

Nepessing News

Winter 2015 -Edition



SIERRA
CLUB
FOUNDED 1892

The Nepessing Group represents the Sierra Club in Genesee, Lapeer and Northern Oakland counties.

Explore, Enjoy & Protect by Chair Denny Crispell

Has anyone read about, or seen on the news the problem of lead in Flint's drinking water? My first thought was, "Where is the lead coming from?". It is not coming from the Flint River, but from the old lead pipes buried under the streets. "Why now?" Because the water is more corrosive due to the higher chlorine levels. "What can be done?" I heard the water could be treated so it is not so corrosive. I admit, I am not an expert, or have any knowledge of how to treat water. But it seems like the logical thought process to me. But many seem quick to point blame, before they even know what the solution is. Maybe the best solution is switching back to the Detroit Water System. I hope some agency like the DEQ or EPA keeps a closer eye on it this time. I hope every city everywhere has

taken heed. This could happen to them.

So what is new with the Nepessing Group? Well first, ballots are included for 2016 ExCom members. Executive Committee members are the ones who vote on issues important to our Group. Linda Berker, Jack Minore, Laurie Tata, Ellen Waara and myself Denny Crispell, have agreed to run again for two year terms. We would welcome any member to run with us. There will be an empty slot for a write in if anyone has another potential in mind.

So let's move on to what our activists have been up to. In the spring, we had a service outing at the Tibbits Nature Sanctuary, and later in the year, Ligon Nature Center. On all our hikes, we encourage members to bring plastic bags along to help collect any litter strewn along the trails. Some members joined the Detroit March

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for Justice to show their support for social justice and environmental causes. Others participated in a Global Warming Awareness March In grand rapids. Many others have led outings to help encourage our members to enjoy the outdoors and wild places. Mike Haley leads close to thirty outings every year! What a commitment! About 16 members have volunteered to help host the next Texas Hold'em Tournament. If you are wondering why so many of our members are involved, it is simply because we are all friends and have fun! To many people, volunteering must sound frightening. But remember, it's your world too, let us try to protect it together!

The Friends of the Shiawassee River receive Start-up Grant from the Michigan DEQ

by Lauri Elbling

The Friends were honored to be recognized at the 11th Annual Michigan Clean Water Corps Conference. Lauri Elbling, the Friends' new executive director, and three of our stellar volunteers (Mike, Anita and Dianne) are participating in trainings that will strengthen the StreamTeam program and the data we collect to help us track and understand the health of our Shiawassee River Watershed. Special thanks to Suzanne Lossing for initiating the program.

Thank you to MI Corps and the Friends team!



14 October 2015 another day in Lansing-Capital-Neighborhood

by Mike Haley Vanilla Lobbyist

Once upon a time I was a lead lobbyist. There are three rules to lobby for the Sierra Club at the Capital: 1. Keep to the well-crafted talking points. 2. Do not use bad language. 3. Do not lobby for yourself. Nepessing Political Chair Laurie Tata was lead lobbyist in the Nepessing Group two person lobby team. We were assigned to visit one Republican and three Democratic House Representatives and a Senator. Each office visit is scheduled for 30 minutes. Also, we had two talking-point-folders to a Republican representative and the Republican Majority Leader to drop off. Our visit with Rep Neeley (D-34) was useful in that we informed him that Sierra Club has Environmental Justice Department in Detroit headed by Rhonda

Anderson. We spent 75 minutes with Rep Phil Phelps who had just filed with the help of Flint ACLU a Freedom of Information request to the Michigan DEQ and the City of Flint concerning quality of Flint River water. Rep Pam Faris (D-48) was in session and we spoke one of her staff.

Our last visit was Sen Jim Ananich and staff. That visit was short because Jim had a meeting to go to. Last lobby day Jim visited an hour with members from his district. But we had enough time to present the former high school teacher a book, James MacGregor Burns' *ROOSEVELT The Lion and the Fox* with the following explanation. When Dan Kildee announced that he was running for Congress he made this statement, "I told my staff I want to mention Roosevelt but my staff advised me not to. But I will anyways." I told

Jim Ananich that I gave Dan a copy of the book a week ago in his Flint Office.

In the epigraph of his biography of Roosevelt Burns writes: A prince, wrote Machiavelli, must imitate the fox and the lion, for the lion cannot protect himself from traps, and the fox cannot defend himself from wolves. One must therefore be a fox to recognize traps, and a lion to frighten wolves. Those that wish to be only lions do not understand this. Therefore, a prudent ruler ought not to keep faith when by so doing it would be against his interest, and when the reasons which made him bind himself no longer exist. If men were all good, this precept would not be a good one; but as they are bad, and would not observe their faith with you, so you are not bound to keep faith with them.

Environmental News from around the globe. by Robert Simpson

Maine just passed the first statewide law since Citizens United to deal with the unlimited sums of secret money that decision ushered in. By strengthening the state's landmark Clean Election Act and increasing disclosure requirements and penalties for rule breakers, Maine just declared the beginning of the end to the Citizens United era.

On November 3, **Ohio** voters approved by a margin of 71% to 29% a constitutional amendment that will greatly reduce, or even eliminate, the gerrymandering of state legislative districts beginning in 2021. Ratification of Issue 1 by the voters followed its approval by bipartisan votes of 28-1 in the Ohio State Senate and 81-7 in the Ohio House of Representatives. The overwhelming success of this reform should encourage similar efforts in other states that have been badly gerrymandered.

A group of volunteers and local organizations calling itself Honest Elections **Seattle** filed a new public campaign-financing and elections-reform effort Friday. The group, which

includes Fuse Washington and Sightline Institute, will begin collecting signatures later this month to put Initiative 122 on Seattle's November ballot, it said in a news release sent out by Fuse. It will need at least 31,000 signatures. The initiative, if approved, would direct the city to use public funds to give every voter four \$25 "Democracy Vouchers" to donate "to the qualified candidates of their choice" running in Seattle elections, according to the release.

Rooftops on new buildings built in commercial zones in [France](#) must either be partially covered in plants or solar panels, under a law approved on Thursday. Green roofs have an isolating effect, helping reduce the amount of energy needed to heat a building in winter and cool it in summer. They also retain rainwater, thus helping reduce problems with runoff, while favoring biodiversity and giving birds a place to nest in the urban jungle, ecologists say.

Sept 28, 2015 - In a long-awaited decision, the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia has today upheld a denial by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), rejecting **Georgia Aquarium's** application to **import 18 wild-caught beluga whales from**

Russia. In 2012, Georgia Aquarium applied for a permit to import into the U.S., 18 beluga whales captured from Russia's Sea of Okhotsk between 2006 and 2011.

American Academy of Pediatrics to End Affiliation With Monsanto

Months after her initial contact with the AAP Segedie received some good news: The American Academy of Pediatrics has agreed to sever ties with Monsanto by the end of 2015. It is Segedie's hope that the AAP will scrutinize partnerships in a different way now

[Disappointing results from a critical test well at the company's Burger prospect in the Chukchi Sea](#), combined with the high costs of developing the region and an "unpredictable regulatory environment" have prompted Royal Dutch Shell "to cease further exploration activity offshore Alaska for the foreseeable future," CEO Ben van Beurden told reporters Thursday. But the company so far isn't relinquishing its drilling rights in U.S. Arctic waters, including 275 leases in the Chukchi Sea. The Interior Department just rejected Shell's bid to "suspend" – or extend the duration – of its Beaufort and Chukchi sea leases, which otherwise expire

between 2017 and 2020.
October 16, 2015

Costa Rica just became the first country in Latin America to ban [hunting for sport](#). Costa Rica's Congress voted unanimously on Monday to approve the ban, which will protect the country's wildlife - including several species of native big cats. Any [hunters](#) caught breaking the new law will face jail time or hefty fines.

Sea World **San Diego** will cut **orca shows** starting In 2017 One of Indonesia's biggest palm oil producers, a company called **Astra Agro Lestari**, yesterday announced a new commitment to **stopping deforestation** and **preventing agricultural burning** throughout its supply chain.

Earlier this year, the environmental group [Forest Heroes](#) used a drone camera to document clear-cutting that was happening on land managed by Astra Agro Lestari. Indonesia has had a high rate of rainforest loss in the past decade, as trees are cleared to make way for palm oil plantations and other export crops. The [video went viral](#), prompting an outcry from around the world, as this deforestation not only threatens endangered species but also contributes to global

climate change. Activists also pressured other businesses owned by Astra Agro Lestari's parent company, conglomerate Jardines Matheson, including Pizza Hut and the luxury hotel chain Mandarin Oriental. Spoofing ads for the Mandarin Oriental, Forest Heroes created a public awareness campaign featuring endangered Sumatran elephants and the catchphrase "She's Not a Fan." The non-profit SumOfUs also organized campaigns outside of Mandarin Oriental hotels.

WASHINGTON — President Barack **Obama** has announced he has **rejected** TransCanada's application to build the **Keystone XL pipeline**, capping a 7 year saga that became an environmental flashpoint in both Canada and the U.S.



Charity gaming

By Linda Berker

Thanks to the Nepessing Group's ability to participate in Michigan's Millionaire Party Tournament Permitting process for qualified Charities, we are able to support our club's activities each year. With our tournament proceeds, we are able to directly

benefit our community and our environment. Money we gain through Texas Hold'em poker tournaments at Legends Poker in Metamora has: built a bridge on a hiking trail, informed hundreds of people of the dangers of high volume hydraulic fracking, supported the USDA's Conservation Service's environmental education program, and supported Mott Community College's Green Initiatives program among other good works. We could not hold these tournaments without our tireless, trustworthy volunteers who work shifts from 5-6 pm until 2 am!!

Thank You to our November 2015 volunteers:

Bob Aguirre
Clark Almasy
Linda Berker
Denny Crispell
Ed Chuchvara
Marie Chuchvara
Marianna Fitzgerald
Ann Marie Funsch
Mike Haley
Bill Klocek
Anne Naber
Richard Naber
Amy Sheridan
Robert Simpson
Chris Stolz
Laurie Tata

Let's all recognize their service when the opportunity arises. Let's also thank all those players who donated their time and money by enjoying our tournament.

Jack Minor Shared information about free water Filters:

Free filters are available for current MDHHS clients at the 125 E. Union St. or 4809 Clio Road MDHHS office locations. For residents who are not currently enrolled in MDHHS assistance programs, free filters are available at the Genesee County Community Action Resource Department offices at 2727 Lippincott and 601 North Saginaw in Flint. Staff will be at all four locations from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, to distribute filters and assist residents who have questions about proper installation. Other recommendations are to run water until it gets cold and only use cold water to cook with, drink and especially when mixing baby formula. (Excerpted from Governor Snyder's press release on Oct. 8.) It will be awhile before we know the full health impacts, particularly on young children in our community. Join the conversation at our monthly meetings, held at Mott Community College's Genesee Room, Prahl College Center, 1401 E. Court Street Flint.



*Please join us for the
Lake Nepessing Sierra
Club annual Holiday
Potluck
Saturday, December 13
Noon to 5 pm
At
Ligon Nature Center
5213 East Farrand
Road
Clio, MI 48420*

Take Clio/Montrose exit off I-75. Proceed east on M-57 (Vienna Road) Approximately 7.3 miles to Genesee Rd., turn north (left) onto Genesee Rd., Turn east (right) onto Farrand Rd., Proceed east for .7 miles. Turn north (left) into the gate. Park on the Pavement in marked spaces only.

SNAPSHOTS:



Recruiting at the Otter Lake and Grill after our hike.



Mike Haley recovering at the bake sale supporting the local author.



Otter Lake Hike recovery and mingle time.

Come make friends and memories with us, we are eager to share what we know and a love of nature.

Join us on the trails.



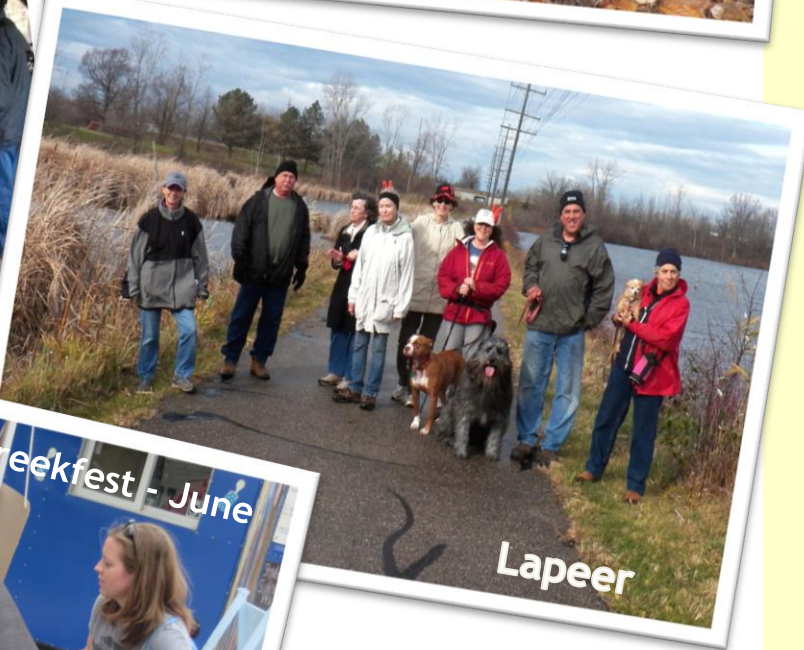
Flushing



Otter Lake



Flushing



Lapeer



Ortonville Creekfest - June

Many thanks to Nepessing regulars who volunteered their time and efforts into gathering Ban-fracking signatures. Coordinated by Robert Simpson, other members involved are Denny Crispell, Fred Townsend, Carol Graham, Dale Wolfgram, Mike Haley, Mike Keeler, Terry Reechko, Linda Berker, Dave Kronner, Bobbie Walton, Esther Fuchs, Miriam Marcus and Carol Simon. While we didn't reach our goal of 300,000 signatures - we made a mighty effort with just 500 volunteers who collected 150,000 signatures. Thank you all!

BOARD ELECTIONS 

Vote for not more than five.

- Denny Crispell**
- Ellen Waara**
- Linda Berker**
- Jack Minore**
- Lauri Tata**

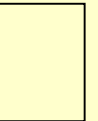
Write-in:

Please post mark your ballot no later than 6 January, 2016. Votes will be counted at the EXCOM meeting on January 13. Those who have two members in one household can make a second copy of the ballot and turn it in at the Christmas party or place both in an envelope. Tri-fold this sheet to conceal the ballot, apply postage and tape all edges to mail.



SIERRA CLUB
FOUNDED 1892

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Address



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**Make everyday Earth Day,
please recycle!**

Visit us on the Web!

www.michigan.sierraclub.org/nepessing

Board Members and Volunteers

At-Large	Fred Townsend
At-Large	Ellen Waara
At-Large	Jack Minore
At-Large	Carol Graham
At-Large	Thomas Haley
At-Large	Linda Berker
At-Large	Terry Reechko
At-Large	Laurie Tata
At-Large	Denny Crispell

Officers

Chair	Denny Crispell
Vice Chair	Laurie Tata
Treasurer	Richard Naber
Secretary	Mike Haley

Committees

Conservation	Ellen Waara
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