryland" trip organized by the Sierra Club Outdoors for All Campaign and the Detroit Outdoors collaborative.

Shelton has welcomed over a million people to parks during his park service career, and he has put a particular emphasis on making space for African American youth and other youth of color. He wants them to know that they, along with every American, are the owners of Yosemite and all our national parks. He didn't hear that when he was a boy growing up in Detroit, but these teens can now share that message with their families and friends back home. After their time with Shelton, students walked away knowing about Buffalo Soldiers' remarkable contributions to national parks, about how Frederick Law Olmsted is a connecting thread between Detroit and Yosemite, and they learned many other "hidden" stories of Yosemite and national park history. It was not lost on the students that they had just spent time with a legend in the National Park Service.

Detroit Outdoors has been lucky enough to make this sojourn to meet with Shelton three times now. The visits have left a powerful impression on the students, teachers and leaders. The Yosemite students have gone on to lead outdoor adventure clubs at their schools, three have returned to Yosemite, some have gone on to kayak at the Apostle Islands, camp around the UP, and canoe in the Boundary Waters. Two Yosemite alumni have even rafted down the Grand Canyon and one is set to sail on a tall ship in the Great Lakes for a week this August.

Shelton Johnson has inspired millions of people during his time as a Park Ranger. He's done Detroit proud to say the least, and for a growing group of youth from his hometown his legacy is a powerful message that our parks and public lands are places for them to explore, enjoy, and protect.



Ranger Shelton Johnson, center, poses with Detroit students, teachers, and the rest of the "Detroit to Gloryland" crew. (photo credit: Detroit Outdoors)

What's Happening: J.H. Campbell Coal Plant

By Tamara Horne & Jan O'Connell

When Sierra Club secured a May 2025 shutdown date for the JH Campbell Coal Plant in West Michigan through a settlement with Consumers Energy, we jumped into action, working with the utility and community members to ensure the site would be decommissioned safely and that nearby residents would have a say in what comes next for the site. Just two weeks shy of that date, the Trump administration's Department of Energy issued the first of what would become several "emergency" orders in an attempt to keep the plant running unlawfully. Since then, we've been busy in the community and the courtroom challenging the Trump administration's unlawful orders that have kept the Campbell Plant running for far too long.

In September, the D.C. Circuit Court ruled in favor of the Sierra Club and its partners by striking down the Trump Administration's use of the Federal Power Act to keep the Campbell Plant running. But the fight is not over yet. We must make it clear that Michiganders don't want to hold on to expensive, dirty coal or stall the transition to renewable energy. Read more about what we've been up to and what's ahead below.



Sierra Club organizers Jan O'Connell and Tamara Horne pose with Attorney General Dana Nessel at a Campbell rally held for the one year anniversary of the Trump administration's emergency order.

Public hearing for two new coal waste injection wells

In July, Sierra Club members and supporters showed up in large numbers for a public hearing on two new deep injection wells for coal waste at the Campbell plant property. Deep injection wells are designed to store waste below aquifers, posing a risk to drinking water. Attendees spoke at an Environmental Protection Agency public hearing, asking the agency to deny the permit and consider safer disposal method.

One full year of "emergency" orders

In May, we commemorated one full year of "emergency" energy orders that keep the Campbell Plant running while costing Michiganders nearly \$600,000 a day. We held a demonstration along with Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel, who has also challenged the Trump Administration in court on behalf of the State of Michigan. Sierra Club members, supporters, partners and affected community members gathered to remind Trump and Consumers Energy that no one wants the deadly fossil fuel plant to remain running, polluting our land, air, and water.

Looking ahead at fossil fuels in Michigan

While our fight to shut down the Campbell Plant continues, Trump's emergency orders may not be the only thing keeping coal alive in Michigan. As data center developers eye communities in Michigan, utilities are considering how to power the grid to meet data center demands. In response, we hosted a Data Centers and Zoning Webinar to help community members understand how data centers are powered and what to consider as their local municipalities update land-use ordinances. We are keeping a watchful eye to ensure data centers don't lead to more fossil-fuel energy infrastructure development, and we are fighting to keep Michigan's renewable energy investments on track.

If you'd like to get involved in future West Michigan clean energy actions like these, contact Sierra Club Michigan organizers Tamara Horne, tamara.horne@sierraclub.org and Jan O'Connell, jan.oconnell@sierraclub.org.

How Green Stormwater Infrastructure is Shaping the Future of Great Lakes Protection

By Zjalyn Carter

Sierra Club Michigan is part of the National Wildlife Federation's Sacred Grounds program Detroit team along with Friends of the Rouge. Together, this team works to support local community organizations and houses of worship with project planning and logistical support for the installation of rain gardens at their respective sites to better manage and capture storm water runoff. This year the Sacred Grounds team installed community rain gardens at Sanctuary Farms, Siena Literacy Center, General Baker Institute and Community of Christ- Detroit Hope. Together with dedicated community members and nearly 50 volunteers over the season, we planted over 2000 native plants in rain gardens around Detroit. The rain gardens already installed have the ability to take in over 150,000 gallons of rainwater per year. There are two more rain garden installations left this year, before we focus our work on planning for the spring.

What is the purpose of a rain garden?

A rain garden is a native plant garden that takes in rainwater from a downspout or outflow and absorbs it naturally back into the ground, recharging groundwater supplies and preventing our stormwater systems from being overwhelmed by excess water during heavy weather events. Rain gardens also provide habitat for pollinators, improve soil quality and beautify spaces for the local community.

Building a green job workforce

Proper maintenance is crucial to ensuring that green infrastructure projects continue to work the way they are intended and are effective at managing stormwater.

Along with the Sacred Grounds program, Sierra Club and Friends of the Rouge co-teach a Stormwater Specialist Training class. This class is an eight-week hands-on course that teaches students how to manage and maintain rain gardens and also equips them with the tools to establish a business offering green stormwater maintenance services to local sites. Throughout the 8-weeks students had the opportunity to learn from and visit different GSI projects around the city to see what stormwater management looks like in action. Students graduate from this course with the skills and knowledge to become green stormwater advocates in their own communities. This past summer 13 hardworking students graduated from this course. Congratulations to the graduates of our summer 2026 cohort!

Through these programs, Sierra Club is helping to protect our Great Lakes from pollution and ensure that Michigan's workforce can keep up with green infrastructure advancements throughout our city. These programs are crucial to building communities that are resilient in the face of climate change and protecting our Great Lakes for current and future generations.



Stormwater Specialist Training 2026 graduates with co-teachers Zjalyn Carter and Matt Conners (Friends of the Rouge)



Stormwater Specialist Training class gaining hands on experience installing a rain garden at St. Suzanne Cody Rouge Community Re-



Stormwater Specialist Training Class field trip walking tour of Oudolf Garden and Green Stormwater Infrastructure on Belle Isle

Sierra Club Honors Whitney Gravelle, President of Bay Mills Indian Community, as our 2026 Environmentalist of the Year

Originally planned as an in-person event in Marquette, the Sierra Club Michigan Chapter Awards Ceremony was held virtually on July 17 due to dangerous wildfire smoke, which served as a stark reminder of why our mission to protect the planet is so critical. The extreme weather and poor air quality that impacts our home state reminds us of the urgency of the climate crisis - driven by our reliance on fossil fuels - and reinforced the work of our 2026 awards.

We proudly recognized Whitney Gravelle, President of the Bay Mills Indian Community as our 2026 Jane Elder Environmentalist of the Year for her work to uphold tribal treaty rights in the fight to shut down Enbridge's Line 5 pipeline. President Gravelle delivered an inspiring call to action in the wake of the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy's decision to approve permits for the company's proposed oil tunnel beneath the Straits of Mackinac. In her remarks, she called on us all to act, stating:

"This moment belongs to everybody, to those communities and to those tribal nations. Whether you be an educator, an organizer or an elected official like myself, we are people who chose to refuse to give up. We refuse to back down and we refuse to not amplify our voices." - President Whitney Gravelle, Bay Mills Indian Community

The Sierra Club Michigan Chapter also recognized:

Legislative Environmental Legacy Award: Awarded to **Senator Rosemary Bayer** for her incredible leadership in the Michigan Senate and commitment to environmental justice, conservation and protection of Michigan's natural resources.

Bunyan Bryant Award: Awarded to **Rhonda Anderson** for her work to ensure the voices of community members are heard among decision-makers, take on polluters like DTE and Marathon and create lasting change for communities.

Trillium Award: Awarded to **Alex Seidleck** for her commitment to youth leadership development, which resulted in the Michigan Chapter's first-ever collegiate lobby day, which brought students from the University of Michigan, Michigan State University, Wayne State University and Wayne State Law Society to Lansing to talk directly with lawmakers.

Environmental Journalism Award: Awarded to **Lester Graham and Lucas Smolcic Larson**. Lester Graham is recognized for leaving an impressive legacy of excellent environmental reporting that has advanced understanding and highlighted challenges and opportunities for Michiganders, especially on issues like Enbridge's Line 5 pipeline, dam safety, Great Lakes protection and habitat protection. Lucas Smolcic Larson is recognized for his deep dives into energy and utilities issues to uncover critical information that impacts Michiganders and the Great Lakes environment, covering topics like Trump's Executive order keeping coal running in our state, the escalation in energy rates, and the rapid increase in proposed hyperscale data center projects.

Life of the Party Award: Awarded to **David Holtz** for his good humor and an ability to see the absurd in almost anything, which keeps spirits high when organizing.

Marlene Fluharty Award: Awarded to **Fred Miller** for driving the Sierra Club's climate and conservation work across the state by founding the Southeast Michigan Group's Climate Action Team and revitalizing the Chapter's conservation committee.

Virginia Prentice Award: Awarded to **John Rebers**, who has channeled his deep love for Michigan's wild places into dedicated leadership — from leading the Central Upper Peninsula Group to chairing the Wildlife and Wildlands Committee — working to leave these special places intact for future generations.

Group Service Award: Awarded to **Cathy Sayre** for her steadfast leadership in the Crossroads Group for many years, most recently co-chairing the Freedom River project to plant native trees and flowers at a veterans retreat.



President Whitney Gravelle at press conference following the Michigan Supreme Court's oral arguments in 2026.

Local Giving Helps Us Win More Protections

By Cara Beld

We at Sierra Club Michigan are always up against goliath corporate interests. And to be honest, covid really hit our support system including membership and donations.

But now we're facing even bigger opponents - big tech fueling hyperscale data centers and an explosion of methane plant proposals

To meet this new challenge and continue the important work on green infrastructure, moving Michigan beyond coal, and

protecting natural spaces, we need your support for our work here in Michigan\



Michigan Chapter Executive Committee members and staff thank you for supporting local work.

Can you help us by...

1. Making a donation to support Michigan Chapter citizen engagement work? This includes fighting for strong guardrails at the state capitol, training our grassroots members and holding our elected officials accountable. These non-tax deductible gifts provide the most flexibility for the Chapter. Make checks payable to Sierra Club Michigan Chapter and mail to the Lansing office at 602 W. Ionia St. Lansing, MI 48933 OR make a secure gift online at sc.org/MIMackinacSupport.

2. Making a taxdeductible donation that supports educational and administrative policy work? Your tax-deductible gift supports the legal advocacy, education and outreach that leads to strong safeguards for Michigan's wild lands, wildlife, air and communities. Make checks payable to 'The Sierra Club Foundation' with 'Michigan Chapter' in the memo line. Mail to: Sierra Club Michigan Chapter, 602 W. Ionia St. Lansing, MI 48933 OR give online at sc.org/MIMackinacGive.

3. Make a planned giving plan? This supports the Sierra Club Michigan Chapter 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. A planned gift makes you eligible to join the Rachel Carson Society for special updates and benefits when you let us know of your plans. Reach out to Cara at cara.beld@sierraclub.org for more information.

4. Make a stock gift? This can be made through the Sierra Club Foundation to benefit the Chapter. Just follow these 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 electronically transfer your shares to: DTC 0164, Code 40

5. 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. Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs) made through your IRA Administrator must be made payable to 'The Sierra Club Foundation' with a note in the memosection for the 'Michigan Chapter'.

Not sure which giving option is the best fit for you? Or just want help taking the next step? Cara, Sierra Club Michigan's Development Manager, is here for you! Email Cara at cara.beld@sierraclub.org or call 517-484-2372 for one-on-one support to help strengthen our work in Michigan.



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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- Elizabeth Anderson
- David Begg
- Cara Beld
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\$15,000+

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