

Crossroads Group Sierra Club



FALL 2026

Elections 2027–2028 – Crossroads Group Executive Committee Members

Once again, the time has come to elect our Crossroads leaders to carry us through the next 2 years. Please read the candidate statements and use the ballot below to vote for **up to 4 candidates**. Ballots must be returned by **December 1, 2026**.

Cut out and mail this ballot to: Sierra Club Crossroads Group · P.O. Box 306 · Brighton, MI 48116

OR take a photo of the ballot and email it to cg.webmaster@michigan.sierraclub.org

Sierra Club Crossroads Group Executive Committee 2026 Official Ballot

- Lee Anzick** ☐ I first joined the Sierra Club following the 2018 mid-term elections. I met a bunch of great folks and within 6 months I had the privilege of co-creating, with Tiffany Stewart, our climate change rally in front of the Brighton Chamber of Commerce. Since then, I've served on subcommittees and I've served as vice chair. I'm currently serving as chairperson of the group. It is a great privilege to lead such a dynamic group in the Michigan chapter.
- Lee Burton** ☐ I have been an environmentalist and outdoor lover for most of my life. Aside from Crossroads, I am active in the Huron River Watershed Council and the Livingston Land Conservancy. Currently I am the vice chair for the Crossroads group and serve on the executive committee. I would like to continue serving in this capacity so I can contribute to a better environment in our area through this organization.
- Mary Novrocki** ☐ I am an avid natural habitat gardener, a birdwatcher, and a longtime supporting member of the Sierra Club. I have been a member of the Sierra Club Crossroads Group since 2009. As a child, I was a passionate protector of everything living. This has guided my actions ever since. I believe that all species and habitats must be protected. I believe that 100% sustainable energy use is an achievable and necessary path to ending the climate change crisis. I believe that our environmental justice policy must guarantee the equitable distribution of environmental benefits and burdens for all living things. Finally, it is my hope that our country, this United States of America, will become unified within itself—and with the world—to stop the Earth's destruction.
- Brett Swanson** ☐ I first became an active member of the Sierra Club Crossroads Group in September of 2023. Since then, I have participated in many events and activities including Earth Day, a bus trip to Cincinnati to advocate for the shutdown of Line 5, trips to Lansing for Lobby Day and to lobby against datacenters, and several other issues. I have also enjoyed participating in many Crossroads-sponsored hikes and outdoor activities. I currently serve as co-chair of the Conservation Committee and chair its subcommittee on Microplastics.

Your Name: _____ Your Address: _____



Explore, enjoy, and protect the planet

—Sierra Club motto



Executive Committee Chairs

Chairperson: Lee Anzicek

Lee.Anzicek@michigan.sierraclub.org

Vice Chairperson: Lee Burton

Lee.Burton@michigan.sierraclub.org

Treasurer: Julie Griess

cg.treasurer@michigan.sierraclub.org

Secretary: Peg Breece

cg.secretary@michigan.sierraclub.org

MI Chapter Group Representative:

Lee Anzicek, Brett Swanson

cg.grouprep@michigan.sierraclub.org

Fundraising/Sponsorships: Maria Burden

cg.fundraising@michigan.sierraclub.org

Media: Ann Groth

cg.media@michigan.sierraclub.org

Membership: Cathy Sayre, Suzen Oliver

cg.membership@michigan.sierraclub.org

Newsletter: cg.pubs@michigan.sierraclub.org

Outings: crossroadsoutings@michigan.sierraclub.org

Political: Ginny Maturen, Doug Cornell

cg.political@michigan.sierraclub.org

Programs: Mary Novrocki, Karen Schmitz

cg.programs@michigan.sierraclub.org

Webmaster: Laurie Mercure

cg.webmaster@michigan.sierraclub.org

Conservation: Brett Swanson, Shirley Jackson

cg.conservation@michigan.sierraclub.org

VISIT US AT:

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Forest Therapy by Ellen Koehler

It has long been known that spending time in nature soothes the soul, a balm for weary hearts. Shinrin-yoku, which translates as forest bathing, originated in Japan in the 1980s as a way to promote the benefits of exposure to natural environments. Dr. Qing Li, author of *Forest Bathing: How Trees Can Help You Find Health and Happiness*, recognized the negative impacts of workplace stress on his culture, and he began to research ways to foster physical and mental health in his patients through focused time spent in nature. Inspired by Shinrin-yoku and practiced worldwide, forest therapy is a slow restorative walk in a natural setting. A trained guide facilitates a special sequence of elements as participants are invited to pay close attention to what they are noticing. While both hold much value, a nature therapy experience is quite different from an interpretive walk during which one is focused on the world of ideas and identification. Through the experience of a guided forest therapy walk, we stop to see, smell, touch, hear, and feel with our heart that which makes up the meadow, stream, and forest, and the beings who live within.

At the start of a forest therapy walk, a threshold of connection is crossed as the group enters the natural setting with focused attention. Like a bridge which carries us over rivers or roads, this threshold allows us to consciously and slowly cross from the tamed world where cares threaten to overwhelm us to a world in which we know that we are part of nature and that we belong. It is here that we become acutely aware of what we are sensing around and in us. By consciously activating our senses, a state of relaxed and heightened awareness is achieved, and we are able to more deeply feel our relationship with the rest of the natural world. When we practice a deep sensory connection with nature, we experience startling and refreshing effects on our total person—body, mind, and spirit. In addition to feeling a sense of calm, discovery, and transformation, forest therapy participants often report a sense of feeling supported, embraced, and nurtured. At times, deeply rooted memories, messages, and emotions surface. Research also documents physical effects such as slowed heart rate, lowered blood pressure, and a boosted immune system via phytoncides, chemicals the trees are giving off at all times. While the ideas of forest and nature therapy can be put into practice on one's own, they are most often explored through guided group experience. By gathering together with others, absorbing the forest atmosphere through the senses, and sharing with one another what we are noticing, we learn together to listen more deeply to what nature has to communicate. As we slow down, breathe deeply, and intentionally focus on the pleasures of being present in the moment, we set the stage to be able to connect deeply with ourselves, with others, and with the more-than-human world.

Ellen Koehler is an ANFT-Certified Forest Therapy Guide

Nurtured by Nature Forest Therapy website:

www.nurturedbynatureforesttherapy.com

Upcoming walks www.nurturedbynatureforesttherapy.com/event-list

Crossroads Group Events

All of our outings and programs are free and open to the public.

See our Meetup site [meetup.com/Sierra-Club-Crossroads-Group](https://www.meetup.com/Sierra-Club-Crossroads-Group) for more details about these outings and programs (including possible cancellations or changes) and to see details when we schedule future events. Meetup is free to join and a great way to let us know who is attending each event and to allow us to communicate with our members and for you to communicate with us.

West River Trail Bike Ride with Cider Mill Stop – Sunday, October 11, 11 am

Location: Hudson Mills Metropark, 8801 North Territorial, Dexter

Join us for an easy 13-mile pedal on the scenic, paved West River Trail from Hudson Mills Metropark to the Dexter Cider Mill and back. We will stop for treats at the Dexter Cider Mill.

Huron Meadows Metropark Fall Color Hike – Sunday, October 25, 1 pm

Location: 8765 Hammel Rd · Brighton

Meet at the Cedar Ridge picnic area

Come enjoy the fall color season with us on a 3.5-mile hike at Huron Meadows. Trails are mostly flat with a few moderate hills, and feature scenic views through forests and overlooking the Huron River.

More fall and winter hikes and other outings will be planned soon—check our Meetup site for the latest details.

Brighton District Library Programs

An Introduction to PFAS & Michigan's Eat Safe Fish Program – Wednesday, November 18, 7 pm

What are PFAS chemicals and why should we care? Harry Castle, Community Engagement Coordinator with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), will introduce us to the PFAS family of chemicals, exploring where they're found, how they enter the environment, exposure routes, and potential health effects. He will also explore the Michigan Eat Safe Fish program, including the Eat Safe Fish guides, statewide consumption guidelines, preparation tips, and how to enjoy local fish safely. Finally, Harry will touch on the science behind creating the annual guides.

Taking Back Your Yard: Invasive Species Removal and Native Replacements – Wednesday, January 20, 2027, 7 pm

Molly Wozniak works with invasive species removal and replacement in Michigan's Genesee, Lapeer, Livingston, and Shiawassee counties. In her presentation, Molly will show us how to identify, report, and remove common backyard invasive species—and which native plants are good replacements. Molly will also cover the resources available in the area to help with invasive species removal and what to look for when purchasing native plants.

The Healing Power of Nature: Poetry and Prose

For centuries, there have been books and poems written about the healing power of nature. Thoreau called this healing effect the “tonic of wildness.” Sierra Club founder John Muir advocated for the benefits of nature in countless writings, famously noting “Everybody needs [places] where Nature may heal and cheer and give strength to body and soul alike.”

Wendell Berry, a writer and environmental activist who passed away on August 31 of this year at the age of 92, described the peace he experienced in nature in his well-loved poem below.

The Peace of Wild Things by Wendell Berry

*When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.*

—New Collected Poems (Counterpoint, 2012, used by permission.)

Get to Know the Sierra Club Michigan Chapter Endorsed Candidates Before You Vote

Jocelyn Benson, Governor. Currently Michigan Secretary of State

For Benson, the three most pressing environmental issues facing Michigan are: threats to clean, affordable drinking water, rising energy costs driven by outdated systems, and pollution from corporate actors who face no consequences.

“I’m running for governor to make sure government shows up when you need it, saves you time and money, and gets out of the way. This is personal to me because I’m a mom of a 10-year-old kid and the work we do over the next ten years will define his future. I want Michigan to be the place he chooses to call home. As governor I’ll fight to build a Michigan we all can afford, protect your safety and freedoms, and grow an economy that doesn’t succeed at the expense of our natural environment.”

Garlin Gilchrist, Secretary of State. Currently Lieutenant Governor

Gilchrist’s top three policy priorities are: “Protecting our democracy and Michigan’s free and fair elections from Donald Trump. Stand tall against big tech companies and the Trump administration who want to abuse your personal voter registration information or license-plate data. Modernize licensing and registration by providing smarter, 21st-century service.”

He also has these priorities: “Safe drinking water when threatened by lead contamination; expanded investment in water research; adopting zero net energy goals; and increased consumer protection policies.”

Eli Savit, Attorney General.

Savit emphasizes three particular environmental priorities:

“*First* is the all-out federal assault on climate-change regulations, and its efforts to prop up the fossil-fuel industry at the expense of clean energy. At the absolute top of my list of priorities will be challenging the Trump Administration’s efforts to roll back the greenhouse gas “Endangerment Finding”—the linchpin of all subsequent climate-change regulations.

Second is PFAS contamination. Michigan has more identified PFAS sites than any state in the nation, and PFAS contamination has almost certainly already resulted in a tragic loss of life.

Third, an emerging environmental issue is the rapid rise of AI—and the construction of data centers which threaten vulnerable communities. Although I am not categorically opposed to the construction of data centers, I am deeply concerned that they are being sited in communities which are already vulnerable, and without any consideration for health or environmental standards.”

Abdul El-Sayed, U.S. Senate.

“My work has always been about fighting for environmental justice and fairness, not just as policy, but as a moral responsibility. As Detroit’s health director and later leading Wayne County’s health department, I made protecting our environment and addressing the social determinants of health – safe water, clean air and healthy neighborhoods – a top priority. We brought together neighbors and local groups to establish a countywide air quality monitoring system, empowering people with the tools and information they need to hold polluters accountable. When Marathon Petroleum threatened Southwest Detroit, I stood with residents to push back and convinced them to invest in cutting emissions in our neighborhoods. After the Flint Water Crisis, we made sure every Detroit school and childcare center was tested for lead, and I fought against water shutoffs and worked to create a pathway to affordable, safe drinking water—because clean water isn’t optional, it’s a basic human right. The Michigan League of Conservation Voters named me Public Official of the Year.”

William Lawrence, Michigan House District 7

“I first learned about climate change at 12, and I’ve been focused on ensuring a livable future for my generation and our children ever since I participated in “Students for Environmental Action” at East Lansing High School. I led a fossil fuel divestment campaign on my college campus. I built a national network of students fighting for divestment. I worked with friends to start the Sunrise Movement in 2017. I architected Sunrise’s 4-year plan to make climate change matter in US politics, led our election-year fellowship program in 2018, and served as our Director of Strategic Partnerships from late 2018-2021. I helped draft the Green New Deal and built the Green New Deal Network alongside the Sierra Club and other partners.

I have been focused on fighting for good housing for all here in Michigan. I saw how nearly \$400b for housing was left on the cutting room floor as Build Back Better was pared down to pass the IRA. I considered this a travesty, because ‘the rent is too damn high’ and we all need a roof over our heads to shelter from the unstable climate. Residential buildings account for roughly 10% of US carbon emissions. Building and rehabbing green housing is a huge opportunity to reduce carbon emissions while defending the basic human right to housing.”

Jennifer Conlin, Michigan House District 48 (Incumbent).

Since Ms. Conlin took her seat in the Michigan House in 2023, she’s been a strong supporter of the Michigan Sierra Club’s priorities and introduced or co-sponsored many bills. Additionally, she’s introduced bills to increase health affordability and remove barriers to healthcare, regulate PFAS and provide relief for citizens affected by it—including polluter pay. She has supported school meals, services to veterans, especially in the area of increased support for veterans’ mental health; affordable housing, school safety, literacy, renter discrimination prevention; and prompt payment for construction workers.

Easy Swaps for Single-Use Plastics in Your Kitchen

If you've already discovered beeswax wraps, you know the secret: going plastic-free in the kitchen doesn't mean sacrificing convenience. It just means rethinking habits that most of us inherited without a second thought.

The average American household throws away dozens of pounds of single-use plastic every year—plastic wrap, zip-top bags, plastic produce bags, disposable containers. Most of it isn't recyclable. Much of it ends up in waterways, breaking down into microplastics that have now been found everywhere from the deepest ocean trenches to human bloodstreams. The good news? The kitchen is one of the easiest places to start making a difference.

Beeswax Wraps: The Gateway Swap

If you haven't tried beeswax wraps yet, consider this your invitation! Made from cotton fabric coated with beeswax, tree resin, and jojoba oil, they cling to bowls and wrap foods beautifully—using just the warmth of your hands. Rinse with cool water and mild soap, let air dry, and they're ready to go again. One piece of wrap can last a year or more.

Cheese lovers especially appreciate beeswax wraps. Unlike plastic wrap, which traps moisture and can make cheese sweaty and rubbery, beeswax wrap allows the cheese to breathe while still protecting it. Hard cheeses wrapped this way can stay fresh and flavorful noticeably longer. They're particularly wonderful for covering bowls and dishes in the fridge, bundling herbs, wrapping cut onion, wrapping sandwiches and snacks for travel, and keeping fruit fresh.

This is a swap that's actually *better* than what it replaces. One caveat: they're not ideal for raw meat. In that case, for better food safety, use a dedicated container.

Silicone Bags: The Zip-Top Replacement

Reusable silicone bags have come a long way. Brands like Stasher make bags that are freezer-safe, dishwasher-safe, and can even go in boiling water or the microwave. They seal tightly, lay flat in the freezer, and last for years. Yes, the upfront cost is higher than zip-top bags—but they pay for themselves quickly, and they don't end up in a landfill after one use.

Glass Containers: Worth the Weight

Plastic storage containers leach chemicals into food over time, especially when heated. Glass doesn't. A set of glass containers with locking lids handles everything from meal prep to leftovers to pantry storage. They're oven-safe, microwave-safe, and don't absorb odors or stains. Mason jars are an inexpensive way to start. They work beautifully for storing dry goods, soups, salads, leftovers, and even taking lunch to work.

Produce Bags: A Simple Switch

Those thin plastic bags in the produce section are almost never recycled. Lightweight mesh or cotton produce bags are a direct replacement—they're breathable (which helps keep produce fresh), washable, and last for years. Keep some in your shopping bag so you always have them.

Replace Dishwasher Tablets

Plastic-free dishwasher tablets are a sustainable alternative to traditional pods, specifically eliminating the use of polyvinyl alcohol (PVA/PVOH)—the dissolvable plastic film used in standard pods that can contribute to microplastic pollution in waterways. Brands like Blueland, Green Llama, Attitude, The Unscented Company, TruEarth, and Fomin are all available locally. These come either as so-called "naked" tablets (compressed mineral powder with a film) or they use biodegradable, non-plastic wrappers.

You can also skip the packaging by buying dishwasher tablets, dish soap, and many other items in bulk using your own refillable containers from refill stores such as Walking Lightly in Ferndale and BYOC Co. in Ann Arbor.

Starting Small

You don't have to overhaul your entire kitchen at once. Pick one swap—maybe beeswax wraps, since they're great—and use it consistently for a month before adding another. Small, sustained changes compound over time, and the habits stick better when they're built gradually.

Michiganders for Money Out of Politics (MMOP)

MMOP is the Michigan ballot-question committee behind Proposal 2 on Michigan's November ballot. It was created by the Taking Back Our Power coalition, which lobbies for restrictions on political contributions. Michigan United Action, Clean Water Action, Detroit Action, Michigan League of Conservation Voters, and other groups are involved. MMOP was drafted by Voters Not Politicians in conjunction with the Michigan Chapter of the Sierra Club.

Proposal 2 would restrict campaign contributions from regulated gas and electric utilities, large government contractors, and closely connected people and organizations. It would also require greater disclosure of donor information on political communications. This effort began due to frustration over rising utility and healthcare costs and the political influence that large donations have enabled.

MMOP collected over a half-million signatures to get the proposal on the ballot. They are now campaigning for passage by recruiting volunteers and doing voter outreach and education. If MMOP passes in November, the next goal will be an even broader reform on campaign contributions.

Vote YES on Proposal 2!



Sierra Club – Crossroads Group
P.O. Box 306
Brighton, MI 48116

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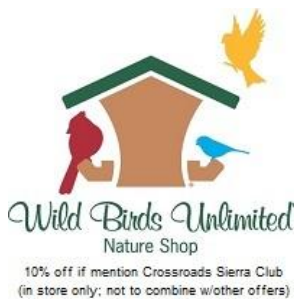
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