

# The Lookout

Newsletter of the Sierra Club Huron Valley Group

Fall 2021



Thoughts from  
the Chair

2021 Successes &  
2022 Priorities



Political  
Committee

Regional & State  
Updates



Explore

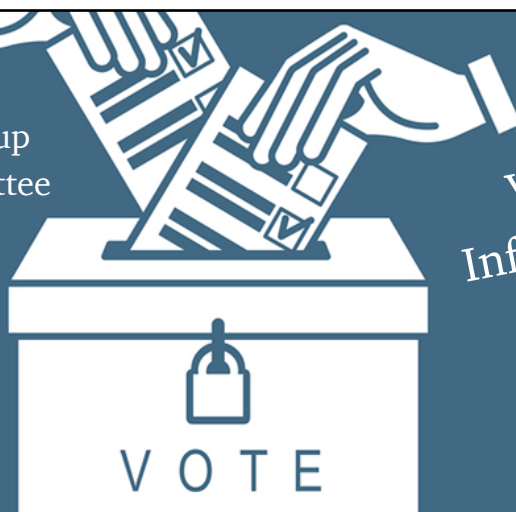
Local Outings  
Reopen



## ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Working Towards Equitable Access  
and Participation

Huron Valley Group  
Executive Committee  
Election



Voting  
Information  
Inside!

## Thoughts from the Chair

### Jason Frenzel

HVG Executive  
Committee Chair



In spite of all the challenges that 2021 has given all of us, I am amazed at the successes that the HVG team has accomplished this year.

The amazing Tajalli Hodge (HVG's Secretary) coordinated every aspect of installing a native garden in Sugarbrook Park in Ypsilanti Township. This planting will beautify the area, increase stormwater infiltration, and serve as pollinator habitat. Numerous HVG members helped at the two planting days, including many from the new(ish) UM group! We look forward to helping upkeep the planting in future years. Please consider joining us. You can find our events at [www.meetup.com/Sierra-Club-Huron-Valley](http://www.meetup.com/Sierra-Club-Huron-Valley)

Past HVG Chair Dan Ezekiel continues to create inspiring and educational program events. We look forward to returning to in-person (hopefully) next year. We plan to keep virtual opportunities, as well as in person, which will aid in their accessibility to folks who can't make it to the UM Botanical Gardens.

Building off of our program committee's successes, a suite of our current and past leadership hosted our first annual Trash Talk Tour. We hope this event will continue to educate our communities about the importance

of reducing refuse going to landfills and amazing work being done to accomplish this.

By the time this newsletter is published, our outings team, led by John Metzler, will have hosted over 40 hikes and cleanups. This, in only the second half of the year, after Sierra Club's self imposed pandemic safety restrictions were lifted. You can also find these outings on our Meetup page.

Expanding our outings and workdays, John is working to figure out how we can support the natural areas around St Joe's Hospital. Hopefully we'll be a link in the multi-decades chain of stewards of these unique ecosystems.

Jaime Magiera has brilliantly moved our newsletter to electronic only. We are excited about doing our part to save a few trees each year. Please check that you've also received an email announcement about this newsletter. If not, send us a note so we can get you subscribed!

We've had a number of political successes locally and helped with a number at the state level. Erica Ackerman, Steve Brown, and Nancy Schiffler all work on various components of our political advocacy. 2022 promises to be an important political year in Michigan. Please let us know if you'd like to be added to our advocacy email list.

Anne Brown, HVG Vice Chair, has been working to pull together a meeting of numerous environmental and justice related groups in the region. We hope this sharing and coordinating conversation will help us all get more done. If it goes well, we plan to have this gathering every year.

The UM Sierra Club group continues to accelerate and engage more and more students. As noted, we're delighted by the integration between HVG and UM Group's leadership teams and events. Congrats to Brendan Ireland on taking the helm this year. And, big thanks to Melinda Bostwick for coordinating HVG's side of this amazing partnership.

Building on the UM creation and successes, I am starting discussions around creating HVG sub-groups at EMU and in the Lenawee area. If you'd like to be involved, please contact me: A2JasonFrenzel@gmail.com.

Lastly, our fundraising team has had a suite of successes this year. Fabulous t-shirts have been sold at community events. We hosted two trivia fundraisers (one in person!) which were quite successful. And we had an anonymous donor offer to match any donations this year, up to \$1500.

Reflecting on all these accomplishments, and more, I'm deeply inspired by our team. I am honored to work alongside these amazing individuals. If you'd like to get involved in any of these activities, or have additional ideas, there's always more room at our table.

### Join us for the HVG Program Meetings

Every third Tuesday  
of the month from 7:30-8:30PM

<https://www.sierraclub.org/michigan/huron-valley/virtual-meetings>

## Political Committee Update

**Erica Brown Ackerman**  
Political Committee Chair



Members of the HVG continue actively pressing for environmental action by our elected officials and other government bodies. One such issue is recycling in Ann Arbor, where recyclables have been shipped out of town and out of state since the Materials Recycling Facility (the "MRF") was shut down in 2016. Last year, when it looked like the City was considering an arrangement where recyclables would be shipped to Lansing for processing at an as yet unbuilt facility, we lobbied City Council to authorize the local non-profit Recycle Ann Arbor to rebuild the MRF at no cost to the City. The City eventually accepted Recycle Ann Arbor's bid, and this month the state-of-the-art MRF opened its doors.

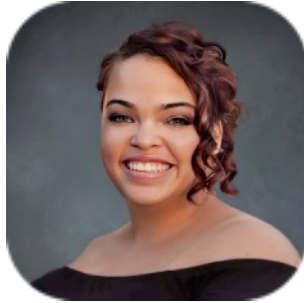
On other fronts, HVG members play leading roles on the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission and the Ann Arbor Environmental Commission, not to mention in the Washtenaw Zero Waste Coalition. Through Parks and Rec we have pushed for increased bike trails and open space preservation, while on the Environmental Commission, members advise the city on issues such as remediation of the 1,4-dioxane groundwater plume, reaction to PFAS contamination of the City's drinking water, and choosing between the Huron River and Detroit River as sources for the City's drinking water. In addition, members are working to encourage the Ann Arbor Public Schools to set an ambitious goal for reducing greenhouse gas emissions from their facilities.

# Environmental Justice Update

## Tajalli Hodge

HVG Executive Committee

The fall rainy season is here! While some folks may prefer a dry fall, this rain is absolutely integral for establishing the Michigan native wildflower garden



recently planted at Sugarbrook Park in Ypsilanti Township. This project has been in the works for the better part of 2021, with conception starting earlier in the year and funding secured from donors, including the Ann Arbor Area Board of Realtors, Michigan Recreation and Park Association, and the Washtenaw County Water Resources Office.

The goal of this project was to turn a large area of turfgrass into a beautiful native garden for a community that contains underdeveloped green



spaces. On October 2nd and 9th we did just that. Over 40 volunteers came together to plant about 1200 young plants on the first work day and spread close to 20 cubic yards of mulch on the second plant day along with installing nearly 550 additional plants.

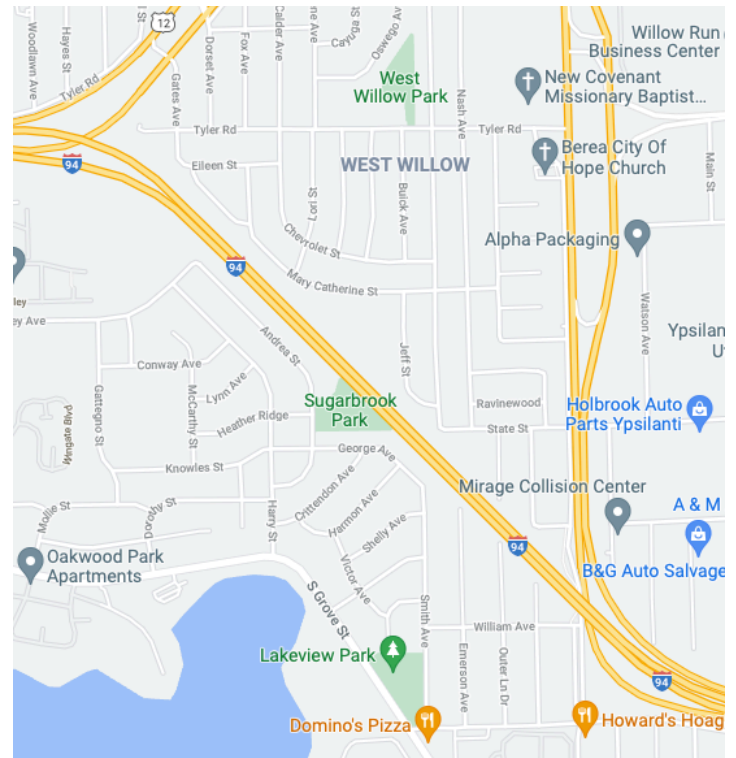
Some of the plants installed include wild strawberry, nodding onion, purple coneflower, and black-eyed susan among others. These plants will soak up excess water in the park - reducing standing water - and increase the biodiversity of insects and other pollinators. As



an additional bonus, the garden is shaped like the state of Michigan, complete with an upper and lower peninsula.

Although the install has been completed, there is additional work yet to be done. We will need multiple workdays, especially in this first year of the garden, to eliminate weeds and ensure that our native plants are thriving. We'll also be installing some pavers and edging as well. To get involved, contact Tajalli Hodge at [tkelleygraves@gmail.com](mailto:tkelleygraves@gmail.com)

*Sugarbrook Park is located off Andrea St. at Heather Ridge in Ypsilanti Township*



## Communications

### Jaime Magiera

Communications Committee  
Chair



As I mentioned in the last issue, this spring the HVG Executive Committee voted to discontinue the print version of the newsletter. It was by far the largest expense in our budget. Each issue cost us thousands of dollars to print and distribute. Also, the embedded carbon cost was quite high. To make sure the membership was aware of the change, we sent out postcards and posted on social media. I'm happy to say the response has been quite positive, with many members reaching out to say they'd like to receive the digital version of the newsletter. We are still sending a link to the newsletter to every HVG member whom we have an email address for and have just sent out another postal mailing notifying members of the change.

In tandem with switching to a digital-only newsletter, voting in the ExCom election is now online only as well. The candidate bios are now in table on a webpage with a simple checkbox form for making the selections. This means voting is efficient and easy. We hope this opens the door to more HVG members voting in the ExCom election, and maybe even running themselves in the future.

Another project I'm embarking on as Communications Chair relates to the myriad of communications the HVG leadership participates in through the course of a year. On a regular basis we receive questions from the community about land management, water

quality monitoring, wildlife protection, and a variety of other related topics. Often, one or more leadership members will provide detailed responses to the questions via email or phone. So much valuable information is exchanged, I've wondered how we could harness it as a resource for the greater community. What I've come up with is a regular "Ask the Leadership" blog post. If we receive a question from the community that we feel the response is beneficial to the greater public, we'll put it into a blog post for posterity. This could be a great way to expand HVG's value as a resource for environmentalism and sustainability information. Look for our first blog post in the coming weeks.

On personal note, my son turned one year old this July. It's been a joy to watch him explore the wonders of the natural world for the first time. His first few forays on grass were tentative and cautious. Now, there's no stopping him as he bounds through the our nearby parks. He's been marveling at the first snowfalls of the season. I can see that it's magical to him. Watching his curiosity and joy as he explores the natural world reinvigorates me to carry out the mission of the Sierra Club:

*To explore, enjoy, and protect the wild places of the earth;*

*To practice and promote the responsible use of the earth's ecosystems and resources;*

*To educate and enlist humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment; and to use all lawful means to carry out these objectives.*

I wish you good health and wellbeing always.

## Outings Update: Explore and Enjoy!

**Shonda Tohm and John Metzler**

After a 16 month hiatus, we celebrated the reopening of local outings with an afternoon hike at Matthaei Botanical Gardens on July 5th and have rolled on since. In the first three months of outings, we held or co-promoted 24 events. And, despite intentionally keeping our traditional outings small, we've had somewhere between 150 and 200 participants across those events. We've come back from the COVID-19 hiatus stronger, with the broader and deeper reach we were just starting to develop when outings were shut down.

We've hosted outings in all 3 of the counties we serve, with special credit to leader Chris Kosal for extending our reach into Lenawee and Monroe Counties. Chris further served our southern members with an outing to the Crosswinds Marsh on the southern edge of Wayne County. Thanks to Judy Webster's work, we're offering longer, and often hilly, aerobic hikes (6-8 miles or more at a brisk 20-minute/mile pace). Shonda also was finally able to lead her first hike, her planned debut having been delayed by the COVID hiatus. Both Dan Ezekiel and Stephen Brown led bike outings, Dan in conjunction with our September program, Steve with the Trash Talk Tour. Dan also organized two outings tied to our recent monthly programs on local small farms, with a third coming up in October.

We provided local support for the Michigan Chapter (state-level) Outing at Brighton State Recreation Area. We partnered with the River Raisin Watershed Council for two outings led by



naturalist Meija Knafl, with Ypsilanti Township for another two naturalist-led outings, and with Washtenaw County NAPP on two service days.

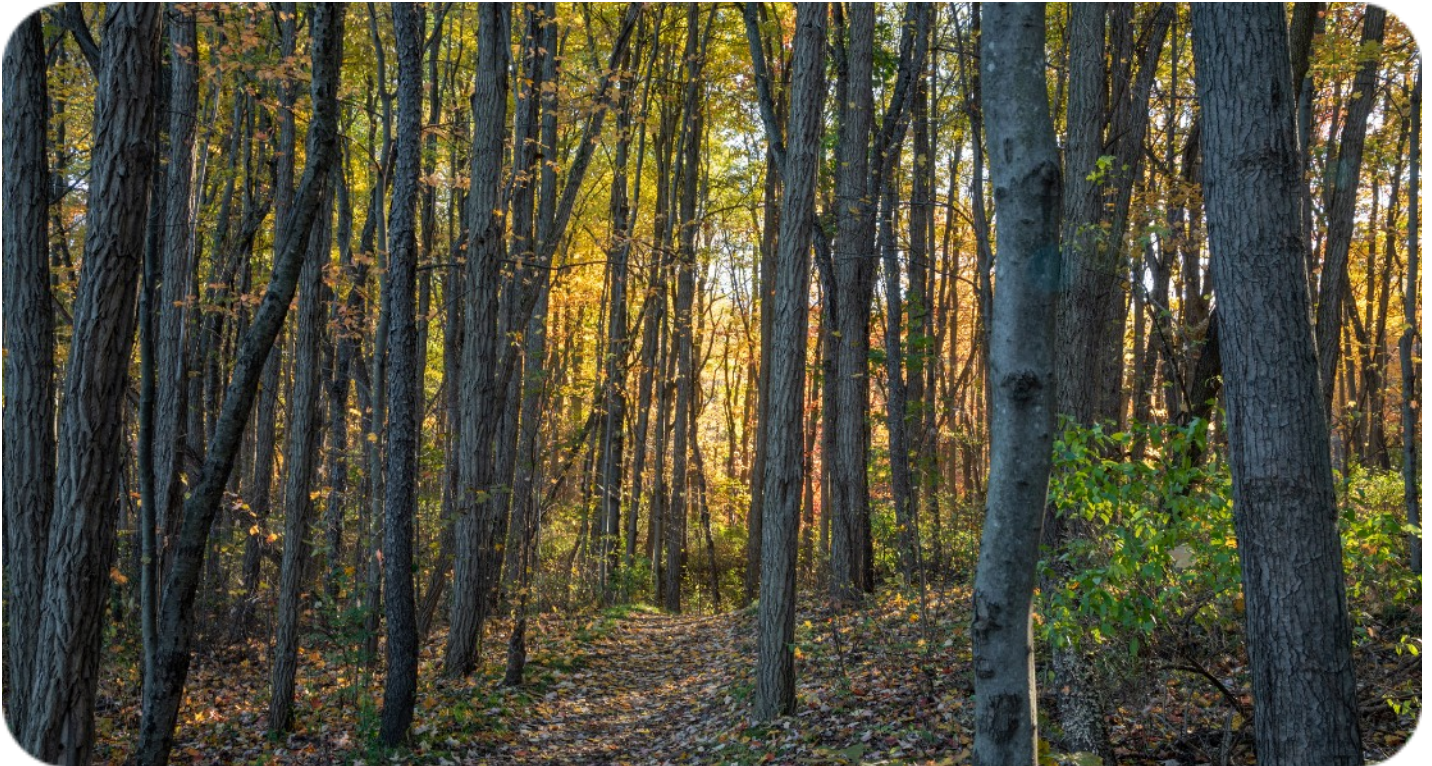
As we look to the coming months, our 2nd Annual Fall Color Tour is in full swing. We expect this to be an annual series (would be a silly name otherwise), offering 2 or more outings each weekend and some on weekdays throughout the peak color season in southeast Michigan. Check out [our Meetup](#) as we continue rolling out events, depending on how fall color in SE Michigan progresses.

The end of fall color is not the end of our hikes; winter hiking has lots of beauty to offer as well. Outings will continue through the winter, including hikes, service days, and connections to the Monthly Program.

If you haven't joined one of our outings since re-opening, make a plan to do so soon. Whether we are learning about the various species of duckweed with EMU Professor and long-time HVG member Gary Hannan, enjoying ripe blackberries straight from the bush, or watching 25 sandhill cranes erupt from a wetland, we always welcome good company! We hope to see you on a trail soon!



Highland SRA, White Lake



Pickerel Lake, Pinckney SRA





## Sierra Club Huron Valley Group

<http://sierraclub.org/michigan/huron-valley>

[hvgsierraclub@gmail.com](mailto:hvgsierraclub@gmail.com)

P.O. Box 7802  
Ann Arbor, MI 48107

---

### HVG Executive Committee

**Jason Frenzel**

*Chair*

**Anne Brown**

*Vice Chair*

**Jaime Magiera**

*Communications Committee Chair*

**Erica Ackerman**

*Political Committee Chair*

**Dan Ezekiel**

*Programs Committee Chair*

**Tajalli Hodge**

**Jessica Ankley**

## 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 our online calendar for announcements of Monthly Public Program topics and other 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!

## 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, you can sign up at...

<https://sierraclub.org/michigan/huron-valley/email-list>

*The Lookout is published in Spring and Fall each year. Design, layout, and typesetting by Jaime Magiera*



## Shopping for the Earth

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

- Over the past 15 years, the Sierra Club Huron Valley Group's **Shopping for the Earth** has been a very successful program for supporting our efforts to protect parks, natural areas and local farmland, and to address local and regional environmental problems.
- For every \$20 of cards you buy, you get the full \$20 in store credit and earn from \$0.80 to as much as \$4.60, depending on the merchant, for the Sierra Club.

### Great for:

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

There are two ways to order cards:

1. Mail-In Order Form for groceries from local stores including:

Ann Arbor People's Food Co-op, Arbor Brewing Company, Arbor Farms, Busches, Kroger, Meijers, Produce Station, Whole Foods, and more...

2. Online ordering from over 600 national merchants including:

Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Bath & Body Works, Best Buy, Cabela's, Chipotle Mexican Grill, CVS/pharmacy, Econo Lodge, Glen's Market, Groupon, Home Depot, iTunes, Kohl's, L.L.Bean, Lands' End, Lowe's, Noodles & Company, Office Max, REI, Rite Aid, Sears, gas stations, Starbucks, Tim Hortons, United Artist Theatres, Walgreens, Whole Foods, and more...

Visit our website for more information:

<https://www.sierraclub.org/michigan/huron-valley/shopping-for-earth>

## Huron Valley Group Executive Committee Elections

The Sierra Club is the largest democratically run environmental organization in the world, with direct election of leaders at the national Board, state Chapter and local Group level each year. Participation by members in the voting process is crucial for maintaining this structure. The Executive Committee (ExCom) for the Huron Valley Group is responsible for the administration and operation of the group, and does so entirely with volunteers. This fall, HVG members will be electing three ExCom members for two-year terms beginning in January 2022. The Nominations Committee has nominated four candidates for the three ExCom positions.

All Sierra Club members within HVG territory (Washtenaw, Monroe, and Lenawee Counties) at the time the mailing list for the Fall newsletter is generated are eligible to vote. Although the member meeting was moved to the December 14th to accommodate the holidays, the Executive Committee voted to keep the voting deadline midnight of the following Tuesday (December 21st).

Because the decision was made earlier this year to provide the newsletter in digital format only, thereby saving the organization thousands of dollars and minimizing environmental impact, voting is being conducted via a secure online web form. Please review the candidate statements below and vote online by December 21st.

<https://www.sierraclub.org/michigan/huron-valley/blog/2021/12/hvg-executive-committee-election-2021>



### HVG ExCom Election

**July 20, 2021:** Nominees must inform the Nominating Committee of their interest by the July Member Meeting

**Aug 05, 2021:** Nominating Committee notifies candidates and ExComm of nomination status.

**Sep 21, 2021:** Any candidate petitions and/or ballot issue petitions must be delivered to the Nominating Committee at the September General Meeting.

**Oct 01, 2021:** Candidate statements and photographs are due to Elections Committee. Final candidate list given to the Executive Committee.

**Nov 1, 2021:** Eligible voter list is pulled from the member database. Election materials are finalized to be posted on the website and distributed through the newsletter.

**Dec, 21 2021:** Ballots are due. Ballot count process begins, completing no later than December 31. After completion, candidates are notified.

## HVG Executive Committee Candidates 2021



Erica Brown  
Ackerman

Climate change, the greatest threat of our time, drives my environmental activism and originally led me to run for the Executive Committee of the Huron Valley Group. I currently serve as group representative to the state Executive Committee, where I am Chapter secretary. In addition, I am chair of the HVG's Political Committee and am active in the Fundraising Committee. Previous to my participation in the HVG ExCom, I helped found an Ann Arbor [350.org](http://350.org) group, which I chaired for one year. As climate lead in Organizing for Action, Washtenaw County, I organized multiple educational outreach programs, reaching hundreds of participants. The Sierra Club plays a vital role in the climate struggle and other environmental issues. It is my goal to further that work in any way I can.



Anne Brown

To My Sierra Club Friends:

I'm thankful for the opportunity to have served as Vice President this past year and I am seeking re-election for that position.

The HVG continues to make great strides in working to protect our environment, address inequities and support both state and national priorities.

If re-elected, I hope to focus my efforts on building the capacity of the organization through membership recruitment and engagement as well as collaborating with like-minded organizations to address our climate and conservation needs.

Thank you for your consideration and for everything you do!

## HVG Executive Committee Candidates 2021



Alyshia Dyer

I am running for a position on our Sierra Club Executive Board because I am passionate about sharing our love for the environment with children in our county, especially from Ypsilanti, where I grew up. As an Ypsilanti Township resident I hope to use my connection with my community to foster more engagement and work with others on the e-board to plan youth outings and field trips. I also want to be more involved with environmental justice and continue learning about how important it is to protect our climate. Currently I am a graduate student at University of Michigan pursuing dual degrees in policy and social work. My policy interests include social and environmental justice, and poverty elimination. Prior to my graduate studies I served as a parks service officer (where I found my love for nature) and then was hired after that to serve as a deputy sheriff with Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office. After seven years, I decided to go back to school to pursue policy and social work so I could help change policies in our county that harm people impacted by our justice system. I currently serve on our community action board, the Black Lives Matter Washtenaw County Community Mental Health task force, and am a Big Brothers, Big Sisters mentor. My hobbies include hiking, collecting rocks, improv, and playing chess.



Jaime Magiera

Since being elected to the Executive Committee in Winter 2018, I've worked to expand the reach of the HVG— particularly amongst youth and traditionally marginalized members of our community, such as people of color. As Chair of the Communications Committee that work has included redesigning our newsletter, expanding our social media presence, incorporating video & audio into our materials, and helping move the election process online. As other Sierra Club groups looked to stay connected with their membership during the pandemic, I started the Bootstrap Project to provide basic guidance on how they can organize, publicize, and manage online member meetings. I've also worked to build partnerships between the HVG and other local organizations with shared goals- including the Washtenaw Bicycling & Walking Coalition to decrease carbon emissions, and the People's Food Co-op to promote sustainable food systems.

My political areas of focus include local water protection- such as from the Gelman dioxane plume, community renewable energy projects, sustainable food systems, environmental justice, and protecting our surrounding green spaces. I'm asking for your vote for re-election so that I can continue expanding the group's reach and its effectiveness in building a more sustainable future.

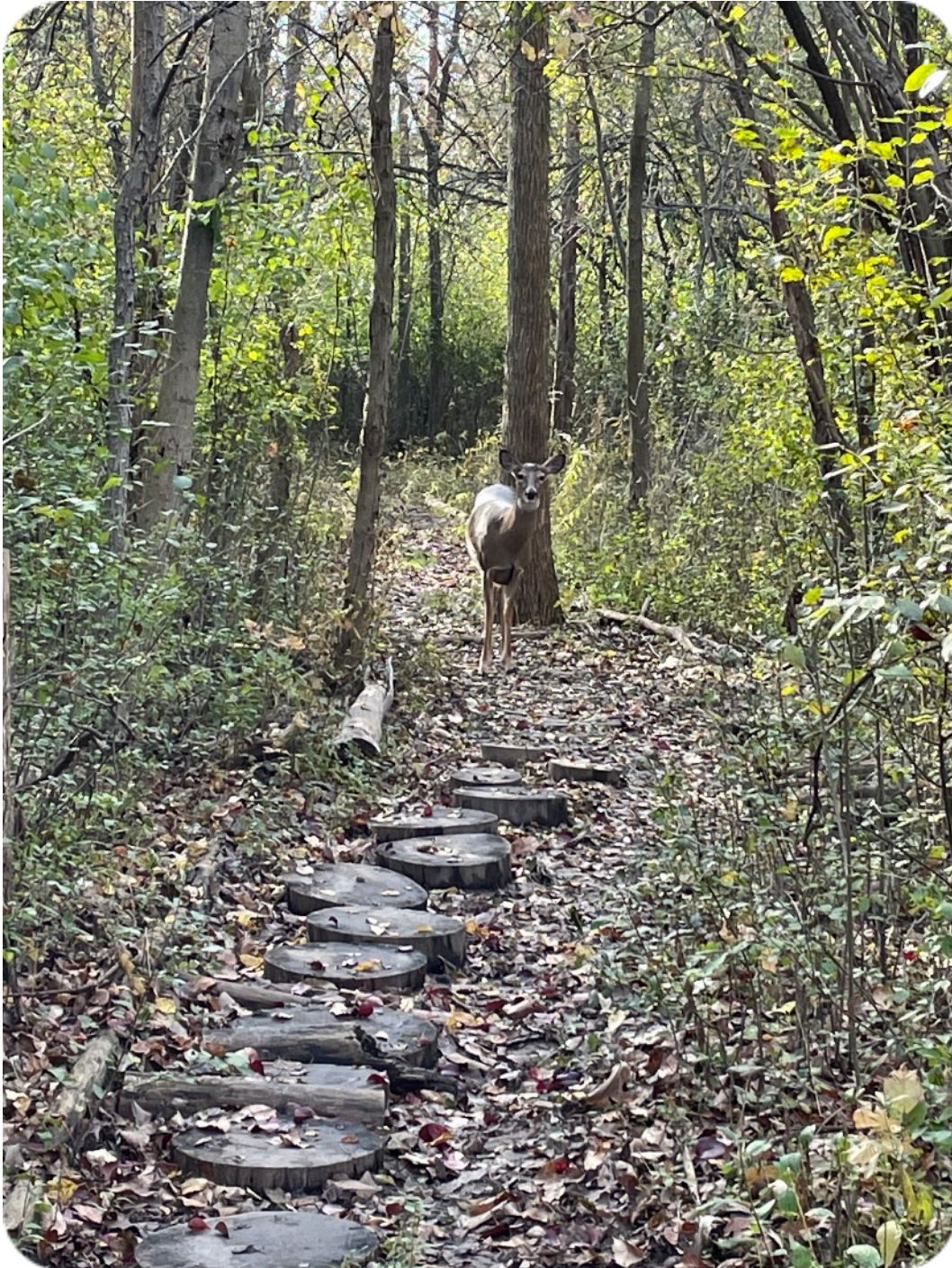


SIERRA  
CLUB  
FOUNDED 1892

**Huron Valley Group**

P.O. Box 7802

Ann Arbor, MI 48107



Molin Nature Area

*Photo by Sammie Anderson-Magiera*