



THE LOOKOUT

Vol. 32 No.2 Spring 2010



Backpacking Adventure in Nordhouse Dunes Wilderness

Nordhouse Dunes Wilderness is about 3,500 acres of National Forest, and unique in many ways. It is the only federally designated wilderness area located along the Lake Michigan shoreline in Michigan's lower peninsula, between Manistee and Ludington. Its ecosystem is home to a variety of plants and wildlife. Most of the dunes are 3,500 to 4,000 years old and some stand about 140 feet high. Unlike other dune systems, the Nordhouse Dunes are interspersed with woody vegetation such as juniper, jack pine and hemlock. Small water holes and marshes decorate the area, and dune grass covers many of the dunes. The area is popular for hiking, camping and wildlife viewing. The beach is wide and sandy, excellent for walking and sunset viewing. The Nordhouse Dunes Wilderness Area is a place to get away from it all.

So, on the weekend of July 25-26, 2009, several of us out-of-doors enthusiasts went there on a backpack trip. Most of us departed on Friday, met at the public car pool parking in Brighton and drove to a very small town named Free Soil, located along US-31. We stayed overnight at cabins. Next day, Saturday, we had a delicious breakfast at a local restaurant, Orchard Market, and then met the rest of the group at the trail-head in the Lake Michigan Recreation Area, where we started our hiking adventure. The trails are minimally signed if at all, in keeping with the ambiance of wilderness.

We started from day use area with access to the beach, a stretch of sand split in half by Porter Creek. After crossing the creek we scrambled up 122 steps to the observation platform, caught our breath and admired the view of Lake Michigan. The trail follows a dune ridge high above the shoreline, level and easy walking for the first mile. On one side are dunes forested in hardwoods, pines and paper birch. On the other side you can see a steep drop to a white,

sandy beach and Lake Michigan blue on the horizon. It is a remarkable contrast.

Next we entered the area where a tornado had gone through two years ago; we were scrambling and

continued page 2

By Ewa Roszczenko



Nordhouse Dunes continued from page 1

hopping over downed trees while climbing up and down dunes. It was a difficult part of the hike. But soon we found a fabulous campsite between dunes and forest, set up our tents and had lunch. Some of the participants relaxed on the beach while others went hiking on the beach and during the break went swimming in the lake. When we looked at the sky we observed two thunderstorms coming from south and

north and we were in the middle of it. Luckily, both storms passed by. Even though most of afternoon was cloudy, we had a chance to observe the sunset.

When we came back from our 4-mile beach hike we cooked dinner, had a bonfire and great conversation. We went into our tents and fell asleep listening to the roar of the lake. Nobody was sure if it was raining at night.



You can get there from here.

On Sunday morning, believe it or not, Mary W. baked cinnamon rolls for all. I absolutely adore her for her effort and enthusiasm. The rolls were the most delicious I have ever had. Everything tastes much better in the woods. After breakfast we hiked back on the beach to our cars. The morning was cloudy, windy and misty. We all had a feeling of accomplishment.

Next we drove to Ludington, walked on the beach to Big Sable Point Lighthouse and enjoyed the view from the top, a 3-mile roundtrip walk. Our last destination was the restaurant "Old Hamlin" in Ludington where we had our farewell dinner. It was a great trip, fabulous place and wonderful company. I hope we will repeat it next year and explore more.



Photos courtesy of Ewa Roszczenko

The Huron Valley Group Newsletter is published 4 times a year by Huron Valley Group, Michigan Chapter, Sierra Club, 621 Fifth Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48103

Local Food Summit

By Dorothy Nordness

Over 200 enthusiastic participants from the local food movement met for a day of brainstorming, networking, and problem solving on March 2nd at the second HomeGrown Local Food Summit. Farmers, food distributors, land preservationists, environmental groups, restaurant owners, and a myriad of others, including some identifying themselves only as "eaters," exchanged ideas about how to expand the local food movement and explored overcoming the blocks that keep people from buying more local food. A new campaign – "10% Washtenaw" – was launched at the event. The 10-year campaign goal is to work for locally produced food being 10% of the food purchased in Washtenaw county; the current level is less than 1%.

"Health and the Environment" was the topic of one of 16 groups charged with developing "action steps" promoting local food. Our vision for the future was to "Create a sustainable and resilient environment where our food is pesticide-free, nutritious, fresh,

organic, local, grown in clean soil; clean water; clean air to support us, our children, and future generations." Among the 19 action steps we came up with in the too short 20 minutes we had were:

- Demand local/organic/sustainably produced food at stores/restaurants
- Advocate that institutions (schools, churches, organizations) serve local/organic food
- Work on awareness building through book clubs, film showings/film festival, contests

Over 50 local organizations were represented at the event; in addition to the Sierra Club, the Legacy Land Conservancy (formerly Washtenaw Land Trust), Ecology Center, and the Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy were there to support local, sustainably produced food and to protect the land needed to produce it. More information on the summit is on the web at <http://localfoodsummit2009.blogspot.com>

A Cup Half Full...

As a child growing up in the 1950s I felt a visceral fear of an atomic war. We practiced hiding our heads in the hall at school or hiding under our desks. News, novels and movies about possible war existed all around me. I remember Khrushchev banging his shoe in the UN and the Kennedy missile crisis. Now in 2010, the Cold War is history. The USSR fell. The major fear of my childhood has largely disintegrated.

I can imagine that, for my children, global climate change is the boogiemán. Oceans rising, rain patterns changing, glaciers melting are enough to shake anyone's confidence in the future. Add to that growing human populations, depletion of fishes, trash floating in the Pacific in a swirl as big as Texas, massive deforestation, to name a few more concerns. How do you address it?

We are, globally, piecemeal. Which is interesting. We have news, internet blogs, automakers world-wide working to develop electric cars, possible wind farms in the Great Lakes, solar farms in Germany, global conferences in Kyoto and Copenhagen, green cleaning products in the grocery store, LEEDS building certification standards, and Chicago deciding to build green. Change is bubbling all around me. It's rather exciting.

I have my personal goals--get my house fully

insulated, eat a more vegetarian diet, write letters to my political representatives. Maybe I can even put solar panels on my roof if I can afford it. Will this help? Yes, to some extent. I also choose to think positive. Negative thoughts scare me.

How will the world look in 2050? Will the crisis caused by global climate change be in the past, like the Cold War? Will my great-grandchildren take electricity from renewable sources for granted? Will cars be obsolete? Will the world's poor be richer and the rich, more taxed?

What will be their boogiemán?

By Cynthia Leet

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Urbanwood: A Better, Sustainable Option for Removed Trees

By Jennifer Eschelbach

More and more communities are looking for better ways to manage their urban forests. Whether that means seeking more eco-friendly options, or supporting more local initiatives, or both, developing a program to reclaim community wood will assist in reaching those goals.

Urbanwood isn't really much different from traditional wood. It's durable, beautiful and renewable. The only difference is that it doesn't come from typical forests or lumber yards. Rather, it grows in backyards, parks, and neighborhoods.

Unfortunately, trees removed from our cities are often seen as waste, and generally end up in a

chipper. Urbanwood programs seek to end this cycle, by working to save logs. This creates a wide variety of green products, conserves resources, and supports local jobs.

Turning an urban tree into a finished product is labor-intensive, but well worth the effort. Hazardous trees are removed due to death, disease, or development. Quality logs are handpicked and set aside. Local mills process the logs one at a time to preserve each one's unique character. The lumber from this "waste" wood becomes beautiful furniture or flooring for your home.

The U.S. Commerce Department found that 73,000 American furniture jobs were eliminated between 2000 and 2002. During the same period, U.S. sales of Chinese-made furniture exploded from \$405 million to \$5.82 billion.

Municipalities and urban areas can reach their environmental and think-local-first goals with an urbanwood program in more than one way. The most important aspect is to promote the highest and best use of a community's wood resources. Secondly, by capturing the lumber value contained in trees and utilizing it within the communities it came from, jobs are created and dollars are kept right in the neighborhoods.

According to Jessica Simons, a project coordinator for the Southeast Michigan Resource Conservation and Development Council's Urbanwood program, "Southeastern Michigan's dead urban trees could produce enough



*"Sawmill John"
Haling is an urban
sawyer in Michi-
gan. Photo by
Peter Hoffman.*



Furniture made from urban wood by designer Paul Hickman

lumber to build 362 average-sized homes each year."

Urbanwood is a natural choice for green building projects, because it conserves resources by keeping good wood from going to waste. Since all harvesting, processing, and sales happen locally, urbanwood products create fewer transportation emissions than other eco-friendly options.

In addition to the environmental and economic benefits, programs are rewarded through building connections between producers and end users. Urbanwood programs also increase the opportunity to enhance public understanding of sustainable working forests and landscapes.

To learn more, check out www.Greenovation.TV, where you will find a cool video highlighting Michigan sawyers. To learn even more about urbanwood programs currently in operation all over the country, visit the following Web sites:

- Southeastern Michigan (<http://urbanwood.org>),
- Mid-Atlantic region (<http://www.urbanwoodexchange.org>),
- Los Angeles (<http://www.urbanwoods.net>),
- Chicago (<http://illinoisurbanwood.org>)
- Seattle and San Francisco (<http://www.urbanhardwoods.com>).

Photos courtesy Paul Hickman and Peter Hoffman



Jennifer Eschelbach is a GreenovationTV contributing writer and in charge of outreach for The Environmental House Energy & Green Building Resource Center (EnHouse) in Ann Arbor, Michigan. The EnHouse is a comprehensive resource and touring facility dedicated to furthering the causes of green building, energy efficiency and renewable energy. Jennifer is currently working on her second bachelors degree from Eastern Michigan University in Urban and Regional Planning. She loves the smell of energy efficiency in the morning.

Kitchen cabinets made from dead urban ash trees

Moose on the Loose?

By Jack Woodward

This is Jack Woodward, at rest on a Sunday after a strenuous hike with Bisbee, AZ's, "Mule Team." My topic, however, is your recent "The Wolves and Moose of Isle Royale" program [January, 2010 monthly meeting]. I recall sending you the story of my conversation with an Isle Royale duck [The Lookout, Fall 2009]. But now for a moose story. One that I can't recall ever publicizing.

Long ago (1980s, maybe) a group of HV Group adventurers did a back-pack on Isle Royale. Nancy Shiffler was leader. Other hikers were Charlotte Wyche, Barb and Ralph Powell, Vince Smith, and four or five others whom Time does not allow me to remember.



"Seeing moose" seemed to be the adventure's objective, for I remember that at every curve in the trail Nancy would halt us, turn and raise a finger before her lips: "Shhh, now... real quiet... moose... there might be a moose just around the bend. Shhhh! If we're quiet enough maybe we'll see...."

Ssshhh be damned! The week went by, a week in which we saw not a moose. Then, weary and disappointed moose-wise, we trudged down the last lap and around a last curve and into the settled area where we were to catch the boat homeward the next morning. There — waiting in expectation at the kitchen door of the island's tourist lodge — was a moose! A real live Isle Royale moose, object of many a tourist's attention. Not a tame moose by any means, but a wild one so interested in the lodge's garbage that it ignored the nettlesome little humans.

Like to pull its tail? Just don't pull too hard! Like to feed it your left-over "trail mix"? Just be careful — Moosey Moose might accidentally bite your hand.

And if so many humans are swarming around that you can't get a "wildlife" picture of the creature? Just look around. Probably every moose on the island is lurking within 500 yards of that kitchen door.

Women and the Environment: Linda Taylor, Modern-Day Role Model

By Nancy Bishop

Linda Taylor of Clearwater Beach, Florida, is a current day environmentalist, author and educator, definitely making her mark in the fight to save our planet. Growing up in south New Jersey along the Atlantic shoreline during the 1960's made a strong impact on young Linda. She would spend her days scouring the beaches for any animals in need of help due to an oil spill or some other unforeseen event. A strong belief in spirit-mind-body connections helps Linda create a sense of peace within self and the natural world around us.

Over the past ten years, Linda has spent considerable time researching the courageous women environmentalists of the past. Her recent book, *Great Women Exploring Nature, How Wild Florida Influenced Their Lives*, recounts the stories and adventures of Harriet Beecher Stowe, Marjory Stoneman Douglas and Anne Morrow Lindbergh, to name a few.

I have seen the positive impact G.W.E.N. has had on the students in my classes, opening their eyes to new and exciting places and the women who fought so diligently to protect them. Linda acknowledges the intense connection between ourselves and the world around us. She states in G.W.E.N. (p. ix), "If we find

our own rhythm, a movement that is reflected in the natural world around us, we can redefine our self and purpose. Nature helps us discover the brightness of our spirit and shines it on our lives, our relationships, and our deeds."

When Linda is not out about town telling others about the magic of the women in G.W.E.N., you can find her on Caladesi Island guiding groups on a full moon night, appreciating the beauty of finding peace in nature.

Linda is also an entrepreneur, creating her own eco-friendly company Its Our Nature in 1996. It's Our Nature or ION has grown into somewhat of a staple in local markets in Tampa, Florida. If you are interested in finding out more about Linda and her earth-friendly products, log onto www.itsournature.com. I have known her for several years now and can honestly say she is one of the most grateful and humble people I have met. She has a true appreciation for everything and everyone, and is truly an inspiration! Linda is a strong role model for current day activists interested in finding out what they can do to protect our planet!

As the days get longer and we spend more time outdoors, take time to appreciate the beauty of nature and all it has to offer!

Sierra Club—Huron Valley Group Calendar



Participants in Sierra Club outings will be asked to sign a liability waiver. If you wish to read the waiver before coming to an outing please see <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms/> or call 415-977-5630. When carpooling is used to facilitate logistics for an outing, participants assume the risks associated with this travel, as well. Carpooling, ridesharing and the like are strictly a private arrangement among participants. Park fees may apply. **For up to date information, visit our website at <http://www.michigan.sierraclub.org/huron/>**

Tuesday May 11, 2010 - 7:30 pm - Sierra Club Book Club. Nicola's Books (Westgate Shopping Center, 2513 Jackson Ave Ann Arbor, MI). Book: "Water: **The Epic Struggle for Wealth, Power, and Civilization,**" by Steven Solomon -- a history of the role of water in human civilization and the impact today of freshwater scarcity. Contact: Nancy Shiffler (734) 971-1157. Note: back to summer hours.

Sunday May 16, 2010 - 9:00 am - Mill Lake "Secret Hike", 5 miles (note: NEW TIME). Gerald E. Eddy Discovery Center (17030 Bush Road Chelsea, MI). Hike five miles around Mill Lake on marked trails, gravel roads and unmarked trails in the Waterloo State Recreation Area on a "Secret Hike" with guest hike leader Barry Lonik. Either meet at picnic table in front of Zingerman's Roadhouse at 9:00 am to carpool or 9:45 am at the trail. Take I-94 west to Pierce Rd exit; go north past Cavanaugh Lake Rd to Bush Rd; turn left (west) and follow Bush Rd to the Gerald E. Eddy Discovery Center entrance road. Turn left and park at the first (lower) lot. Contact: Jay Schlegel 734-477-5715 jayhschlegel@comcast.net.

Monday May 17, 2010 - 7:00 pm - Washtenaw Inner City Outings - Monthly Meeting. REI Community Use Room (970 West Eisenhower Parkway Ann Arbor, MI). Washtenaw Inner City Outings (ICO) is a Sierra Club community outreach program providing opportunities to explore, enjoy and protect the natural world for those who would not otherwise have them. ICO volunteers work with agencies such as community centers, churches and neighborhood youth groups. ICO plans outings and provides equipment and trained leaders who are enthusiastic to share their love of the natural world. Contact: vhernan@umich.edu.

Tuesday May 18, 2010 - 7:30 pm - HVG Monthly Public Program: Above the Arctic Circle: Trekking Axel Heiberg Island. Matthaei Botanical Gardens (1800 N Dixboro Rd Ann Arbor, MI). **Alan Richardson will take us on a photographic trip above the Arctic Circle to Axel Heiberg Island.** Free. HVG Monthly Public Program; 3rd Tuesday of every month. Non-members welcome; refreshments provided. Contact: doug.cowherd@michigan.sierraclub.org.

Sunday May 23, 2010 - 1:00 pm - Walk the Future Route of the Allen Creek Greenway. Washtenaw Dairy (602 South Ashley Street Ann Arbor, MI). Join Greenway advocates for a leisurely 5 mile round trip walk of the future Allen Creek Greenway. Come enjoy a unique perspective on Ann Arbor, and help us brainstorm about what this beautiful, green, public amenity should be. Walk starts at the Washtenaw Dairy. We'll go to the Huron River and return. Rain or shine; bring a hat, sunscreen, and water. Contact: 734-665-0248 rmitchel@umich.edu.

Friday May 28, 2010 through Monday May 31st - HVG: North Manitou Island Service Weekend Trip. North Manitou Island (Glen Arbor, MI). Base camp service trip backpack on N. Manitou Island, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Park. Camping, ferry and food fees. Trip limit 16. Adult 21+. Work on service projects on Saturday, unstructured time to enjoy the island on Sunday. Reservation deadline May 1st. For details and reservations contact Betsy Foote at gebfoote@att.net (trip leader) or Kathy Guerroso at 734-677-0823 (HVG Sierra Club outings leader chair). Carpooling Thursday evening and Monday noon. Contact: 734-904-7314 or gebfoote@att.net.

Tuesday June 8, 2010 - 7:30 pm - Sierra Club Book Club. Nicola's Books (Westgate Shopping Center, 2513 Jackson Ave Ann Arbor, MI). Book: "**The Changing Environment of Northern Michigan: A Century of Science and Nature at the University of Michigan Biological Station,**" K.J. Nederhoffer, A.J. Hogg, and B.A. Hazlett, eds. Contact: Nancy Shiffler (734) 971-1157.

Tuesday June 15, 2010 - 7:30 pm - HVG Monthly Public Program: Topic TBA. Matthaei Botanical Gardens (1800 N Dixboro Rd Ann Arbor, MI). Free. HVG Monthly Public Program; 3rd Tuesday of every month. Non-members welcome; refreshments provided. Contact: doug.cowherd@michigan.sierraclub.org.

Sierra Club—Huron Valley Group Calendar continued

Monday June 21, 2010 - 7:00 pm - Washtenaw Inner City Outings - Monthly Meeting. REI Community Use Room (970 West Eisenhower Parkway Ann Arbor, MI). (See ICO May 17 Information) Contact: vhernan@umich.edu.

Sunday June 27, 2010 - 1:00 pm - Pickerel Lake "Secret Hike/Swim", 2.5 miles. Pickerel Lake (Hankerd Road Pinckney, MI). Hike 2.5 miles around Pickerel Lake in the Pinckney State Rec. Area w/ guest "Secret Hike" leader Barry Lonik; swim afterward. Either meet @ picnic table in front of Zingerman's Roadhouse at 1:00 pm to carpool or 1:45 pm @ the trail. Take Dexter-Ann Arbor Rd west thru Dexter; continue west on Island Lake Rd 3 miles to Dexter Townhall Rd; turn right, north, to N Territorial Rd; turn left, go west 1.5 miles to Hankerd Rd; turn right, go north 1 mile; turn right onto the Pickerel Lake access road. Contact: 734-477-5715 jayhschlegel@comcast.net.

Sunday June 27, 2010 - 1:00 - Walk the Future Route of the Allen Creek Greenway. Washtenaw Dairy (602 South Ashley Street Ann Arbor, MI). Join Greenway advocates for a leisurely 5 mile round trip walk of the future Allen Creek Greenway. Come enjoy a unique perspective on Ann Arbor, and help us brainstorm about what this beautiful, green, public amenity should be. Walk starts at the Washtenaw Dairy. We'll go to the Huron River and return. Rain or shine; bring a hat, sunscreen, and water. Contact: 734-665-0248 rmitchel@umich.edu.

Tuesday July 13, 2010 - 7:30 pm - Sierra Club Book Club. Nicola's Books (Westgate Shopping Center, 2513 Jackson Ave Ann Arbor, MI). Book: **"The Big Burn: Teddy Roosevelt and the Fire that Saved America,"** by Timothy Egan. Early history of the National Forest Service, by the author of "The Worst Hard Time". Contact: Nancy Shiffler (734) 971-1157.

Monday July 19, 2010 - 7:00 pm - Washtenaw Inner City Outings - Monthly Meeting. REI Community Use Room (970 West Eisenhower Parkway Ann Arbor, MI). (See ICO May 17 Information) Contact: vhernan@umich.edu.

Tuesday July 20, 2010 - 7:30 pm - HVG Monthly Public Program: Topic TBA. Matthaei Botanical Gardens (1800 N Dixboro Rd Ann Arbor, MI). Free. HVG Monthly Public Program; 3rd Tuesday of every month. Non-members welcome; refreshments provided. Contact: doug.cowherd@michigan.sierraclub.org.

Sunday July 25, 2010 - 1:00 pm - Walk the Future Route of the Allen Creek Greenway. Washtenaw Dairy (602 South Ashley Street Ann Arbor, MI). Join Greenway advocates for a leisurely 5 mile round trip walk of the future Allen Creek Greenway. Come enjoy a unique perspective on Ann Arbor, and help us brainstorm about what this beautiful, green, public amenity should be. Walk starts at the Washtenaw Dairy. We'll go to the Huron River and return. Rain or shine. Contact: 734-665-0248 or rmitchel@umich.edu.

Monday August 2, 2010 - 10:00 am - Grand Island Backpack trip. Grand Island National Recreation Area. Mixture of backpack and base camp. Five days on Grand Island, located in Lake Superior just offshore from Munising and Pictured Rocks. We will take the ferry service from Munising to the island on Monday Aug. 2 and return via the ferry on the 6th. Terrain is predominantly trails, dirt roads, and beaches. Beautiful scenery. Dependent on ferry schedule. Cost TBD; will cover food, camping fees and any ferry costs. Contact: Nancy Shiffler 734-971-1157 or nshiffler@comcast.net.

Tuesday August 10, 2010 - 7:30 pm - Sierra Club Book Club. Nicola's Books (Westgate Shopping Center, 2513 Jackson Ave Ann Arbor, MI). Book: "Halfway to Heaven," by Mark Obmascik. August is our "fun read" month. This book is a witty account of a middle-aged journalist who sets out to climb all 54 of Colorado's 14,000-foot mountains in one year. Also the author of "The Big Year." Contact: Nancy Shiffler (734) 971-1157.

Monday August 16, 2010 - 7:00 pm - Washtenaw Inner City Outings - Monthly Meeting. REI Community Use Room (970 West Eisenhower Parkway Ann Arbor, MI). (See ICO May 17 Information) Contact: vhernan@umich.edu.

Tuesday August 17, 2010 - 7:30 pm - HVG Monthly Public Program: Topic TBA. Matthaei Botanical Gardens (1800 N Dixboro Rd Ann Arbor, MI). Free. HVG Monthly Public Program; 3rd Tuesday of every month. Non-members welcome; refreshments provided. Contact: doug.cowherd@michigan.sierraclub.org.

Sunday August 22, 2010 - 1:00 pm - Walk the Future Route of the Allen Creek Greenway. Washtenaw Dairy. (See July 25 information. above) Contact: 734-665-0248 or rmitchel@umich.edu.

Sierra Club—Huron Valley Group Calendar continued

Friday September 3, 2010 - Isle Royale National Park, backpack trip. Isle Royale National Park (Isle Royale National Park, Michigan). 10 days (including traveling time) backpack adventure. This is an island without roads, where the moose and the wolves live in a natural balance with each other. Loons, their eerie, demented laugh and distinctive checkered back is synonymous to backpackers. It is one of Michigan's most pristine settings, with 165 miles of hiking trails. It is the only National Park completely closed down in the winter, and is Michigan's best wilderness experience, a place to remember forever. Contact: 734-756-5362 ewarosz@yahoo.com.

Monday September 20, 2010 - 7:00 pm - Washtenaw Inner City Outings - Monthly Meeting. REI Community Use Room (970 West Eisenhower Parkway Ann Arbor, MI). (See ICO May 17 Information) Contact: vhernan@umich.edu.

Tuesday September 21, 2010 - 7:30 pm - HVG Monthly Public Program: Topic TBA. Matthaei Botanical Gardens (1800 N Dixboro Rd Ann Arbor, MI). Free. HVG Monthly Public Program; 3rd Tuesday of every month. Non-members welcome; refreshments provided. Contact: doug.cowherd@michigan.sierraclub.org. Bill Rodgers wrodgers@umich.edu

Two Things I Like about Oregon—What's the deal with PIELC?

By Bill Rodgers wrodgers@umich.edu

After living for 39 years in Ann Arbor, and then moving to Eugene, Oregon in 2006, two of the things that make me glad we made the move are spring and PIELC. Let me explain.

First, I really enjoy spring, and here is an actual season that merits the name. In Ann Arbor, it seemed like spring was so fleeting as to be scarcely enjoyed, but here the spring flowers start to appear in February, and linger on into June – even later if I drive an hour or so up into the Cascades. Yes, there are some rainy days, but there are also many cloudless, comfortably warm days when I can work in my garden or take a walk in an old-growth forest.

The second thing I want to share with you about Eugene is the PIELC: the Public Interest Environmental Law Conference, an event occurring in late February or early March every year at the University of Oregon. It describes itself, with perhaps just a bit of exaggeration, as "the premier gathering for environmentalists in the world." Every year there are several keynote speeches by national and international environmental leaders, but what I usually find most compelling are panel discussions by "grassroots" environmentalists describing a local environmental issue they confronted, their response to it, and lessons they learned about tactics that work well or not so well. The range of issues is always wide: endangered species, coal-fired power plants, responses to peak oil, trash, the privatization of water – the list goes on and on. I'll describe a few of the sessions I went to this year to give you a sense of the conference.

I went to two sessions on CAFOs – concentrated animal feeding operations. This was, and I expect still is, a big issue in Michigan, and in past years Ann Woiwode (director of the Michigan chapter of the Sierra Club) has participated in panels

here, so I wanted to get an update on what is happening. One session featured the authors of two recently published books describing the devastation caused by CAFOs in many places around the country, and how local residents fought back. David Kirby (Animal Factory) focused his book on three locations (North Carolina, Illinois, and Washington state), but interviewed hundreds of activists and farmers around the country including Ed Steinman and Lynne and Doug Henning from the Ann Arbor area.

The panelists at a second session were lawyers or activists fighting local battles. One of them (Charlie Tebbutt) was the primary lawyer involved in litigation about dairy CAFOs in the Yakima Valley in Washington, described by David Kirby in his book. Another (Brent Foster) was active in the Oregon Chapter of the Sierra Club; last year he was invited to join the staff of Oregon's new, environmentally friendly attorney general.

The topic of another session was bottled water, and specifically on the issue of whether Nestlé should be allowed to open a water bottling facility in the Columbia River Gorge. That brought back memories of Nestlé's efforts to build water bottling plants in Wisconsin and Michigan, the effects of the plant they did build in Mecosta County, and the long legal battles that ensued.

Maybe this is enough to whet your appetite. If you want to learn more, go to www.pielc.org, where you can download programs from many of the past conferences, and later this year find out about plans for next year's conference. And maybe you'll decide to come out here some year, either as a participant or an observer – and also to enjoy a bit more spring weather. Be sure to let me know if you do come!

By Alan Richardson

CLEAN CAR UPDATE

Here is the running total of the economic and environmental consequences of my choice to purchase and drive a Honda Civic GX fueled by natural gas.

Period covered: 18 October 2000 (purchase date) to 16 March 2010

Distance driven: 129,460 miles
 Fuel purchased: 3,976 gallons gasoline equivalent (GGE)
 Fuel economy: 32.6 miles/GGE
 Fuel cost of CNG used: \$5,301
 Average fuel cost: \$1.333 per GGE
 Cost economy: 24.4 miles per dollar
 Savings over gasoline: \$2,948 (\$1,008 over payback amount)
 Payback mileage*: 86,905
 Payback date*: 15 April 2006

* Payback of \$4,500 purchase premium for natural gas fuel option reduced by \$2,000 Clean Cities cash rebate and \$2,000 federal income deduction at 28% marginal tax rate in effect at time of purchase.

Estimated exhaust emissions of different passenger vehicles driven 129,460 miles

Pounds of:	Average car on road in 2000	CA LEV**	Civic GX
Hydrocarbons	798	21.4	0.86
Carbon monoxide	5,960	969.5	45.6
Oxides of nitrogen	396	57.0	5.70
Total (pounds)	7,154	1,047.9	52.16

** Standard for 'Low Emission Vehicle' passenger car required by California starting in 2001

HVG Political Committee Needs YOU!

By James D'Amour

It's going to be an important year for Michigan and the environment.

New coal plants are being proposed throughout the state. Asian carp threaten to invade our Great Lakes. Factory farms continue to pollute with little impunity. The depressed economy looms large over what little remains of our environmental protections. Meanwhile, local politicians are selling off or giving sweetheart long-term leases of prized parkland without the public vote of their citizens in spite of state and local law.

These and other issues make us wonder about our elected officials.

Want to make a difference in this area? Join the Sierra Club Huron Valley Group's Political Committee. We will look closely at our state and local candidates for political office, and with the powerful voice of the Sierra Club we can support the champions of the environment. For more information contact James D'Amour, HVG Political Committee Chair, at jamesdamour@comcast.net.

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Off the Beaten Track: Conifers of the Interlobate

I am fascinated by the native conifers of southeast Michigan. Despite a landscape dominated by deciduous woods, in certain special locations one can find cone-bearing trees. While there may have been a few other coniferous species around here in pre-settlement times, today only four species are found in natural environments (others have been planted as ornamentals or to control soil erosion). And on one special trail, all four of them can be seen.

The rarest of the interlobate conifers is the northern white cedar (*Thuja occidentalis*). Common in northern Michigan swamps where they often form dense thickets, in our region they are found in a very few locations along the margins of swamps and lakes. White cedars were probably more common in pre-settlement times before many of the swamps were drained and groundwater levels were 6-10 feet higher than today. In addition, white cedars are rot-resistant, so those that were present were used for things like fence posts and pretty much wiped out. Slow growing and dependent on cold water, they didn't regenerate well after being cut.

Possibly my favorite conifer is the tamarack or eastern larch (*Larix laricina*). 'Racks are also a northern species that likes to have its feet cold and wet, but is quite a lot more common than white cedar as it tends to be located in the less accessible middle of swamps rather than along shorelines. 'Racks also form clumps, especially in the state recreation areas where there are nice little tamarack bogs tucked away amidst the high hills. Tamarack is the only deciduous conifer of our area; that is, it loses its leaves (needles) every fall. It starts out bare in the spring, produces bright green needles early on that turn a bit darker green as the growing season progresses, then turn golden in October before dropping. The wood is also rot-resistant and is quite dense and heavy.

A common associate of tamarack is black spruce (*Picea mariana*). It populates the same acidic swamps and bogs, but often has a look of not being fully formed or as if chunks of it have been removed, and has a conical or club-shaped top. Black spruce

wood is less robust than other conifers, but is unique in that lower branches which become covered by mosses and litter can take root and form new tree stems when pressed into organic matter by the weight of snow.

Finally there's the eastern red cedar or juniper (*Juniperus virginiana*), with the broadest habitat range of any conifer. Most commonly thought of as a pioneer species on sandy and gravelly hilltops, in some instances junipers can be found in swamps and along rivers and streams. Junipers can be bushy or sparse, tall or compact, depending on growing conditions. Unlike the other local conifers, junipers are common in the southern half of the lower peninsula, although the Michigan big tree is in Grand Traverse County.

Ah, the trail. From M-52 north of Chelsea, head west on Waterloo Rd. about 1-1/4 miles and turn right on Cassidy Rd. Head northwest past the prison about 1-1/2 miles, passing wetlands on both sides. Where the wetlands give way to uplands, there is an unmarked trailhead with a place to pull a couple tires off the sparsely traveled road on the south side. Head to the north side of the road and find the well established trail as it runs north and then west in the woods along the edge of an old field.

The trail will head north again through a mature woods and past a swamp to the east, with a tamarack-black spruce clump a short distance off. West of there is another swamp; from the trail one can see white cedars and more black spruce, and the adventurous will bushwhack along the shore to get a better view of impressive stands of each. Continue north on the trail through a red pine (*Pinus resinosa*) plantation to another old field. The trail then heads east through more mature woods overlooking a deciduous swamp to the north. When the trail reaches a huge field, start heading south on an old two-track which becomes a foot trail again as one climbs. The trail follows the edge of an old field to the top of a fairly long and steep hill dividing the first swamp encountered (now to the west) and another to the east. Continue south back to Cassidy Rd. where there are a series of posts to keep ATVs from entering, and head west a short walk back to the starting point. Look for junipers all along the route.

By Bob Treemore



Opposition to U.P. Mine Heats Up

Think that protesting is a thing of the past? Think that confusion over mining ventures, water quality, and government permits doesn't happen here in Michigan? Think again.

The long-running battle over the Kennecott sulfide mine in the Yellow Dog Plains in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, not far from the shores of Lake Superior, has recently taken a turn to the surreal, as a citizen was recently arrested for allegedly trespassing on public land.

For more details on this ongoing story, please see:

<http://headwatersnews.net/mining-article/citizen-arrested-for-trespassing-on-public-land/>

<http://michigan.sierraclub.org/issues/greatlakes/sulfidemining.html>

Why is Ann Arbor having FITS?

Are We Having FITS Yet? The Sierra Club Huron Valley Group continues to monitor developments affecting Fuller Park as part of the Fuller Intermodal Transportation Station project (FITS; see The Lookout, Winter 2010). The Ad Hoc Citizen Group for Sensible Planning has put together the following brochure detailing the issues with the proposed development. Check a2fits.weebly.com for further updates.

Did you know that The City of Ann Arbor is planning to spend more than \$10 million to help the University of Michigan build a parking structure in Fuller Park?

What's going on?

In August, City Council approved the initial steps toward constructing the Fuller Intermodal Transit Station project (FITS), also known as the Fuller Road Station. FITS is a 1000 place five-level parking structure to be built on three acres of Fuller Park, designed to last 75 years and to be able in the future to support an 8 story structure and 1600 spaces. Although a rail station is promised in a hypothetical Phase II, what is actually going to be built is a parking garage.

1. How much will FITS cost?

The City has not released any estimates of the cost of the project, but a memorandum given to the UM Regents on January 21 said that the estimated cost of the parking garage is \$46 million. UM will pay 78% of the construction cost, and have control of 78% of the parking spaces. The City will pay 22% of the construction cost (\$10.3 million) and, in addition, will pay for an environmental impact study and design work. So, the City will be spending nearly \$11 million to help build a parking structure whose primary user will be the University of Michigan.

The City has suggested that there will be a future Phase II, which would include a train station for the proposed Detroit-Ann Arbor commuter line. This argument, that the project is actually to benefit mass transit, is being used to defend the construction of the parking deck.

2. In fact, FITS will not include a train station.

We strongly support rail transit in Ann Arbor. But any potential need for a train station on Fuller Road is many years in the future. A little historical background will help to see this:

In 2006 and 2008, the Southeastern Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) sponsored studies of possible commuter rail in Southeast Michigan. They found that the predicted ridership for Ann Arbor-Detroit Commuter Rail was too small to make it eligible for federal funding. SEMCOG then designed the Ann Arbor-Detroit Commuter Rail "demonstration project", to show that ridership could be higher than the studies suggested. The demonstration project was planned to operate four commuter trains a day, with five stops - at Detroit, Dearborn, a new station near Metro Airport with a connecting bus shuttle, Ypsilanti, and Ann Arbor. The project would run for three years, using the existing

rail line belonging to the Norfolk-Southern railroad company, and the existing Amtrak stations. If the three year results show sufficient ridership, the project could then seek federal funding.

A serious difficulty for the Commuter Rail Demonstration Project is that the railway between Detroit and Ann Arbor has heavy freight traffic and cannot support this level of passenger use. The Federal stimulus package earmarked \$8.62 billion nationally for high-speed rail, and Michigan, in a joint effort with seven other states, requested \$800 million from the stimulus for work on the Pontiac-Chicago route, including elimination of a significant number of conflicts between freight trains and passenger trains on the Detroit-Ann Arbor tracks. However, Michigan received only \$40 million, the only part coming to the AA-Detroit Railway project for restoring the Dearborn station. SEMCOG hopes that they will be able to run a few trains for special events only, beginning in October. [Details can be found on the SEMCOG web site: [<http://www.semco.org/TransportationBlog.aspx?id=88037&blogid=87637>]

Any commuter service between Detroit and Ann Arbor will require very large Federal support. SEMCOG estimates that even with good ridership the service will require \$8 million/year in subsidies. But federal funding will not be granted until the three-year SEMCOG demonstration project (which now has no start date) shows adequate ridership to justify the support. There will be no need for a rail station on Fuller Road for many years, if ever. FITS has NO rail transit component.

"It's a parking garage!"

3. Why is the City paying \$10 million for parking spaces it doesn't need?

The City will have the use of 200 spaces in the proposed parking structure if it gets built. But right now there is a 250 space ground level City parking lot on the site in Fuller Park where the parking garage will stand. Why is the City planning to spend \$10 million for 238 spaces in a structure, when it has 250 ground level spaces now, for free?

4. There will be ongoing financial costs.

In addition to the \$10-11 million capital costs, the City will pay 22% of the operating costs for the garage.

5. The City will lose current revenues from parking leases with the UM.

Right now, UM pays the City \$69,000 for M-F daytime use of about 600 parking spaces in Fuller Park. If FITS is ever built, these will be vacated, and the University will pay only \$19,000/year for the use of 800 parking spaces in FITS, a City-owned garage sitting on City parkland. This is a loss of \$42,000 annually in rental income.

6. It will increase traffic problems.

FITS will be three shifts, 24 hour/day, parking garage for the UM Medical Center. At least 800 autos will be moving in and out of FITS three times every day. Automobile traffic and congestion in the area will be greatly increased. It is strange that a 1000 place parking garage is advertised as helping mass transit!

7. FITS sets a dangerous precedent.

The site of the proposed FITS belongs to the City. It's Public Land. The City's Ordinances allow the construction on Public Land belonging to a park only if the structure serves a park use.

Here's Ann Arbor City Code: CHAPTER 55 ZONING

5:10.13. PL public land district.

(1) Intent. This district is designed to classify publicly-owned uses and land and permit the normal principal and incidental uses required to carry out governmental functions and services.

(2) Permitted principal uses.

(a) Outdoor public recreational uses, such as: playgrounds, playfields, golf courses, boating areas, fishing sites, camping sites, parkways and parks. No structure shall be erected or maintained upon dedicated park land which is not customarily incidental to the principal use of the land.

If this project is built, it will set the precedent that the City can build whatever it likes in any of its parks.

The City parks belong to the citizens of Ann Arbor. They were not bought or donated to the City to provide acreage for the construction of a parking structure for the use of some other institution.

In 2008, the Ann Arbor electorate overwhelmingly approved a charter amendment (Section 14.3(b) of the City Charter) requiring a vote on sale of any parkland. Since a long term (30 years?) lease to the UM is equivalent to a gift or sale, the project should be subject to voter approval at a regular election.

FITS is a very bad deal for the city.

Ask the City Council to reconsider their \$10M commitment to this unnecessary project.

Fuller Park





You can help the earth at no cost to you — through your regular shopping!

- Over the past decade, the Sierra Club Huron Valley Group's **Shopping for the Earth** program has helped generate \$110 million to preserve natural areas and farmland.
- You can help us do more by buying **Shopping for the Earth** cards for the stores where you already shop.
- For every \$20 of cards you buy, you get the full \$20 in store credit—and earn from \$0.80 to as much as \$3, depending on the merchant, for the local Sierra Club.

"We donated \$140 last year to prevent sprawl and protect wildlife. It was easy, and it didn't cost us anything extra."
-Gwen Nystuen

"A bonus for nature for every grocery purchase I make- even chocolate!"
-Rita Mitchell

Two ways to order cards:

1. **Mail-In Order Form** for local stores -- see below.
2. **Online ordering** for national stores and some local stores including Amazon, iTunes, L.L. Bean, Land's End, Sears, and hundreds more - department stores, restaurants, hotels, and more.

Visit <http://michigan.sierraclub.org/huron/glscrip.htm> to learn more & get started!

Great for:

- ✓ Regular purchases like grocery shopping
- ✓ Giving as gifts
- ✓ Planned purchases like appliances
- ✓ Making online purchases



Mail-in Order Form

Please fill out the number of cards you'd like for each store below (maximum \$500 total per order).

Your total order: \$ _____

Ann Arbor People's Food Co-op **	_____ cards @ \$25 each	_____ cards @ \$50 each
Arbor Brewing Company **	_____ cards @ \$25 each	
Arbor Farms *	_____ cards @ \$20 each	
Borders Books & Music **	_____ cards @ \$25 each	_____ cards @ \$50 each
Busch's *	_____ cards @ \$5 each	
Hiller's Markets *	_____ cards @ \$50 each	
Kroger *	Obtain card at Kroger's and register it at www.krogercommunityrewards.com so that the Sierra Club receives a donation from your reloads.. see http://michigan.sierraclub.org/huron/kroger.htm for instructions	
Produce Station **	_____ cards @ \$25 each	_____ cards @ \$50 each
Whole Foods **	_____ cards @ \$50 each	_____ cards @ \$100 each
Meijer	A rebate program - please see: http://michigan.sierraclub.org/huron/docs/SFTE_Meijer.pdf	

* Reloadable cards! The Sierra Club receives a contribution each time you reload, so only one card is needed per person.

** Not reloadable—consider ordering several!

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Your information will not be shared with any group.



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www.michigan.sierraclub.org/huron/

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	Ed Steinman*	665-0248

Executive Committee

Ron Sell*

* = HVG Excom Member

How to Get HVG reminders via email!

At each HVG general meeting, there is an email sign up list. For those who missed it, or haven't joined us at a meeting, here's how you can get our general meeting reminders.

If you would like to receive email notices of each month's Huron Valley Group general meeting and occasional notices about other local Sierra Club activities send an email to Doug Cowherd at dmcowherd3@comcast.net with your name and "HVG email list" in the body of the message.

Are You A New Member?

Welcome to the Huron Valley Group of the Sierra Club. When you join the Sierra Club you are automatically a member of a local group, as well as a state chapter and the national organization. Membership entitles you to this newsletter as well as all editions of the state and national member publications. Check this page for our Directory with contacts on conservation, outings, political action, and the Inner City Outings program. Check the calendar in the middle of this issue for announcements of Monthly Public Program topics and our calendar of activities. We will be glad to see you at our next meeting or answer any questions if you care to call. Please take advantage of your membership as an opportunity to enjoy, preserve and protect our natural environment!

Membership

Yes, I want to help safeguard our nation's precious natural heritage. My check is enclosed.

Name _____

Address _____

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State _____ ZIP _____

email _____

Check enclosed, made payable to Sierra Club

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Card Number _____

Contributions, gifts and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to Sierra magazine and \$1.00 for your Chapter newsletter.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

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Spring 2010 Inside:

- Backpacking Nordhouse Dunes - pages 1-2
- Sustainable Option for Urbanwood - pages 4-5
- Calendar of Events - pages 7-9
- Conifers of the Interlobate - page 11



DID YOU KNOW... that this newsletter is ENTIRELY volunteer-written, volunteer-edited, and volunteer-assembled? The Huron Valley Group could really use your help on future issues of "The Lookout" with any of the following tasks:

- *ad wrangler*
- *article writer*
- *photography/graphics*
- *proofreading*
- *folding/assembling/mail-preparation*

And, no, you do not have to do something "every issue" (unless you want to!); just help out as you can. If you are interested in helping us out, or if you have any questions, please contact us at hvgnews@yahoo.com