

40th Anniversary Issue

Reaching More Than
20,000 Sierra Club Members
in Massachusetts

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Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

M A S S A C H U S E T T S

SIERRAN

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SIERRA CLUB
FOUNDED 1892

How time flies...

It was just 40 years ago that a group of concerned activists set out on a mission to protect the environment. From those beginnings, the Sierra Club is celebrating an important milestone: our 40th Anniversary in New England.

Inside this special issue of the Sierran, you'll see that the past decades have been filled with activism and accomplishments – with a special emphasis on the first two decades. The next Sierran will bring us to the present. But the pressures of global warming, deforestation and pollution continue. The Club's volunteers and supporters also continue our commitment to preserve and protect our environment.

We hope that you take a moment to renew your commitment to the environment. While part of our funding comes from our national headquarters, we depend on YOUR generosity to help us meet our financial goals. In these difficult financial times, more than ever, we need your help to continue our work. Please help us pursue our increasingly essential efforts. Please show your support - and send your contribution today.

*Thank you,
Dan Proctor, Chapter Chair*

Massachusetts Sierra Club

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40 YEARS OF PROTECTING OUR COMMONWEALTH

Letter from the desk of James McCaffrey, Director

In 1969 a hardy group of Sierra Club members made a decision... It was time to "think globally and act locally." The event would pave the way -- less than a year later -- for the formal founding in 1970 of the *New England Sierra Club*. This year, Sierrans across Massachusetts and New England are celebrating 40 years of protecting our region's environment, and for nearly half this time I have been honored to work for the Club.

I began my journey with the Sierra Club as many do. I was drawn to the spectacular nature photography on Sierra Club calendars in my local bookstore, the publications for which the Club is so well known. I wanted to learn more about the Club, and like so many before me, filled out the form in the back of a desk calendar and joined. Shortly afterwards I was invited to a meeting of the then-active Sierra Club International Committee, chaired locally at that time by Mary Ann Nelson. The committee was focused on protecting disappearing rain forests, indigenous peoples, and tropical habitat. I wanted to get more involved, so I attended meetings, wrote an article for the *Sierran*, helped plan, organize, and table at an event at the Boston Public Library, and began to learn much from my new friends and fellow Chapter volunteers about protecting the earth.

After volunteering for a year I applied for a rare job opportunity within the Club, working for then Chapter Director Priscilla Chapman, who served as both mentor and guide - a true leader in the environmental field. During my time working for the Chapter since then, volunteers and staff working together have accomplished much these past twenty years. We helped pass the Massachusetts Rivers Protection Act, transforming the way Massachusetts would permit river-front development, in turn protecting thousands of miles of river, lakes, streams, and habitat. We defeated a cargo-port in Maine, and another proposal to fill wet-

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ON THE COVER: Mt Norwottuck, Amherst, MA. Photo by Elisa Campbell

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Thoreau Group's First Incarnation – 1972-1985

by Gil Woolley and Dan Proctor

One of the most active groups in the New England Chapter was the Thoreau Group, in the western suburbs of Boston. It formed in 1972 and from the beginning fought, and often won, environmental battles. We present here a brief recounting of two outstanding successes of the Group.

W.R. Grace

The former W.R. Grace chemical plant in Woburn is well known due to the book and

"When I became involved with the Thoreau Group in 1972 it could have been used as the paradigm of what a group should be. We could have staffed a UN agency with our scientists, engineers and attorneys!"

--Gil Woolley

movie, *A Civil Action*. But there was also a Grace chemical plant in Acton, a Thoreau Group town. A toxic solvent, 1-1-dichloroethane, turned up in the water of two town wells near this plant four years before the Woburn case arose. The polluted Acton wells supplied 40 percent of the town's drinking water. But Grace denied responsibility and state and federal environmental agencies declined to take action.

With assistance from ACES (Acton Citizens for Environmental Safety, founded specifically to deal with this drinking-water issue), Thoreau Group collected evidence. This included photographs of a large, obviously polluted pond and of a railroad tank car stenciled with "1-1-dichloroethane." The tank-car photograph on page one of the local newspaper convinced town, state and federal officials to take action.

The Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund joined a suit brought by the U.S. EPA. The toxic plant was designated as a National Superfund Site—one of the nation's earliest. The courts forced W. R. Grace to clean up the site and some of this work continues today.

Route 2

In the late 1960's and early 70's, the Massachusetts Department of Public Works made two attempts to turn Route 2, between Acton and Cambridge, into a major limited-access expressway. On both occasions the Thoreau Group led the opposition and succeeded in stopping the proposal.

Our principal arguments were that the proposed design made a serious and unnecessary impact on the environment, especially in Concord, and also on the reservoir that supplies most of Cambridge's drinking water. We also argued that the limitations on the capacity of Route 2 were not due, primarily, to the design of the road but to the capacity limitations of the roadways that Route 2 fed into. Route 128 was (and still is) at over-capacity during much of the day while the eastern terminus is the grossly over-capacity Fresh Pond area. From Fresh Pond, Route 2 traffic flows into narrow, twisting Fresh Pond Parkway and then into very busy Memorial or Storrow Drives.

Thoreau Group made Cambridge aware of the threat to the City's water supply and this was probably the issue that killed the plan. We supported some local safety improvements, some of which have recently been implemented.

These major achievements, and many less notable ones, were accomplished entirely by volunteers at virtually no cost.

Gil Woolley has been active in the chapter and group since the 1970's and, among other things, has written many articles for the Sierran. Dan Proctor helped restart the Thoreau Group and is recently become chair of the Massachusetts Chapter.



"I will never forget creeping along up the railroad line ... to see what W.R. Grace was really doing on their land there." – Alexandra Dawson. Photo, New England Sierran, circa 1978.

Only Sierra Club...

by Dan Proctor

...is positioned to clearly become the nation's most effective environmental organization. There are tens of thousands of environmental organizations in this country, but not one of them has a permanent organization at all three levels of government: federal, state and local. The Sierra Club is already well-established at the federal and state levels. With its group structure, which encompasses several towns, it is well-prepared to develop local organization. In a highly town-centric state like Massachusetts, this is a logical step.

In the era before global warming, there was less need to maintain a Sierra Club presence in every town. Local-level environmentalists, if they ever organized at all, typically rallied to address temporary issues specific to their locality. After the issue faded, the organization dissolved. But global warming requires abiding local presence since this challenge is everywhere, involves everyone, and is a long-term, massive threat. Furthermore, the complexity involved in shifting our economy and households from dwindling, polluting energy to sustainable green energy requires an all-hands-on-board approach. It requires

continual learning, exchange of information, and informed assessment of alternative policies.

Another reason for us to build local presence is rather obvious: to make it convenient for our members to participate in organized effort. And the Club has a priceless resource for making organized effort both easier and more effective: the online "Clubhouse." In its 118 years, the Club has accumulated a rich trove of materials to support its active members. The internet makes it possible for local members across the country to access these materials instantly and free of charge. I was amazed the first time I explored this website, and I encourage you to have a look for yourself at clubhouse.sierraclub.org. To log in, the user name is "clubhouse" and the password is "explore."

If you would like to help organize a Sierra Club committee in your town, and especially if you would be willing to serve as chair, please let us know. You may reach me by email at chapter-chair@sierraclubmass.org or by phone at 617-423-5775.❖

Dan Proctor is the new Chair of the Massachusetts Chapter.



Taking a break... 1975. Ft Warren is seen in the background as visitors stop to rest on George's Island. The Boston Harbor Islands National Recreational Area was later established in part due to the tireless efforts of New England Sierra Club activists.

Origins

by Elisa Campbell

In the late 1960s and early 70s, Americans became more interested in and concerned about the environment. This new interest led to the first Earth Day in 1970, important legislation, and an increase in membership in organizations working on environmental issues. The Sierra Club, which had been founded in California in 1892 and was basically a western organization, was growing in the east. To serve these members, the organization began a process of creating new chapters. The Atlantic Chapter, which had included the entire east coast from Maine to Florida, evolved into many chapters, including, 40 years ago, the New England Chapter – which covered all the New England states except Connecticut which became its own chapter.

The New England Chapter set up an office in the region's largest city, Boston, and went to work. As you will read in Bob Murphy's recollections elsewhere in this Sierran, it was a lively time. Among the earliest leaders were Roger Marshall, Stuart and Abigail Avery, Birge Albright, Alexandra Dawson, and John and Louise Lewis from Massachusetts, as well as many people from the other states; I particularly remember Bob Norman from New Hampshire and Lowell Krasner from Vermont.

During the 70s, the chapter tended to have its winter meetings in the Boston office and move around the region for meetings during the times of the year when travel was less likely to be a problem (I do remember the Blizzard of '78, when I got off the bus in a totally snowed-in Boston to walk between mounds of snow and buried cars up Joy Street to our office). The first chapter meeting I attended was in Rockport, in a bookstore with a view of the harbor, where most of the meeting was consumed by a vigorous discussion of the pros and cons of nuclear energy. As it turned out,

the New England chapter helped lead the way for the national Sierra Club to oppose construction of new nuclear plants.

The New England chapter devoted a lot of its efforts for the first couple of decades to supporting the priorities of the national Sierra Club in congress, particularly working with our congressional delegation and senators for passage of Clean Air and Clean Water legislation, and for the protection of significant portions of Alaska with the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act. New England's delegation soon earned a reputation for being good on environmental causes; our Senator Paul Tsongas was a nationally recognized leader on the Alaska bill.

Of course we also had plenty of issues of our own, too. In addition to nuclear power, by the mid-70's the chapter was working to protect George's Bank from destructive oil exploration and drilling, and getting involved in the whole complex issue of over-exploitation of fish (see David Dow's article on sustainable fisheries). Fighting off-shore drilling expanded to protecting the entire outer continental shelf (a national campaign). The 70s was an era of "oil shocks" and efforts for conservation and improving public transportation. The great battles about the Central Artery, harbor tunnel, and whether or not the country and state would do the sensible thing and connect North and South Stations by rail began in the mid-70's as well. And can you believe that it took a fight to get the Red Line extended to Alewife?

As people who often enjoy recreating in the wild areas of our neighboring states, we worked to help create wilderness areas in the White and



The Club was instrumental in protecting Greylock Glen from development in both the 1980's and again in the late 1990's. Most of what is shown in this photo would have been developed as a ski resort or vacation homes.

Green Mountain National Forests and to protect rivers in Maine from major new dams. We fought a proposed tanker port in Sears Port, Maine. Closer to home, we began working to create parks on the Boston harbor islands, and helped get a program of volunteer stewards on the island up and running.

In the late 70's Massachusetts finally got a Bottle Bill (I remember picking up litter with other local activists, including our current congressman, John Olver, as part of our work to call attention to the need for that bill). The legislature also passed a bill to protect farmlands by giving farmers the option to be taxed at "current use" instead of the development value of their land. In the meantime, many volunteers were working at the local area in their Sierra Club groups: Greater Boston (GBG), Essex County, Thoreau, Cape Cod and Pioneer Valley (PVG) were active through most of this time. A group would work on an issue until it either got too big for the group to handle on its own, or it had ramifications elsewhere. For instance, the Dukakis administration proposed rerouting parts of Route 2 in both the east (Lincoln) and the "west" (Wendell); that provoked a united front against both ideas. Both water drinkers in GBG and water "suppliers" in PVG opposed the diversion of water from the Connecticut River

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Political Endorsements Have an Impact *by Phil Sego*

Many shoppers regularly look for certain symbols or words to guide them. In the produce aisle they often look for “organic” or “local.” For coffee and other items many seek out “fair trade.” If they don’t see those words, they usually won’t buy the item.



Senator Kennedy talks to Club members about Acid Rain in 1989 on the summit of Mt. Greylock.

Political endorsements can have a similarly significant impact in a race, helping either establish or confirm a candidate’s positions, credentials and commitment. Many voters use endorsements as part of the process in determining their vote. Because of this, the Sierra Club invests a significant effort in reviewing candidates’ qualifications and making endorsements.

Since making its first presidential endorsement in 1984, the Sierra Club has increasingly come across as the “green seal of approval,” indicating which candidates care about the environment and are willing to work to protect and preserve it. Mirroring the club’s commitment, the Massachusetts chapter has also consistently been endorsing in federal elections and some high-profile statewide races.

James Watt, President Reagan’s anti-environment Interior Secretary, isn’t remembered for doing much to help green causes but he did do two things: 1. His attacks on the environment helped double Sierra Club membership, and 2. The Sierra Club started ramping up our political activity.

In the past decade, the chapter began a major effort to greatly expand our political endorsement program. We set a goal of evaluating all 200 state legislative races, and many municipalities, as well as all federal elected offices. In the most recent election, the Club surpassed our goals.

The huge increase in our effectiveness was not due to just a greater commitment by our volunteers. The Massachusetts legislature is becoming “greener,” and our ability to ascertain a candidate’s environmental credentials has been helped by the internet’s fast and easy access to information. We have also been working with many of our organizational partners, thus availing ourselves to a large pool of additional data. As a result, we have become important allies of our elected officials, working together towards shared goals.

The endorsement process is instrumental in promoting the club’s priorities. The Sierra Club, as one of the best-recognized names, can and has made a difference to voters choosing between candidates. Throughout the year, the all-volunteer Chapter Political Committee investigates the voting records of incumbents and challengers, reviews questionnaires and discusses policy with candidates. Some of the candidates have been previously endorsed; some are new. All are candidates who will advocate for environmental protection. The Chapter’s political program is more active than ever, and in the coming year will be reviewing all 200 legislative races, 10 congressional, plus many statewide races.

There are countless elections where a Sierra-endorsed candidate has won by a slim margin. In many cases, Club volunteers have staffed phone banks, worked at polls and conducted door-to-door campaigns. The Chapter was also helpful in presidential primaries in New Hampshire, helping fill buses with volunteers – securing solid victories for our endorsees.

Many important environmental issues you’re reading about in this Sierran, as well as many others, will be decided in this legislative session. The Committee hopes that you, as someone who clearly cares about the environment, will find some time to help elect pro-environment legislators. You can make a big difference in an election by volunteering. We urge you to support our endorsed candidates! If you have questions about the endorsement process, or can help elect environmental candidates, contact cpc@sierraclubmass.org.



Political Activists Call for Watt’s Resignation

Phillip Sego is the Chair of the Chapter Political Committee

Faith, Hope and Ecology

by Bob Murphy

There are avatars and prophets in the world. If you've spent some time with the Sierra Club's Massachusetts Chapter, perhaps you've met a few. On the beaches of Cape Cod, in the Berkshires, in Essex County, and in other places, the Sierra Club can teach you some of the things that you need to know about your environment and your life. It can be a subtle experience, but still, it can be enlightening.

On the first Earth Day, April 22, 1970, I was a former VISTA worker, recently arrived in Boston, and the Earth Day celebrations changed my life. After graduating from college, I became a volunteer for the Sierra Club's New England Chapter. Abigail and Stuart Avery were very influential and much appreciated. Saundy Cohen was the Chapter's office manager and Edie Wilkinson was editing the newsletter. I wrote lots of newsletter articles, I helped with office chores, and I went on day trips with leaders like Bill Lamb and Gerry Ives. John and Louise Lewis introduced me to the Boston Harbor Islands.

Donald Worster, the environmental historian, was the leader of a little study group at Harvard where I learned about John Muir, Aldo Leopold, and Rachel Carson. I was especially impressed by Henry Thoreau. Like Henry, I wanted to know more and more about Massachusetts -- both social history and environmental issues. I've seldom been active in "save the wilderness" campaigns. Even in my environmental work, like Henry, I've moved to the beat of a different drummer.

The Sierra Club office in Boston was close to the government offices on Beacon Hill and it wasn't unusual to see crowds of people screaming against school integration; I saw protestors throw chunks of ice at a yellow bus that was driving past the State House. Thoreau confronted the problems of racism, and, more than a century later, there was still a lot of nastiness in Massachusetts. That, too,

aware of the lead pollution problem. He assumed that the Sierra Club was indifferent to urban issues.

I worked with Barbara Fegan to help establish the Massachusetts state cancer registry. I was very active in helping to prepare the Bay State's right-to-know law. Labor unions, community health advocates and environmentalists worked together to develop the right-to-know program. For several years I was a volunteer guide on the Boston Harbor Islands where one day I met Helen (Lyn) Dalzell, who subsequently became my wife.

While I was managing the Chapter's office in the mid-70s, we received a letter from a church in the Worcester area that wanted information about the Sierra Club and environmental issues. At that time it was very, very unusual to see any kind of cooperation between environmentalists and

major religious groups. I had worked with religious leaders in the civil rights movement and in the peace movement. At the time, discussions about "environmental justice" and "ecology theology" seemed very radical.

Bit by bit, the situation changed. During the 1990s, I enrolled at the Harvard Divinity School. Timothy Weiskell was developing the Working Group on Environmental Justice for Harvard's Du Bois Institute for Afro-American Research. I worked with community-minded ministers in Dorchester and New Bedford. Public health and environmental justice were shared concerns. In 1995, I



The Cape and Islands Group holds its first meeting in Barnstable, 1988. Shown are Fred Bull, David Dow, and Fritzie Gareis. David Dow remains active with the Club and has an article in this issue.

was part of the environment and it poisoned everything.

I became involved in what is now called "the environmental justice movement." Sierra Club people told me about Logan Airport and its impact on communities in East Boston. Lead poisoning was an environmental issue that was addressed by Steve Colome and other officers in the Greater Boston Group. The national Sierra Club was prominent in the long, hard struggle to reduce lead levels in gasoline, an important effort in public health history and it was successful. Yet, 20 years later, I met a Newsweek reporter who didn't believe that the Sierra Club was

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From the Director

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lands – 58 acres – in New Bedford, all to land two additional planes per day at a regional airport. We defeated a proposal to fill wetlands in Attleboro and build a shopping mall, and we stopped vacation homes from being built at the foot of the state’s oldest park and highest peak, Mt Greylock State Reservation.

Throughout the Chapter’s history in New England we have promoted sensible transportation choices, including completion of the only remaining gap in the entire northeast rail system, a project that would eliminate 60,000 cars daily from our overcrowded roadways and improve regional air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. We’ve worked to keep public transportation fares low and bring light rail to urban communities in Boston which were promised a train, but instead were given inadequate bus service. And we have rallied for better and more equitably funded regional transportation choices throughout the commonwealth.

Volunteer leaders at our chapter, working closely with national leadership, drafted and passed a sustainable fisheries policy that ultimately became national Sierra Club policy and serves as a model for other organizations nationwide. We have worked to protect the world’s most endangered marine mammal, the Northern Right Whale, by reducing entanglements and ship strikes. Recent population data indicates these efforts may be helping, but more needs to be done.

And for nearly the entire time I have worked for the Club we have fought back, and many times defeated, countless proposals to take parkland for other than its intend-

ed purpose, while working to pass legislation that would require “no-net-loss” of public parkland. Most recently, we have worked to combat climate change by fighting big coal and unsustainable biomass energy, upholding a ban on incinerating trash for energy, and working to promote renewable wind and solar energy in the Commonwealth.

Sierra Club calendars and books can still be found in your local bookstore, but the Club itself, and the impact of our work, can be felt even more places now than ever. Today



Chapter volunteers and staff continue to work together to promote safe and affordable public transportation for all.

there are many more ways to find us, to join, and to support our work. We are the largest grassroots environmental organization in the world, and often considered the most effective in the nation. We are active in, or near, your community, and we are a diverse and multi-faceted group. We are teachers, scientists, artists, stockbrokers, architects, and athletes. We are elected officials, college students, and entrepreneurs. Yet despite this, we strive to be more diverse in every way, and more present in your neighborhood. We will need your continued help and support to do so.

The environmental community, and the Sierra Club here in Massachusetts, continues to rely on

the dedication and commitment of volunteers and the support of our members. This issue contains our annual appeal to our members. All the victories that you as members have made possible thus far are a tribute to your dedication and continued support for the Club. I ask that you please give in any amount that you can, to help us continue our work for the next 40 years and beyond.

Mary Ann Nelson, who introduced me to volunteering for the Club all those years ago is still active as Greater Boston Group Chair and is working to plan our 40th anniversary event this fall. This is a common story in the Club. For so many that become involved, either as volunteer or staff, the connection is deep, and the commitment is true and long-lasting.

Those few that started the Sierra Club roots in 1970 define both the “hardy New-Englanders” and the committed local environmentalist. These Sierrans were already active here in New England, even before the first Earth Day would help bring the modern environmental move-

ment to a broader global audience.

There is a saying in the Sierra Club... that despite our diverse and broadly-structured campaigns and work across the nation we are still just “one club.” This has never been truer than it is today, and it would not be possible without our one base of support, you, the reader – that intrepid Sierra Club member that, 40 years ago, initiated a lasting legacy of protecting the environment in Massachusetts and beyond.

You can read more on our web site, and in the Fall our second anniversary issue of the Massachusetts Sierran will highlight in detail our accomplishments from 1990 to the present.



Carl Sagan addresses more than 600 Sierra Club Members in 1987 at an event discussing the impacts of nuclear arms.

Origins... continued from page 5

into the Quabbin Reservoir. Another proposal was a “public-private partnership” to build a large condominium development at the foot of Mt. Greylock, our state’s tallest mountain. Since we didn’t have a Berkshire group, the chapter took on that issue. We also fought against developments that would destroy wetlands, like Attleboro Mall.

During most of these two decades, the chapter did all this with one staff person and a lot of committed volunteers. Our chapter staff in those years included Saundy Cohen, Bob Murphy, Marsha Rockefeller and Priscilla Chapman. Alison Marks, volunteer extraordinaire, managed the office for years. As our membership grew in the late 1980s and early 90s, we were able to hire an assistant for Priscilla – Jay McCaffrey, who continues to this day as our chapter’s Director.

Periodically people would point out that in much of the country Sierra Club chapters coincided with state boundaries. As the battle over the Central Artery in Boston took up most of the chapter’s time and attention for several years in the late 80’s and early 90’s, the desire to have a chapter of their own grew. The



Dear fellow Sierran,

As you know, the Sierra Club “runs on” volunteers (to borrow from a well-known commercial.) Because of countless hours and amazing expertise given by our members, we are able to make a difference on a wide variety of issues, including protecting marine and coastal habitats, conserving energy and developing non-polluting sources of electricity, reducing our “environmental footprints,” improving public transportation, protecting public lands, and passing important legislation at the State House.

But volunteers can’t do it all; we need the support and contributions of a small but extremely dedicated staff, an office, and the resources of a large, diverse, and well-informed organization. The recession has hit all of these resources hard. Because of reductions in financial support from our national office, we have been forced to cut back our budget, including eliminating our half-time administrative assistant position. Thankfully, volunteers have stepped forward to help fill this latter gap, but only financial donations can restore our budget to health.

Although this issue of the Sierran focuses on past accomplishments, our current staff and volunteers are very much focused on future accomplishments. In order to maintain this vital work, we need your assistance. We’ve included a return envelope for you, but you may also donate online at www.sierraclubmass.org. Please donate generously today so we can all enjoy a healthy tomorrow. We truly appreciate - and depend upon - your continued support.

Very truly yours,

Dan Proctor, Chair
Massachusetts Chapter

election of Ronald Reagan, and his anti-environmental appointments, had helped the Sierra Club’s membership to grow rapidly, providing a big enough membership in the various states to make separate chapters look doable. By the end of 1992, the evolution of the New England chapter into separate state chapters was complete. We’ll continue the saga of the Massachusetts chapter in the fall Sierran. ❖

Thanks to many people for their assistance in this article, particularly Priscilla Chapman, Bob Norman, Greg de Baryshe, David Heimann and Blossom Hoag. Elisa Campbell has been active in the Sierra Club in Massachusetts since the mid-1970s. She led the chapter’s efforts on Route 2 in Wendell and Mt Greylock, has been chapter chair a few times, and has been serving as editor of the Sierran for several years.

Grassroots Efforts to Support Sustainable Fisheries

by David Dow

In the early 1990's the New England groundfish (cod, haddock, yellow tail flounder, etc) fishery collapsed. Clearly we needed to move from over-fishing of these public resources to a more sustainable approach to harvesting. Following the groundfish collapse commercial fishing groups targeted skates and sharks before moving onto pelagic forage fish (herring, mackerel, menhaden, etc.) and demersal invertebrates (Northern shrimp, lobsters and crabs). This sequential overharvesting of fishery resources at lower levels in the ocean food web is referred to as "fishing down the food chain."

In response to the resulting decrease in living marine resources (LMRs), in the early 1990's the Massachusetts Chapter asked the Cape Cod Group to help them develop a "sustainable fisheries" pol-



Sorting clams in 1977. The Sierra Club has been active on fisheries issues in New England for decades.

photo from New England Sierran by Susan Friedrichs

icy. Grassroots activists Billie Bates, David Dow, Chris Neill and Keith Smith developed a draft policy that

was later approved by the Chapter Executive Committee. This policy was published in the Sierran in fall 1997.

In the early 2000's Vivian Newman of the Sierra Club's Marine Wildlife & Habitat Committee initiated a process to develop a national policy on "sustainable fisheries" which was adopted by the Club's Board of Directors on September 20-21, 2002. The national policy was based on the policy developed by the Massachusetts Chapter. Governmental regulation of harvesting LMRs (harvested fish and shellfish resources) are managed by either the federal or state government, depending on how far the water is from shore.

Federal waters, which are between three and 200 miles off the coast, are managed by the New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC) and the National Marine Fisheries Service which is part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. State jurisdictional waters are 0 to 3 miles off shore; the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (MA DMF) manages commercial and recreational fisheries.

In 2008, 17 of the 37 fish stocks managed by the federal agencies were either overfished or subject to overfishing based upon management targets in the fishery management plans. Some stocks such as haddock have shown recovery as a result of fishery management actions (including three large closed areas for groundfishing off of our coast), while the cod stocks are still severely depleted. Other fishery management success stories include sea scallops (commercial fishery) and striped bass (recreational fishery). Thus there are some bright spots in an otherwise discouraging situation.

The situation in state waters is no more encouraging, since the MA DMF depends on user fees to support some of their efforts and has been reluctant to take dramatic action to curtail fishing effort. The same is true for the NEFMC which is dominated by commercial fishing interests.

The Sierra Club's Actions

The Club is a member of the Marine Fish Conservation Network (MFCN) - a coalition of environmental NGOs, saltwater angling and progressive commercial fishing groups - and has conducted much of its conservation work through the MFCN. The Club's first representative to the MFCN was Maxine McCloskey, who gained recognition at a meeting of the International Union for Conservation of Nature for a paper on "ocean wilderness" that resulted in support by that organization.

The Club's new Marine Activist Team is currently considering a proposal on establishing "marine wilderness" areas as part of their marine spatial planning effort. The Activist Team has become interested in fisheries management as a conservation issue. The team recently submitted comments to the NEFMC on their Omnibus Habitat Amendment for their 27 managed species. The Chapter discussed "sustainable fisheries" and "sustainable aquaculture" in the Chapter's recent comments on the Massachusetts Ocean Management Plan where fishing and aquaculture are preferred human activities in the multiuse areas.

The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certifies fisheries harvesting that it considers sustainable and Club members should purchase

continued on page 12

Greater Boston Group Elections

*Your membership number must appear on the outside of your envelope in order for your ballot to be valid.
(An extra ballot is provided for households with joint memberships.)*

Voting Instructions and Election Procedures

You elect the Sierra Club leadership each year. In this issue of the *Sierran*, you will find candidates' statements and ballots (on page 12) for the Greater Boston Group Executive Committee Election. All Massachusetts Sierra Club members who reside in the Greater Boston Group area may vote for the Executive Committee. Please contact the chapter office if you have a question about your group membership.

Mail ballots to: Sierra Club Elections, 10 Milk Street, Suite 632, Boston, MA 02108. Ballots must be received by 5:00 PM, Friday, March 26th, 2010 in order to be counted. Vote for no more than the number of candidates indicated on each ballot.

In order to validate your ballots, please write your membership number on the upper left hand corner of your envelope. Your eight-digit membership number appears on the mailing label of the *Sierran*. A second ballot is provided for those households with joint memberships so that each member can vote. If you have any questions, please call the chapter office at (617) 423-5775.

Greater Boston Group Committee Candidates' Statements *(Ballots are on page 12)*

CINDY DELPAPA – I have been active in the Club for nearly twenty years on the GBG and chapter committees. I am interested in a wide range of environmental topics including clean water clean air, environmental regulation and enforcement.

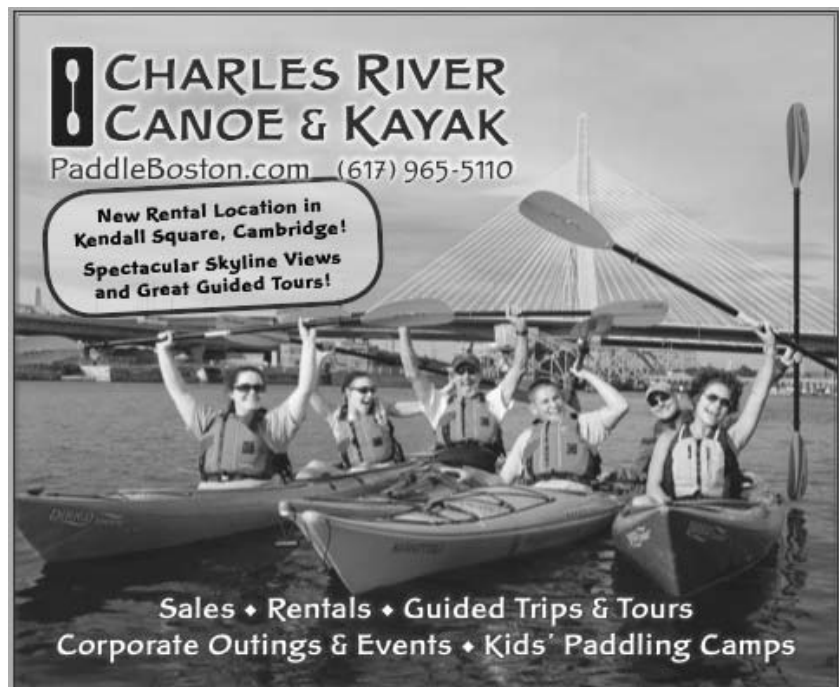
ERIK GEHRING – I have been active in the Sierra Club since 2002, serving on the Massachusetts Chapter Executive Committee and GBG Executive Committee for several years now. Climate change is by far the biggest threat we face. The science says that if we fail to take aggressive action now our planet will be radically altered. And so every action that we take needs to be evaluated through this lens – will it reduce our greenhouse gas emissions?

JOHN KYPER – I'm a former member of the Chapter ExCom, and Chair of its Transportation Committee for the past five years. A Roxbury resident since 1975, I support an enlightened transportation policy that would reduce our dependence on the private automobile by providing more benign and attractive alternatives.

The long struggle for equity in transportation planning reflects how the state is neglecting the needs of its most transit-dependent residents. Since the early 90s I have worked in the Washington Street Corridor Coalition, advocating true, rail replacement service for the old Orange Line elevated instead of the inadequate "Silver Line" bus.

MARY ANN NELSON – No statement received.

KAREN O'DONNELL – As a life member of the Sierra Club since college, I am involved with Boston Harbor and the islands. I enjoyed the old days of local field trips and in-your-face activist and media events. I am a past legislator and have served my American Association of Retired People Chapter and Woman's Club as legislative chair. I am a union electrician, advocate and installer of alternative energy systems, and North South Rail Link supporter from my days on Transportation committee of GBG.



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Candidate Statements on Page 11 - MAIL BALLOTS TO: Sierra Club Elections

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Your membership number, which appears above your name on your mailing label, must appear on the outside of your envelope in order for your ballot to be valid. A second ballot is provided for households with joint memberships.

Ballots must be received by FRIDAY, MARCH 26TH by 5:00 PM, in order to be counted.

BALLOT

**Greater Boston Group
Executive Committee Election**

Vote for no more than five candidates.

- John Kyper
- Erik Gehring
- Karen ODonnell
- Cindy DelPapa
- Mary Ann Nelson

BALLOT

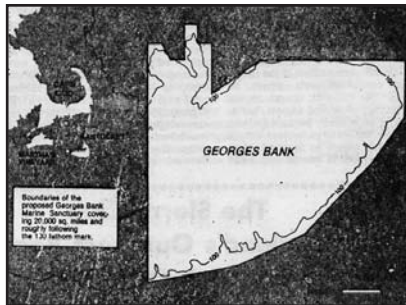
**Greater Boston Group
Executive Committee Election**

Vote for no more than five candidates.

- John Kyper
- Erik Gehring
- Karen ODonnell
- Cindy DelPapa
- Mary Ann Nelson

Fisheries... continued from page 10

these fish in seafood stores and supermarkets – look for the labels. Walmart is transitioning to selling only MSC-certified fish in their grocery stores, so that there will be economic pressure on the federal and state regulators to take more effective management action. Currently, the only MSC certified fishery in New England is the



A map from the Club's newsletter in the 1970's highlights efforts to protect George's Bank.

one for deep sea red crabs. NMFS and the NEFMC are pushing a privatization approach to give different fishing groups a percentage of the total allowable catch. Allocating percentages allows the fishermen/women in these groups to decide when, where and how to catch their fish. This would ensure better prices for the landings and in theory insert an incentive for

conservation among the harvesters. The Marine Activist Team is currently developing a policy on the sector approach to commercial fish harvesting.

Climate Change and Harvesting Interact

The other emerging fisheries issue is the interaction of climate change and fisheries harvesting on the other marine biota and their habitats in the ocean. Climate change will:

- alter the distribution of fish and their less mobile prey in the water column and in the bottom sediments;
- change the base of the marine food web as the water column stabilizes for longer time periods from late spring to early fall;
- cause predator species distribution to either shift northwards or offshore;
- can lead to regime shifts in the ocean food web.

Fisheries harvesting can result in:

- “fishing down the food chain”;
- damage to essential fish habitat by mobile fishing gear;

- incidental mortality of marine mammals, sea turtles, sea birds and coastal migrating birds by fixed fishing gear.

The Cape Cod & the Islands Group has been working with the Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Committee to get them to consider the combined effects of fishing and climate change on the marine biota and their habitats within the SBNMS. The “sustainable fishery” policy developed by the Chapter and national Club continues to guide our conservation efforts to manage our LMRs more effectively, protecting other species, and conserve ocean biodiversity. Fisheries harvesting and climate change are the major human stressors in the offshore ocean environment. Thus we have continuing challenges ahead. We need the support of our members both as selective consumers and as concerned citizens supporting political candidates to make “sustainable fishing” a reality. We have to counter balance the political influence of the commercial fishing and saltwater angling interests which dominate the federal and state management processes.

David Dow is chair of the Cape Cod and the Islands Group.

SCALING UP

by Carol Oldham

We know you joined the Sierra Club because we are the largest, oldest and most influential grassroots organization in America. We know that in order to survive as a species we have to win on the climate issue, but what will it take? For the last several months there has been a lot of talk in the Club about “getting to scale” – building our power and influence for both the current issues and for the long term.

“Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will.” Frederick Douglass

We need more volunteers, more leaders, more partners and more influencers. It also means doing better. We need more engaged volunteers, broader networks, more robust relationships, a more diverse base and stronger leaders.

We have identified three core elements that we should focus on for getting to scale:

- Scaling up leaders
- Scaling up partner, influencer and media relationships
- Scaling up supporters and volunteers

Leadership

Development

We need to develop leaders that lead teams, and that recruit and develop new volunteers, social networkers, and other leaders. Our leaders must do everything from lobbying to making relationships to activating volunteers to speaking to the media. Importantly, we need leaders at many different levels. We need leaders who can manage volunteers for a discrete event on up to leaders who can manage a team of leaders who themselves manage teams of volunteers.

To reach this goal, the national Club is working on several fronts to help our volunteers:

- Prioritize and define – We will create outlines for team roles and team structures that volunteers can reference.
- Train – We are working to develop an online “Grasstops Training Academy” for volunteer leaders.



Getting to Scale... Thousands of Sierra Club Leaders organized to oust “James Watt” - a proponent of opening all public lands to oil and gas drilling - in the early 1980’s. Environmental groups collected over 1 million signatures.

- Engage – we will be working to expand online tools for leaders to self-organize (e.g. Sierra Club Activist Network, climate leaders, climate crossroads) and we will work to develop strategies and best practices for integrating with campaigns

We look forward to working with you! ❖

Carol Oldham is the Club’s Regional Representative and works out of the Chapter’s office in Boston

Faith... continued from page 7

graduated from the Divinity School and I joined the clergy.

Lyn and I spent some years on the coast of North Carolina where I was a circuit rider with three little churches and the environmental justice coordinator for the Sierra Club’s Cypress Group. Always, there was something to learn. I marched with Hispanic farm workers and African-American poultry workers. The coast of North Carolina suffered through six hurricanes during the late 1990s.

In 2000, we came back to Massachusetts and became active in the Cape Cod and the Islands Group. I’m involved with energy justice and sustainable food production issues. I’ve been doing some of this work for decades.

My hair has turned gray and I’ve put on some weight, and at this point when I wear my clergy robes, I may look and sound like Friar Tuck or an ancient Druid. Still, I’m delighted to be with the Massachusetts Chapter

for its 40th birthday. The Chapter changed my life, and then it changed my life again. I’m grateful and without hesitation I say, “Thank you! Thank you!” ❖

Bob Murphy is the vice chairman for the Cape Cod and the Islands Group in the Massachusetts Chapter. He is a parish minister with an active congregation in Falmouth.



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Massachusetts Sierra Club Opposes Utility Scale Biomass in New Position Statement

by James McCaffrey

In December 2009 the Massachusetts Sierra Club adopted a comprehensive Biomass Position Statement, including announcing its opposition to utility-scale biomass plants that will harvest huge volumes of “woody” biomass from New England forests and burn them for energy. We first told our members about his issue in an article in the Fall 2009 Sierran. In early January, the Chapter publicly released its newly adopted position statement and delivered it to the legislature.

The biomass industry is growing nationwide and working hard to have incentives and loopholes to promote biomass fuels written into the federal energy bill. Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) and other incentives to develop biomass have already infiltrated various bits of state and regional initiatives. Several large-scale biomass facilities have been proposed in Massachusetts, each claiming a similar area for harvesting, and each claiming their cutting levels to be “sustainable.” Utility-scale biomass plants could devastate the Massachusetts landscape and cause a huge net increase of CO₂ at this time. Some proposed plants also plan

to burn construction and demolition debris, which the Sierra Club opposes and which has been banned in New Hampshire. At least one coal plant in Massachusetts has proposed switching to woody biomass fuel.

In Massachusetts, the Patrick administration has decided to ask some tough questions about biomass, and we applaud this action. In response to issues raised by the Sierra Club and citizen activists and groups, the state suspended the applicability of REC in late 2009 for proposed biomass plants, pending the outcome of a study to analyze the sustainability of harvesting for biomass fuels. However, we do have some concerns about the process. There is already credible science supporting the removal of RECs and other incentives for biomass, and it is unclear what new information this study will develop. In the mean time, facilities are proceeding to seek other permits and continuing to receive subsidies and incentives from other sources.

The Sierra Club will be watching the outcomes of the study closely, and we will keep our members apprised.

The Club believes there is little likelihood that the current energy resource provided by forest biomass can be increased sustainably. There may be some room in our energy mix for smaller and



much more efficient combined heat-and-power facilities that sell electricity directly to end-users or in areas that are isolated from larger distribution networks. The Chapter will review these small-scale combined heat and power facilities on a site-specific basis. Meanwhile, voters will be asked to decide in November on a ballot initiative that would limit the expansion of biomass in Massachusetts altogether.

There is some potential that small quantities of biomass fuel, sustainably harvested, could provide economic benefit to private forest landowners who otherwise would have no market for “low-value” timber and may be inclined to convert lands to other uses, like development or agriculture. But permitting even the smaller facilities raises difficult policy questions. How much is too much and where do you draw the line? How can you regulate what fuel sources a facility can use, and what happens if those sources run out? Regardless of the scale of a facility, it is the scale of harvesting that is most relevant. The impacts of multiple small-scale facilities could easily exceed that of larger facilities. Neither scenario is a desirable outcome.

To learn more about this issue and read the Sierra Club's full Biomass Position Statement, please visit www.sierraclubmass.org/biomass.html

James McCaffrey is the Chapter's Director.

Massachusetts Chapter Meetings & Events

Due to the long lead time of the Sierran publication schedule, all events, meetings, and outings are now listed on the Chapter web site and in the E-Sierran.

Please sign up for the E-Sierran (see page 16) and/or visit www.sierraclubmass.org and click on “Meetings and Events” to access the latest listings, or call the chapter office at 617-423-5775.

Please note that outings may be cancelled for insufficient interest up to three days before the scheduled date. If you are interested in an outing, please do not wait until the last minute to contact the trip leader.

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- Information about important items in the news
- Green living tips and interesting facts about our environment

- Club meetings, and lots of great ways to get involved in protecting our environment

To help save the chapter's resources as well as trees, the Massachusetts chapter is now publishing the on-paper Sierran twice per year, instead of quarterly. Our new E-Sierran comes out monthly and provides an easy way to be informed and get involved. We're urging all our members to sign up for the E-Sierran today! It's free and will only take about a minute to subscribe.

Privacy: E-mail addresses of members of the lists will not be shared, rented, sold or otherwise provided to any non-Sierra Club entities. The list will be used only for Sierra sponsored and cosponsored events, and critical issue reports.

Just visit www.sierraclubmass.org and click on "E-Sierran".

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