



# Sauk-Calumet Group

February 2019 Newsletter Volume 38, Issue 1

## Opinion: Environmentalists Feel Relief at Midterm Elections

*By Patrick Coffey*

The midterm elections this past November, with Democrats gaining 40 seats in the House, provides environmentalists with some welcome relief. The Sierra Club has never supported Democrats exclusively, but the contrast today between conservative Republicans and Democrats on environmental issues is stark. At least on the federal level, conservative Republicans oppose almost every major area of environmental law and administration.

Republicans have been on the offensive against what they say is too much regulation. (For 78 environmental regulations the Trump administration has tried to reverse, see - <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/10/05/climate/trump-environment-rules-reversed.html>). But in most cases those regulations, like air and water regulations, protect the lives, health, and well-being of children and the vulnerable, like children with asthma, or adults with heart and lung diseases. In recent years, some Republicans in Congress have even proposed doing away with the EPA, our nation's premier environmental regulatory agency, which was begun by Republican President Richard Nixon in 1970. The effect on the nation's health and safety would be dramatic.

According to Motherboard ([https://motherboard.vice.com/en\\_us/article/pg5zqg/a-guide-to-the-climate-change-deniers-in-congress](https://motherboard.vice.com/en_us/article/pg5zqg/a-guide-to-the-climate-change-deniers-in-congress)), in the last Congress, 53 of 100 Senators, and 232 out of 435 Representatives, denied climate change exists or that it is human-caused. Today, thanks to Democratic gains, those numbers look significantly better.

Republicans in Congress were also making waves that they wanted to overhaul the Endangered Species Act. (Two articles from before the election on that topic - <https://www.outsideonline.com/2353896/endangered-species-act-quietly-danger> and <https://oceana.org/blog/congress-chipping-away-endangered-species-act>). Dozens of bills were offered in the last Congress weakening this or that provision of the Act for special interests. Thanks to Democratic wins in the House, the specter of Congressional compromise and undermining of the ESA has been removed for the time being.

As always, we hope balance returns to the Republican Party as regarding environmental issues. We need them. We need consensus in our country again. But until then, we look mostly to Democrats to protect our nation's landmark environmental laws and agencies. And so, with our nation's health and wildlife at stake, we can now work confidently with Republicans for reasonable compromise and positive solutions, and we can avoid what surely would have been dangerous and reckless capitulation. And that is truly a relief to most Sierra Club members and other environmentalists across the nation.

## How Corporate Greed Is Destroying America

*By Ann Baskerville*

What is the environmental cost of clicking "buy" on Amazon (or any other website)? In recent years, the Sauk-Calumet group has worked to draw attention to the environmental impacts of the many warehouses dotting Will County and surrounding counties. These large warehouses owned by major corporations like Wal-Mart, Home Depot, Amazon, and many others rely on diesel semis to bring goods to big box stores. Many of the goods moving through the warehouses are made in Southeast Asia. Of course, this global logistics system requires a large amount of fossil fuels. This fall, the Illinois Peoples Climate March was held in Elwood, Illinois to draw attention to diesel pollution and poor working conditions in many of the warehouses. The New Republic magazine recently published an in-depth article discussing many of the issues that accompany Will County's status as a global logistics and transportation hub. Find the article here: [New Republic Elwood, IL](#)

# Carbon Pricing

*By Dorelle Ackermann*

Carbon Pricing is a policy proposal that charges producers for the costs of burning fossil fuels, a cost now borne by society. Knowing that this cost will be passed on to consumers, the policy will return the fees to consumers by taking the net proceeds and then dividing it up to American households, as a monthly “carbon dividend.” It is estimated that about 58 percent of taxpayers would receive more in their dividend payments than higher energy prices would cost them. Carbon Pricing is rapidly gaining support across a broad political spectrum. Putting a price on carbon is supported by 88 government entities around the world, was listed as the most effective policy by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and recently has been endorsed by 27 Nobel laureates, all 4 former Fed Chairs, and 15 former Chairs of the Council of Economic Advisers. There is now active legislation being considered at a national level and across a number of states. Mike Zanillo from [Citizens Climate Lobby](#) will be speaking at our Sierra Club meeting on March 11, 2019 on the topic of carbon pricing.

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## Join the Sierra Club Volunteer Lobby Team!

*By Kathy Van Kampen, Sauk Calumet Lobby Team Chair*

Each legislative session, Illinois Sierra Club promotes five bills regarding environmental issues to the State legislature. Illinois Sierra Club then puts together a volunteer lobbying team. Volunteer lobbyists receive online training about the legislative process as well as the lobbying process in general. Volunteers can also attend an online issues briefing regarding the legislation being proposed. After this training, the local volunteer Sierra Club lobbyists meet with their state senators and representatives at their local offices to explain the bills, answer any questions, and to ask that they sponsor the proposed legislation. On Lobby Day in April, volunteer lobbyists travel to Springfield to visit their legislators and further encourage them to support Sierra Club legislation. If interested in being a part of this effort, contact Lobby Chair, Andy Kimmel ([ask14nature@gmail.com](mailto:ask14nature@gmail.com)) (817-417-8581) or Sauk Calumet Chair Lois Lauer ([lois.lauer@illinois.sierraclub.org](mailto:lois.lauer@illinois.sierraclub.org)) (708-923-1550), and provide your contact information (name, email, town, phone).

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## It's Easy To Get More Information From The Sierra Club

If you would like to sign up to receive the Prairie State Protector Monthly Newsletter from The Sierra Club Illinois Chapter, click on this [Illinois Chapter](#) and scroll down on the right-hand side there is a place to sign up by entering your e-mail and zip code. The Illinois Chapter also has a blog that you can check out [here](#).

The Sauk Calumet Sierra Club Group is now on Twitter. You can keep up to date with our group by following us on Twitter - [@SaukClub](#)

# Sauk Calumet Sierra Club Group Meeting Schedule

Meetings are held at 7:15 pm on the second Monday of every month at the Frankfort Library (21119 Pfeiffer Rd, Frankfort, IL) with the exception of June, July and August. All meetings are free and open both to Sierra Club members and to the public.

No meetings in June, July, or August



## February 11: National Sierra Club Outings

Sauk Calumet Sierran Dan McNamee who has gone on nine national Sierra Club outings in Michigan, several western states, and Alaska, will encourage us to enjoy the outdoors by giving us some history of the [Sierra Club Outings program](#) and a glimpse of the trips in which he has participated.



## March 11: Carbon Pricing 101

Mike Zanello from [Citizens Climate Lobby](#) will explain the concept of carbon pricing, its projected effectiveness in curbing climate change, and a review of current carbon pricing initiatives.



## April 8: Indiana Dunes Photography

Avid photographer National Park Ranger Rafi Wilkinson will share his passion and his photography, showcasing the amazing natural beauty of the Indiana Duneland.



## May 13: Recycling and Composting!

Avid recycling educator, Kay McKeen, will talk about composting, rescuing, and recycling nearly everything! McKeen is director of [SCARCE](#) a local environmental education organization, which for 29 years, has been dedicated to keeping reusables and recyclables out of landfills. Kay invites you to bring your used unwanted musical instruments, sheet music, Brita or PUR filters, and old keys to donate to SCARCE.

Letters to the Editor:

Letters on content within the Sauk-Calumet newsletter should be sent to the editor at:

[sc-editor@illinois.sierraclub.org](mailto:sc-editor@illinois.sierraclub.org)

Please include your full name and address and reference the article on which you are commenting.

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*\*Denotes an elected member of the Executive  
Committee*

The Sierra Club from the national level down to the local groups does so many positive things to help protect our planet. So let's get out there and enjoy our beautiful world. Click below for Sierra Club Illinois outings.



Remember to check our Sauk-Calumet Group website for current information and news updates on issues relevant to Illinois.

[Click here for our website.](#)

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<https://www.facebook.com/SierraClubSaukCalumet/>

to find us on Facebook.