



Owl-O-Ween Fun Was Had by All

by Peter Debes, Vice Chair

In October, kids of all ages got to see what really goes "HOOT" in the night at our Fall Halloween party. Ron Walker, of Friends In Feathers, brought a screech owl, a barn owl, and a barred owl out of their cages to meet Festival participants, and he told of each owl's amazing abilities. Hearing, vision, and flight - owls have us humans beat on all three! He explained how many owls have ears that are asymmetrical in such a way as to allow the owl to very accurately pinpoint where the sound is coming from, so it can pounce on its prey...even in total darkness! Owls' eyes are large for the size of their heads, and tubular, giving them telescopic vision.

Ron's birds live on his property and serve as ambassadors to help humans understand them better. Each has suffered an injury so that it is no longer able to survive in the wild. Just as people have their own personalities, so do owls, Ron explained, each distinct from others of its same species. The owls were beautiful - so close you could see their huge, colorful eyes and bark-colored feathers that help camouflage them from their enemies. It was fascinating to watch how they can turn their heads in almost a complete circle on their flexible necks.

Prior to seeing the owls, kids were invited to explore the area around the lodge with their parents and find pictures of endangered animals and plants hidden away in small trees, tucked into grass, or

in holes in stumps. Everyone learned that it is very easy to miss seeing a creature near you, even when it is almost in plain sight.

Later, everyone assembled in the lodge to learn about the endangered animal or plant they 'rescued.' What kind of living thing is it? Where does it live? Why is it in danger of going extinct?

As we said goodbye, everyone thought about what she/he could do to help protect the endangered species on our planet. Watch for next year's Fall Festival and join the fun!

Ex-Com Ballot Rochester Regional Group Sierra Club

Each year the Nominating Committee recommends six candidates to serve a term of two years (2012/13) on the Executive Committee.

Vote for any six candidates. Members may vote for those nominated or exercise the option to write in a candidate.

___ Cenie Cafarelli

___ Margie Campaigne

___ Linda Isaacson-Fedele

___ Robbyn McKie-Holzworth

___ Valerie Rice

___ Robert Withers

**Please cut out ballot and mail by
December 26th.**

Ballots will be counted at the first Ex-Com meeting in 2012.

Send ballots to:

Elections

Sierra Club - Rochester Regional Group

PO Box 10518

Rochester, NY 14610-0518



Ron Walker with his barred owl at the Sierra Club's Fall Festival
Photo by: Margie Campaigne



From the Chair: Collaboration Brings Hope

Happy Holidays to our members and friends. May we each appreciate what we have, take a short break from striving towards our aspirations—both personal and collective—and renew the hope that sustains us.

The National Sierra Club has recently come out strongly in support of two efforts: Occupy Wall Street (OWS) and stopping the Keystone Pipeline XL.



Activists gather for the Tar Sands Action rally
Photo by: James Swarts

From Sierra Club's official statement of support for OWS: "In a vibrant democracy, peaceful protest and demonstration is among the highest form of citizen engagement ... It is our heritage to speak truth to power, and our nation's historic respect for peaceful dissent has helped the United States enact civil rights legislation, promote human rights internationally, and end unjust wars..."

The Sierra Club affirms its support for the exercise of political expression through the Occupy Wall Street protests. Corporations that pollute our air, land and water, that put greed ahead of community good, public health and the nation's economic well-being must be held fully accountable. In our work around the country, we have seen first-hand how international coal and oil companies have

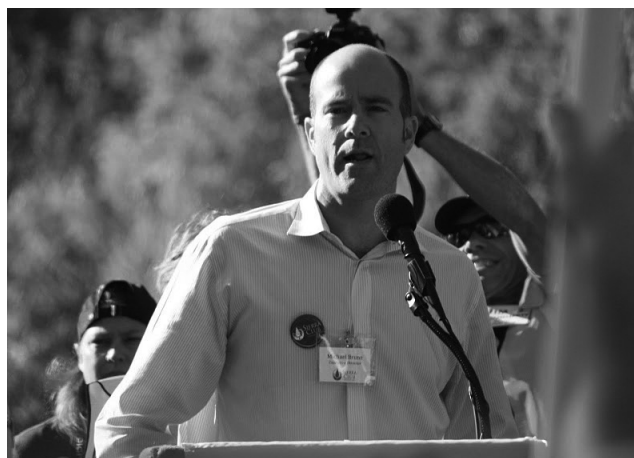
wrecked communities, polluted our environment, and dominated the political process. We stand with Occupy Wall Street protesters in saying 'enough.'"

OWS has gained significant support, from authors and academics (Naomi Klein, Alice Walker, Chris Hedges, Paul Krugman) to celebrities (Susan Sarandon, Mark Ruffalo, Alec Baldwin) to unions (National Nurses United, Transport

Workers Union, Service Employees International) to organizations like ours.

Here in Rochester, we are pleased to see the recent agreement between Mayor Richards and Occupy Rochester to enable 24/7 occupation of Washington Square Park. We hope that this grand coming together - in Rochester

and across the nation - will bring about positive change so that our environmental efforts—and others' efforts in other areas— can succeed in the face of corporate power.



Sierra Club Executive Director Michael Brune at the Tar Sands Action rally
Photo by: James Swarts

Sierra Club was also a major participant in the Tar Sands Action (tarsandsaction.org), which sent a bold message on November 6th

in Washington, DC to President Obama regarding the proposed Keystone Pipeline XL. Sierra Club's Executive Director Michael Brune was one of several keynote speakers, which included the Executive Directors of the National Wildlife Federation, National Resources Defense Council, and many others.

It was thrilling to add my voice to a message uttered by 12,000 voices at once! Sierra Club members, students, retirees, legislators, residents of the lands along the pipeline's planned route, and others asked President Obama to say "no" to the pipeline, and reminded him of his campaign promises to address global warming and transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy.

Thanks to the opposition shown that Sunday, President Obama that week announced a delay of the decision on completing the pipeline, pending determination of a different route and a new environmental impact statement. This is at least a temporary victory, given that six months ago, almost no one outside of the pipeline route even knew about it, and that energy "insiders" expected easy approval of the pipeline by year's end.

Just goes to show... there is power in collaboration. Here's to a 2012 with more collaboration, more hope, and more successes.

Happy Holidays,

Linda

Linda Isaacson Fedele
Chairperson, Sierra Club
Rochester Regional Group

Ellison Park Damaged by Mountain Bike Race

by Hugh Mitchell

In September the Monroe County Parks Department closed half of Ellison Park for a two day mountain bike race. The hilly, southwestern portion of the park was leased to a private, for-profit company named Full Moon Vista Productions. They set up a long, winding race track stretching over the wet hills, around the Ft. Schuyler area and through the lower pine grove. The result was extensive damage to the park turf of the Frisbee Golf Course, on the hills, and in the pine grove. No repairs have been made and Sierra Club has not received any response to our documented protests to the Park Department, the County Legislature Parks Committee, Maggie Brooks, and others.

In a continual search for new sources of revenue, the Monroe County administration has turned to leasing parks for private, for-profit events. This actually privatizes the leased sections, which excludes the non-paying public from park use. Although small-scale leases for picnic shelters has been a normal procedure for years, closing large park areas by lease for special events is a new and unwelcome direction – particularly when the event damages park property. The Ellison Park two-day mountain bike race damaged the park by leaving deep ruts and worn paths where the race track had been. Further, in the Ellison Park case, the bike race interfered with other routine park uses, including blocking trails and paved walkways (a Sierra Club hike was impacted), blocking access to Ft. Schuyler area, blocking the dog park area, and closing the Frisbee Golf Course.

There are a number of questions raised by the County's new policy of leasing large areas of our public parks:

1. Does the County have a right to exclude the public from us-

ing public parks?

2. Does the Park Director have the right to abridge and change park policy in favor of raising money for the County?
3. When an application for leasing a park contains a request for such obviously destructive activity as mountain bike racing, is there any review before a lease is sold? Why is there no mechanism for a surety bond to be paid against damages?



The Executive Committee of Sierra Club has voted to file a strong protest and to follow up by demanding that in the future there be no destructive mountain bike races in our County Parks – particularly those which cause damages and injury to park property. Below is the letter that was sent:

An Open Letter sent to Monroe County on privatizing part of Ellison Park for Mt. Bike Races

Copies to:

cc: Larry Staub, Executive Director, Monroe County Department of Parks

cc: Maggie Brooks, Executive Director Monroe County

cc: Mary Valerio, Monroe County

Legislative Committee for Recreation and Education
cc: President, Monroe County Legislature

On the weekend of September 24-25 a large section of Ellison Park was leased for a mountain bike race put on by Full Moon Vista Productions. This private event created a long, winding race track marked off by taped channels over the full Southwestern hillside section of the park from the corner of Blossom and Landing Road to the north end. It also blocked or took over four public use areas including: blocked walkways, blocked access to Ft. Schuyler and the eastern park recreation areas, blocked access to the dog walking area, and it closed the Frisbee Golf Course.

Two days of mountain bike racing on the damp Ellison Park hillside **resulted in extensive damage to the park lawns, walkways and tree roots.** Photos reveal winding, denuded vegetation and deep ruts on hillsides and in the pine woods. Grass areas now contain dark paths where the bike race tore up the sod and some of these areas have now started to erode. (See photos of damage - included.)

The Executive Committee of Sierra Club has voted for a strong protest and follow-up as follows:

1. We protest the decision to grant a permit which turned Ellison Park into a race track that damaged the park
2. **We demand that in the future, no soft surface areas of any of our parks be leased for mountain bike racing.**
3. We want to know who is responsible to pay for the damages and injuries to park property and who will do the repairs

TAX DEDUCTIBLE GIFTS: THE LESSER KNOWN FACTS

Your Rochester Regional Group is financially supported by the National Club with a portion of membership fees and by the donations that you send directly to us. Gifts to the "Sierra Club Foundation, Rochester Regional Group" are tax deductible and can be used to help us fund newsletter publications and educational programs. You will receive Foundation acknowl-

edgement for the IRS.

Gifts made out simply to "Sierra Club, Rochester Regional Group" are not tax-deductible, but we can use them without restriction— that is, also for legislative advocacy. Please know that your donations, regardless of which type, enable us to make a difference for the environment right here at home. We have very low

overhead compared to many organizations - 88.4% of your donation goes directly to the support of Sierra Club conservation programs. Your support is much appreciated.

Our address is:

Sierra Club - Rochester Regional Group
P.O. Box 10518
Rochester, NY 14610-0518

New Light on Earthworms (and Great Activities for Kids)

by Peter Debes, Vice Chair

As a grand-dad, my grandchildren and I have had many riveting moments digging in...yes!... my compost pile. It is like a little city in itself, with busy occupants searching for food and scuttling frantically for cover when we flip over a shovelful. There are ferocious little predators (centipedes and spiders) that eat other little creatures, as well as "vegetarians" (millipedes and earthworms) that feed on the decaying plants, and more. I role model curiosity for the kids by reaching in and grabbing a squirming worm to hold in my palm. Then I hand them one to marvel at, too. (Use plastic food containers to scoop up other creatures for viewing to avoid getting pinched or bitten).

We all learned that earthworms were good in soil, eating plant matter and "pooping" their wastes

out as castings at the top of their burrows, fertilizing the soil. Now there is new research to suspect that that all is not so rosy. First, after the glaciers left this area, there were NO earthworms in the soil! All had died under the massive layer of ice. As a result, the forests that grew back were very different from "wormy" forests. Leaves and dead wood on the surface decayed much more slowly. The soil surface had a thick spongy layer of decaying leaf matter call "duff" which released nutrients slowly, so plants could take them up immediately.

Then came the immigrants from Europe, bringing with them earthworms. The worms proliferated, causing major changes in the soil. They ate up almost all the plant litter at the surface, leaving only their castings, which mixed with the soil. making it dense and less absorbent of rain. The nutrients in the castings were released so quickly that they washed away in heavy rain or leached right down into soil before the plants could grab them. Also, the earthworms may eat the fungi that form partnerships with plant species and help them to grow. So, scientists think this may be a factor in the disappearance of many native species on the forest floor, and the inability for some of our favorite

trees, like oaks, to successfully produce seedlings. As these trees age and die, invasive trees are only too ready to move in.

So start a compost pile, then check this site to explore with children to learn more:
<http://yucky.discovery.com/flash/worm/pg000102.html>

EmPower New York Energy Efficiency Workshops Thursday, December 8 7:00 PM

Cornell Cooperative Extension
of Monroe County
249 Highland Ave, Rochester

- Learn low- and no-cost ways to save energy
- Learn about programs that can help you afford energy-efficiency home improvements
- Receive a free kit of energy-saving items

Pre-registration encouraged but not required. Contact: Shirley Sherman at (585) 262-2870 or cei@ceinfo.org
<http://csetompkins.org/energy/empower-ny-workshops>

Provided through Center for Environmental Information
Sponsored by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority
Supported by the Rochester Regional Group of the Sierra Club



The People Speak Out on High Volume Hydraulic Fracturing!

by Bette Heger

Over 1500 descended on Dansville for the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) public hearings on the Draft Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement (DSGEIS). According to the *Democrat & Chronicle*, more than two thirds of those who spoke were minimally opposed to the proposed regulations as they stand.

Speakers represented multi-generational family farms, vintners, hunters, hikers, and those serving

the tourist industry. Numerous environmental group spokespersons addressed factual threats to not only drinking water for millions of New Yorkers, but the very health and viability of our regional treasures: The Finger Lakes. Mayors, town supervisors, and other local officials asked practical and as yet unaddressed questions about who was going to pay for the damage to the roads from millions of industrial truck trips hauling water, hazardous chemicals, and toxic waste. And with the draconian staffing cuts the DEC has already suffered and more departmental cuts looming, who and how will any proposed regulations be monitored and enforced?

Yes, there were boots on the ground and hundreds of signatures on petitions to the Governor to stop the "fracking" until the science is fully understood and the current EPA studies are completed. But it was the CITIZEN VOICES that gave passionate

Stay informed on fracking developments in the 2012 legislative session. Please join our Frack Action Alert email
Email: lci_msw@hotmail.com

Support Atlantic Chapter's efforts to send petitions to Governor Cuomo asking him to stop fracking in NY State

Email: hungryhiker@aol.com to get the petition, sign it, and get your friends to do the same.

treasures we are called upon to steward for the next generations.

The first draft SGEIS received 13,000 comments, but less than 5,000 have been received on the latest draft. **It is not too late: Send your comments to the DEC - even a short topic-specific paragraph! - before Dec. 12th to:** Commissioner Martens, NYS DEC, DSGEIS Comments, 625 Broad-

way, Albany, NY 12233-1010. Include your name and address. Electronic Comments: www.dec.ny.gov/energy/76838.

Official Atlantic Chapter Sierra Club Position Statement On Fracking

Current practices and DSGEIS proposals:

- Endanger water supplies and critical watersheds
- Imperil human health
- Seriously damage important wild land resources
- Significantly increase habitat fragmentation
- Use fracking fluids that pose unacceptable toxic risks
- Do not disclose the identity and volume of fracking fluids
- Do not properly treat, manage, and account for fracking fluids, drilling muds, and wastewater
- Do not adequately protect drinking water aquifers and surface waters from contamination
- Will cause violations of air quality standards, individually and cumulatively

Below are suggested themes for comments to DEC.

- DSGEIS contains no comprehensive analysis of cumulative impacts.
- DSGEIS contains no public health risk assessments.
- The ban on fracking in NYC and Syracuse Watersheds is a declaration of unacceptable risk.

- DEC proposed to permit drilling before regulations are in place.
- DEC still refuses to study impacts of pipelines and compressor stations.
- DEC will not make new regulations consistent for all drilling.
- Disposal of fracking waste in municipal waste water treatment facilities should be banned.
- Local ordinances and land use laws should come before drilling interests.
- Hazardous chemicals in fracking solutions should be banned.

For more info, visit: newyork.sierraclub.org/gas_drilling.html and tinyurl.com/2011SGEISFlaws

Cross Country Skiing

by Cenie Cafarelli

Rochester is blessed with many areas for cross country skiing. There are groomed trails in Mendon Ponds Parks (beginner to expert) with a resident beaver in Quaker Pond, in Webster Park, and skiing on hiking trails or open meadows in all parks. There is also flat skiing along the Erie Canal trail and the Greenway trail that are magical in winter with rosy cheeks and a good winter workout.

A little further afield, Harriet Hollister Spencer Recreational Area off route 36 contains groomed trails, spectacular lake views, and snow when many areas in Rochester are barren. There is also a cross country ski area, for a small fee, at the top of Bristol Mountain - 3 km with snowmaking, and an additional approximately 5 km with natural snow.

Go outside and enjoy Rochester's 4th season, with natural light to chase away winter blues.

Greening Your Holiday Giving

By Margie Campaigne

The idea of Green Gifts doesn't have to inspire thoughts of Scrooge or the Grinch. Quite the opposite, consider Green Gifts as those that keep on giving, because they promote sustaining a livable planet! Most any gift idea can be transformed into a green gift. Sending flowers? Those can be ORGANIC flowers! Here are a few ideas, and questions to ask yourself:

1. If the gift is a tangible object, is it truly filling a need or desire on the part of the intended recipient? Is it of good quality, and made to last? Is it recyclable or biodegradable? Does it come as is, or with a lot of unnecessary packaging?
2. If the gift is on the expensive side, can other gift-givers go in on the purchase and omit smaller, perhaps more extraneous gifts?
3. Could the idea for the gift be turned into one for consumable goods (i.e. food), a charitable donation on their behalf, or a gift certificate for a service (massage, babysitting, yard work, computer help, etc.)?
4. Could you sew, knit, craft, bake or otherwise make the gift yourself?
5. Rather than buying gifts that come with their own passports, think of locally made gifts, especially of items unique to your area - maple syrup from a local farm, an artistic gift from a local art festival, a useful item from a local souvenir shop, wine from a local vineyard, and so on.
6. Make it something truly personal - find a nice photo you've taken of the person or their family, or a favorite locale, and have it enlarged and framed (or do it yourself).
7. Give a membership in a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture), local food cooperative, or an organization you know the person would enjoy (museum, symphony, hiking club, season tickets to the theatre, etc.).
8. Give a vegetarian or vegan cookbook. Invite friends and family over for a vegetarian or vegan gourmet dinner (or potluck). See <http://www.goveg.com/environment.asp> for the wonderful benefits to the environment. It's a healthy way of eating, too!
9. Wrap the gift in something useful (a nice hand towel), a reusable gift bag, the Sunday comics, an attractive storage container, etc. If you use standard gift-wrap, make sure it's printed on recycled paper.

Search online for more ideas at <http://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Project-HOUSEGreenIrene/152068008271> in the notes, and via search engines.

A Member's Fight Against the Keystone XL Pipeline

By Barbara Bangs

Little did I know, when I decided to attend a lecture on global warming last August, that it would put me on the road to Washington, DC...twice. But the speaker was Bill McKibben. It's hard to say "no" to Bill. He presented all the depressing data about where our climate is headed, showed slides of "350 Day" participants from around the world, and then told us about one of the biggest global warming threats we currently face: the Keystone XL Pipeline. This project would ravage the Tar Sands Region of Alberta, Canada and transport 800,000 barrels of heavy crude per day 1,700 miles across the Ogallala Aquifer (which provides

drinking water to millions of Americans). The first phase of this project suffered twelve leaks in its first year of operation. But what really got my attention was when Bill quoted NASA's lead climate scientist, Jim Hansen, who warned that the Keystone XL Pipeline would spell "game over" for the fight against global warming.

At the end of his talk, Bill invited the audience to come to DC and get arrested in a protest against the Keystone XL Pipeline...so I did (along with 1,252 others from across the U.S. and Canada). After that action, he asked us to come back to DC on November 6th to circle the White House and 12,000 of us (including a busload from

Rochester) heeded his call. Why did I do it? Because I'm a mom who will do whatever it takes to protect my child; I am compelled to minimize the inevitable climate chaos that my daughter and her generation already face. (My daughter, by the way, joined me on both trips.)

What did we achieve in DC? Shortly after the second protest, President Obama ordered the State Department to re-review the pipeline project with an eye on its effect on global warming. A partial victory! The fight's not over, but we're making headway. To see what's next, go to: www.tarsandsaction.org.

This is the local Sierra Club's biggest fundraiser each year.

Please consider ordering 2012 calendars for your holiday gift giving and support the work of your local Sierra Club.

Proceeds from calendars purchased at local bookstores do not benefit the Rochester Regional Group.

**Please mail all orders to:
Sierra Club, Calendar Sales
PO Box 10518
Rochester, NY 14610-0518**

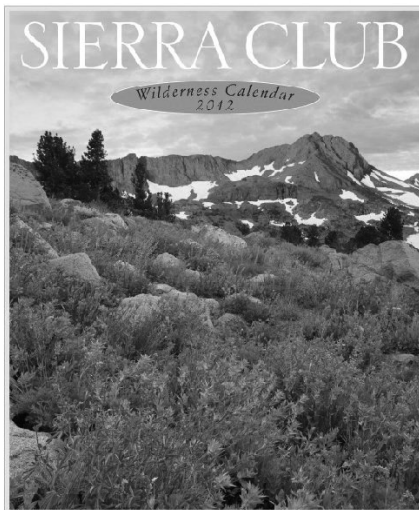
Call 585-266-5376 if you would like to order a large quantity or if you have any questions.

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING YOUR LOCAL SIERRA CLUB!

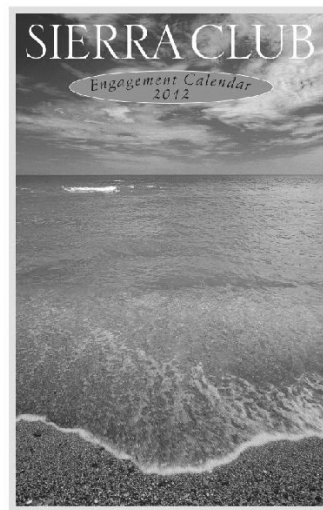


Enjoy, explore and protect the planet

2012 Sierra Club Calendars



Wilderness Wall Calendar



Engagement Calendar

Item	Cost	Qty	Total	Ship To: Please make checks payable to "Sierra Club" and mail to the return address show on your newsletter	
Engagement <input type="checkbox"/>	\$13.95	_____	_____	Name _____	
Wilderness <input type="checkbox"/>	\$12.95	_____	_____	Address _____	
Subtotal: _____				City _____ State _____ Zip _____	
Shipping (see pricing below) : _____				Phone (____) _____	
Sales Tax: _____				Email _____	
GRAND TOTAL: _____					

Shipping Costs:

1-3 calendars: \$5.50

4-5 calendars: \$7.00

More than 5: Call 585-266-5376 for pricing



**Rochester Regional Group
of the Sierra Club**
P.O. Box 10518
Rochester, NY 14610-0518
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TIME-SENSITIVE INFORMATION

Winter 2011-2012 Calendar

All Committees are local volunteer groups of the Rochester Regional Group of the Sierra Club

Date	Day	Time	Calendar/Event	Place
December 1	Thursday	6:30 pm	What Does Science Say Constitutes a Healthy Lifestyle?	Pittsford Library Fisher Room
December 6	Tuesday	6:30 pm	Executive Committee Meeting	Harro East Bldg., Suite 600
December 8	Thursday	7:00 pm	EmPower New York (see page 4)	249 Highland Ave
December 12	Monday	6:30 pm	Global Warming & Energy Committee Meeting	Brighton Library Community Room, 2300 Elmwood Ave.
December 27	Tuesday	4:30 pm	Zero Waste Committee	494 East Ave
December 27	Tuesday	7:00 pm	Great Lakes Committee Meeting	12 Corners Middle School Library
January 3	Tuesday	6:30 pm	Executive Committee Meeting	Harro East Bldg., Suite 600
January 5	Thursday	6:30 pm	What Does Science Say Constitutes a Healthy Lifestyle?	Pittsford Library Fisher Room
January 9	Monday	7:00 pm	Global Warming & Energy Committee Meeting	For location, e-mail lci_msw@hotmail.com
January 24	Tuesday	4:30 pm	Zero Waste Committee	494 East Ave
January 24	Tuesday	7:00 pm	Great Lakes Committee Meeting	12 Corners Middle School Library
February 2	Thursday	6:30 pm	What Does Science Say Constitutes a Healthy Lifestyle?	Pittsford Library Fisher Room
February 7	Tuesday	6:30 pm	Executive Committee Meeting	Harro East Bldg., Suite 600
February 13	Monday	7:00 pm	Global Warming & Energy Committee Meeting	For location, e-mail lci_msw@hotmail.com
February 28	Tuesday	4:30 pm	Zero Waste Committee	494 East Ave
February 28	Tuesday	7:00 pm	Great Lakes Committee Meeting	12 Corners Middle School Library

All Executive Committee meetings are open to Sierra Club members.

The Eco-Logue is printed on 100% recycled paper with green plant-based toner.