



## **James Hansen to Speak at 17th Annual Environmental Forum**

by Paul Sanders

Your Rochester Regional Group of the Sierra Club is delighted to announce that “rock star” climate-scientist turned activist, Dr. James Hansen, will be the featured speaker for our 17th Annual Environmental Forum, in April, 2015.

Dr. Hansen was formerly the Director of the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies, and is currently an Adjunct Professor at Columbia University’s Earth Institute, where he directs the Program on Climate Science, Awareness and Solutions. Since the late 1970s, Dr. Hansen has focused his research on Earth’s climate, especially human-made climate change, and he is best known for his testimony on climate change to congressional committees in the 1980s that helped raise broad awareness of the global warming issue. He was elected to the National Academy of Sciences in 1995 and was designated by Time Magazine in 2006 as one of the 100 most influential people on Earth.

Dr. Hansen is recognized for speaking truth to power, for identifying ineffectual policies as green-wash, and for outlining actions that the public must take to protect the future of young people and other life on our planet. His powerful presence and passion for change have given him a reputation as one of the foremost speakers on climate change, which has been one of the Rochester Regional Group’s



main focus areas for the past few years. We are very fortunate to have him as our guest, and hope that all of you will take advantage of this wonderful opportunity to hear his important message.

The Forum will take place on April 21, 2015. If you are interested in assisting with preparations for the event, or would like to volunteer on the day of the event, please call 585-234-1056.

Please stay tuned for more details concerning our honored guest!

### **Executive Committee Ballot: Rochester Regional Group Sierra Club**

Each year the Nominating Committee recommends candidates to serve a term of two years on the Executive Committee.

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

Ballots will be counted at the first Ex-Com meeting in 2015.

**Send ballots to:**

Elections, Sierra Club - Rochester Regional Group  
PO Box 10518  
Rochester, NY 14610-0518

**Vote for up to 6 candidates for term 2015-2016.** Members may vote for those nominated or write in a candidate.

- Margie Campaigne
- Peter Debes
- Paul Sanders
- Jessica Slaybaugh
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_



## From the Chair: Looking Forward to an Eventful Year

I am still excited from my experience at The People's Climate March, the largest environmental action in our country's history. I was amazed by the local, state, and national coordination that brought such a large number and wide variety of organizations and people together. Our local group of the Sierra Club was well represented, and thanks to the efforts of Frank Regan, Charlotte Baltus, Paul Sanders, Linda Isaacson Fedele and many others, we filled two and a half buses of enthusiastic marchers!

All of the groups that participated are eager to keep the momentum going. We are already planning for the biggest annual Environmental Forum ever, to be a key event to do just that. As you will see in this issue, we are bringing one of the foremost climate scientists in the world, James Hansen, to Rochester as a key-note speaker - but that is just the beginning. We are

working with other organizations in the newly formed Rochester People's Climate Coalition to plan a variety of exciting local events. We will celebrate Earth Day and highlight the urgent need for action to address climate change. We plan to engage more of our community with events featuring music, art, and performances, with the common theme being the urgent need to act to minimize the effects of climate change while we still can.

The election results are challenging. Take, for example, that the person slated to be Chair of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee is James Inhofe (R - Oklahoma), who has published a book titled *The Greatest Hoax: How the Global Warming Conspiracy Threatens Your Future*. Our government is now led to a large degree by those who deny climate change, precisely at



the moment when large-scale, societal change is needed if we are to escape its worst effects. Please join us to learn about climate change and what you can do to help bring about a sustainable future for all. Our April 2015 Forum will be a great place to start.

Peter Debes,  
Chair

### 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 acknowledgement 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

### Keystone Defeated...For Now. Make Your Voice Heard.

by Peter Debes

A big thank you to our legislators who had the wisdom to defeat the bill to allow the Keystone Pipeline to go through. It would have provided Canada an incentive to widen the environmental destruction taking place to extract the world's dirtiest oil, and damaged so many miles of our country's land to send it to Texas to refine and export. If anything, we should be conserving any oil we have for our own future. These projects are a continuation of business as usual. They imply that any extraction of energy is good for our country when it only accelerates the depletion of remaining reserves and diverts resources from developing renewable sources to stop our head-long advance into global warming. Call the White House at 202-456-1414 and urge the President to defeat any new bill to allow the pipeline.

## Rochester People's Climate Coalition: Local Push For Societal Change

by Linda Isaacson Fedele

Our local Rochester Sierra Club Group is very proud to be a founding member of the newly formed Rochester People's Climate Coalition.

Formed in August, with the immediate and important goal of getting local people to the Sept. 21 People's Climate March in New York City, the Coalition succeeded in chartering two and half buses full of eager Climate March participants. Including our buses (about 135 people) and those who traveled to NYC by train and carpool, we estimate that well over 200 Rochester area people participated in the March because they know that it's long past time for our country to take bold action to reduce carbon emissions.

With the Climate March success just behind us, the Coalition is intent on maintaining the momentum towards taking action against climate change. The Coalition is in the process of seeking input from

its over 30 member organizations regarding goals and capacities to ensure that Rochester continues to be a strong voice in pressing for systemic change to reduce carbon emissions and prepare for climate change's effects on our public infrastructure and private properties. By working together and leveraging its members' collective talents, energy, and resources, the Coalition will help to create a more just and sustainable society for all.

The Coalition's first project is to support our Sierra Club's 16th Annual Environmental Forum with Dr. James Hansen—the "rock star" oft-quoted climate change scientist, formerly of NASA, and to work with its member and other organizations to build a week of related events for Earth Day, 2015.

In addition to Sierra Club, founding members of the Coalition include: Congresswoman Louise Slaughter, former Brighton Town Supervisor Sandra Frankel,

Mothers Out Front, R-CAUSE, Rochester-Genesee Valley Area Labor Federation, Citizens' Climate Lobby – Rochester Chapter, Northeast Organic Farming Association of NY, Gandhi Earth Keepers International, Rochester Climate Action Network, Broccolo Tree and Lawn Care, Renewable Rochester, St. Thomas Episcopal Church, First Unitarian Church of Rochester, Friends of the Garden Aerial, Church of the Assumption, NY Working Families Party, and many more.

Does your organization support action to reduce emissions? The transition away from fossil fuels and towards a renewable energy future? The Coalition is a diverse group of organizations, all pushing for climate change action. Even - and especially - if climate change is not your organization's primary rallying issue, but is one that you know is important, please join us! Contact: rocpc@gmail.com or call 585-234-1056.

### Naomi Klein Book Review:

#### ***This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate***

by Hugh Mitchell

As capitalism spreads like a plague over the planet, Naomi Klein says it's destroying life on earth. The cause of this is not just burning fossil fuels but from the basic nature of the beast. "The really inconvenient truth is that it's not about carbon - it's about capitalism. ... Our economic system and our planetary system are now at war."

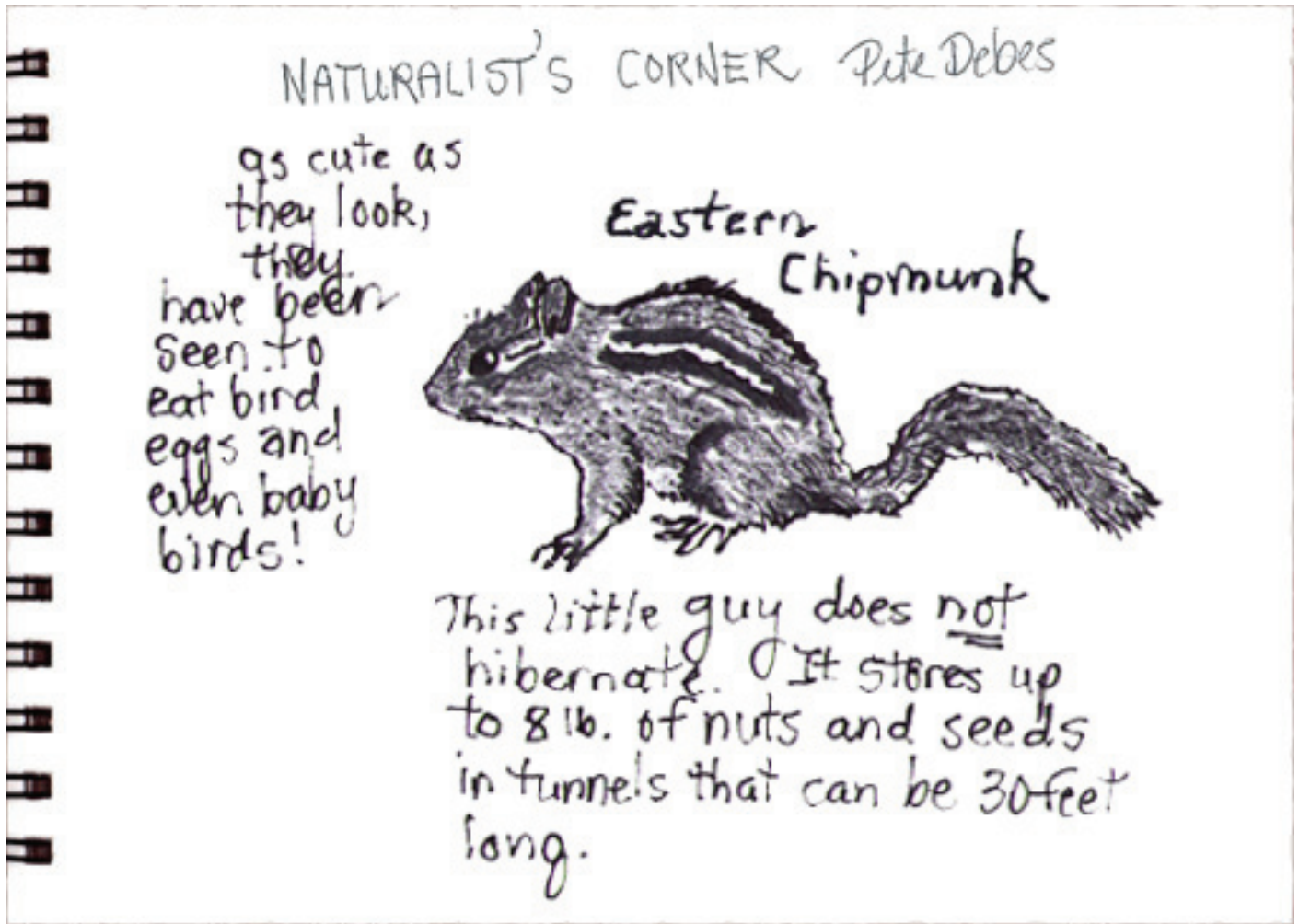
*This Changes Everything* is a hard book, hard because Klein is so convincing and powerful in her clear and understandable prose. And she does not pull her punches. For example, regarding the UN's IPCC she says, "...the intergovernmental body entrusted to prevent 'dangerous' levels of climate change has not only failed to make progress over its

twenty-odd years...it has overseen a process of virtually uninterrupted backsliding." Of course the reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change are compromise agreements and Klein is anything but a compromiser.

But all is not lost. "We have a stark choice: allow climate disruption to change everything in our world, or change pretty much everything about our economy to avoid that fate." The way to do this is through grass roots actions rising from common people, not necessarily by leaders who too often are in the pocket of corporations - particularly after the Citizens United decision. Change will come through what she calls blockadia or people blockades. People protests in Nigeria and Ecuador make it clear that anti-extraction actions

can succeed. People can defend themselves against businesses that threaten their way of life. World-wide climate change can be stopped from the ground up, rather than from the board room down. One example of a way to send a message to fossil fuel companies is through the divestment movement, which became particularly significant when Stanford University led the way by voting to divest.

Lest anyone suspect Naomi Klein is shooting from the hip with undocumented ideas, consider that *This Changes Everything* contains 59 pages of references printed in tiny 6pt type. I recommend reading this book with a stiff drink in hand.



## Sierra Club Outing

### Winter Life in Washington Grove

Saturday, January 17, 10:00 - 11:00 AM

Winter is tough if you live outdoors. How do plants and animals survive it? Naturalist Peter Debes of the Friends of Washington Grove will lead you on a scavenger hunt for signs of life and secrets of survival in the woods, and if we're good, we'll spot a few creatures there.

Meet at the top of the reservoir road, Cobb's Hill Park by the pine trees. Adults and children 7 and older. Dress for the weather. Binoculars useful. Hand warmers will be available. Cancelled if there are high winds. For questions or to confirm cancellation, call Peter Debes at 585-820-2018.

### Future Outings

It can be difficult to schedule outings months in advance for publication in this newsletter. Sometimes an opportunity presents itself at short notice, or simply at a time in between newsletters. To make sure you're constantly informed about Sierra Club outings, visit our website. You can also follow us on Facebook (see article at right). We always keep our Facebook page up to date with the latest outings and events we're involved in.

## Have You "Liked" Us on Facebook?

If you're on Facebook, be sure to "like" us at [www.facebook.com/SierraROC](http://www.facebook.com/SierraROC). We post info on upcoming activities and events, and share news on environmental topics.

Connect with us to stay up-to-date on what we're doing and to link up with some like-minded people. Since Facebook displays pages' posts to a limited number of fans, be sure to check our page regularly, and please feel free to comment on our posts or message us with questions or requests. We love to hear from our members!

You can also keep up-to-date on water issues and the Great Lakes Committee's activities at [www.facebook.com/GreatLakesRochester](http://www.facebook.com/GreatLakesRochester).

## 400,000 PCM: Thoughts From the March

by John Kastner

It's not often you get to walk in the same direction, for the same reason, in such great numbers, with people of every color in the human rainbow, across the spectrum of all ages and ethnicities, to the drumbeat of every heart, under a vast umbrella of smiles, but that's what we did at the People's Climate March (PCM). It was a real spiritual experience, celebrating each other's lives with joyous abandon...chanting, twirling, dancing, marching, we became a sea of bobbing heads and rocking bodies, filling the street and sidewalks to vanishing points before and behind us. Like water surging with relentless determination through concrete canyons, we were a river of lungs and voices unstoppably moving toward a shared vision of a sustainable, livable world... a world of justice and sanity.

Through this river charged an energized current of young people snaking around us, splashing us with enthusiasm, hope and con-

fidence... as full of the joy of life as they could be. This was not a funeral they were attending. Caught up in their play in the face of impending disaster, I could see why I was here. This relentless, determined courage and optimism deserved a future. These were suddenly my children, and they deserved a future. Pessimism and despair were not welcome here. I would not insult their spirit so.

We are so small. We may predict and speculate about the future, but we cannot see it. It behooves us to allow for the possibility we must act on this hope as we can without insisting on seeing the results of our efforts. We must allow for the possibility, however slim, that the



Sierra Club Rochester Regional Group Executive Committee members Peter Debes and Paul Sanders at the People's Climate March on September 21.

sum of our actions may save us. Possibility lies in action, the result of inaction is certain. Life is so beautiful in the struggles that give it shape. All that is beautiful has created itself out of suffering. It is worth everything to protect it.

## Washington Grove Forest Looking Good

by Peter Debes

Take a walk in the Grove and admire ancient giant trees, many over 200 years old. Enjoy the peace, tranquility and sounds of wildlife. Six years ago I was encouraged by the City of Rochester to form a group of concerned citizens to formulate a management plan to help restore and protect the old-growth forest at Cobbs Hill Park, known as the Washington Grove. This early group was supported by the Rochester Regional Group of the Sierra Club. The group of citizens has grown and incorporated as a non-profit 501(c)(3) so that they can raise funds and apply for grants to support the work. Six years later, and after many

hundreds of hours of volunteer work, there are lots of signs of progress.

Over 600 invasive Norway maples have been removed by the City and volunteers creating openings in the canopy for native species to be planted. These include various species of oaks, flowering dogwood, shadbush, cucumber trees (a native magnolia), and sugar maples. With the removal of the

Norway maples, the group is now focusing on invasive Autumn olive shrubs and herbs such as Lilies of the Valley and black swallow-wort.

Many trails have been stabilized by spreading woodchips on them.

The volunteers who have made this progress possible have been attracted from area neighborhoods, colleges such as RIT, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, and a group of employees of Southwest Airlines. So... join the other volunteers next Spring on Clean Sweep day to help continue the amazing work being done there. See the facebook page, Friends of Washington Grove, Inc.



## More Dirt on the Fracking Fiasco

by John Kastner

Have you wondered, as I have, why states like Colorado and California, led by Democratic governors, allow hydrofracking when they are desperately short of water? Colorado has been especially raked over by fracking, with hundreds of wells drilled (many within city limits) and major spills. Last year's flooding distributed fracking fluids and waste water over wide swaths of the state.

A number of cities, including Fort Collins and Longmont, enacted fracking bans within their boundaries. While New York courts upheld the right of communities to decide what was appropriate for their jurisdictions, Colorado courts incredibly struck down local zoning against hydrofracking, ruling that the interests of the state superseded local concern for the health and safety of citizens.

Coloradans organized under the leadership of US Representative Jared Polis' (D) Safe, Clean Colorado Foundation. The foundation created and funded a petition drive to place the decision on whether or not to frack under local control. Volunteers collected over a quarter of a million signatures, more than three times the required amount, to put the measure on the November ballot. It looked like a shoo-in for anti-fracking advocates.

Then, suddenly, the measure was withdrawn. Polis was forced into a deal with Democratic Governor John Hickenlooper (former gas and oil industry geologist who famously claimed he could safely drink fracking water...but didn't). Hickenlooper opposed the local control measure, but he agreed to drop the suit against the city of Longmont's ban and offered a 21 member fracking review board (made up entirely of people with industry ties) if Polis withdrew the petition. The industry promised they would spend \$100 million to defeat the referendum. Polis'

advisors counseled him that the petition could not survive such an avalanche of cash.

All people involved in this deal were either Democrats or major donors to the party. A small group of billionaires and investors saw an opportunity some years earlier to seize Colorado for fracking by flipping the state from red to blue. The idea was to jump on the climate change bandwagon, touting "clean burning" natural gas as superior to the Republican-backed "dirty" coal. They could pick up the support of women and gay rights advocates and claim the environmental high ground, at the same time clearing the way for hydrofracking. These issues made a fine smoke screen for what was to follow.

The Sierra Club, under Carl Pope, accepted \$26 million from Chesapeake Energy and, for a time, the Club promoted natural gas as the "bridge fuel" to renewable energy. The Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter soon disabused National of that notion, but not before it endorsed the Colorado Clean Air/Clean Jobs act (CACJ), switching Colorado from coal-based energy to gas. This soon became the model for the EPA's plan to reduce Americans' CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (which it indeed did, at a tremendous cost in methane emissions and contaminated water). The national Democratic party jumped on the "bridge fuel" bandwagon, with a healthy boost of industry cash, claiming natural gas as a weapon in the war on climate change

Hydrofracking is not only national policy under Obama, it's becoming foreign policy too. Hillary Clinton and John Kerry are hawk-ing hydrofracking to Europe as both a response to global warming and as effective hedge against Russia's threat to withhold gas deliveries to the west if we continue to press them on the Ukraine. Clinton and Kerry are shilling for American gas companies' plans to obtain licenses to export Ameri-

can gas to willing foreign markets, where demand will drive up domestic prices.

Both the Democratic party and a number of environmental organizations accept money from the gas industry and proxies like "sea change", tides and Hewlitt. The Sierra Club got \$50 million from Bloomberg, who has gas industry ties. It would appear that we have few friends, with certain exceptions, in either major party in the fight against hydrofracking. Governor Cuomo has been reelected. He has been coy on the issue of hydrofracking, but he has recently announced that the DOH review of hydrofracking will be completed by the end of the year.

Then there is the news that a study on the health effects of fracking conducted by a federal agency and commissioned by the state of New York was altered to delete information indicating negative health impacts resulting from the process. What are we to do? There is no third party currently capable of putting candidates in office in sufficient numbers to counter the growing pro-fracking threat in New York state government.

The Sierra Club does not currently endorse direct-action civil disobedience. The mainstream news does not begin to cover the issue in any meaningful detail. Well, giving up is not an option either. We have nowhere else to go. The line of battle is drawn on our own ground.

Through the efforts of thousands of our fellow New Yorkers, thousands more have come to understand the enormous dangers of hydrofracking. We still have the popular home rule decision of the New York State Court of Appeals, leaving us much to do to ban fracking in our communities.

*(Continued on p. 7)*

## 2015 Sierra Club Calendars



### Order Form

Item	Cost	Qty	Total
Engagement Calendar <input type="checkbox"/>	\$16.00	_____	_____
Wilderness Calendar <input type="checkbox"/>	\$15.00	_____	_____
Shipping Costs:			Subtotal : _____
1 - 3 calendars: \$5.50			Shipping : _____
4 - 5 calendars: \$7.00			Tax included in cost
6 or more: Call (585) 271-0544 for pricing			GRAND TOTAL : _____

Please make checks payable to "Sierra Club" and mail to:  
Dina Stein  
143 Eastland Ave.  
Rochester, NY 14618

### Ship To:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

## Annual Sierra Club Calendar Drive

Our Sierra Club calendar sale is our biggest annual fundraiser. The monies raised from sales help us make a direct impact in the local community. They also enable us to bring you our Annual Environmental Forum with great speakers like James Hansen, who will join us at the 2015 Forum (see p. 1 for details). Purchases made at bookstores do not benefit the Rochester Regional Group, so if you plan on purchasing a Sierra Club calendar, please purchase one directly from us. Fill out the form above and send it to Dina Stein at the address listed on the form. If you have any questions, you can call her at (585) 271-0544. Thank you for your support!

### More Dirt on the Fracking Fiasco (cont'd from p. 6)

There will be a conference held at Ithaca College this month (November) to plan our strategy. I'll be there, and will report on proposed next steps in the next Ecologue.

The information for this article came from the Sept/Oct. issue of Mother Jones, but mostly from Joel Dyer, Matt Cortind and Elizabeth Miller, writing for the Boulder Weekly in Boulder, CO. They ended their story with this sentence: "If democrats at both national and state level support the gas industry for many decades to come, the Earth cannot be saved from its destruction at the hands of global warming."

### NPR Makes Major Cuts to Environmental Reporting Staff

by Peter Debes

Sierra Club members who are fans of NPR may be interested to know that Anne Gudenkauf of NPR news has recently announced a 75 percent reduction in their environmental news staff. They are going from three full time reporters and an editor down to one part time reporter. Perhaps other club members find the timing of this announcement, so close on the heels of the great People's Climate March, to be particularly insulting. If you want to tell them so, you can fill out an email response form on their website or send a comment to Ms. Gudenkauf at:

NPR, 1111 north Capitol Street, Washington, DC 20002



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**Winter 2014 Calendar**

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

Date	Day	Time	Calendar/Event	Place
Dec. 9	Tuesday	5:30-8:30pm	Executive Committee Meeting	Location TBD. Call (585) 234-1056 to receive notification of location.
Dec. 22	Monday	6:30-8:30pm	Global Warming & Energy Committee Meeting	First Unitarian Church, Room 201, 220 Winton Rd. S., Rochester, NY 14610
Dec. 23	Tuesday	7:00-9:00pm	Great Lakes Committee Meeting	Asbury First UMC 1010 East Ave. (smaller bldg. just west of main bldg.)
Jan. 5	Tuesday	6:30-8:30pm	Executive Committee Meeting	Harro East Bldg., 400 Andrews St., Ste 600
Jan. 17	Saturday	10:00-11:00	Sierra Club Outing: Winter Life in Washington Grove (see p. 4 for details)	Cobb's Hill Park by the pine trees (see p. 4 for details)
Jan. 26	Monday	6:30-8:30pm	Global Warming & Energy Committee Meeting	First Unitarian Church, Room 201, 220 Winton Rd. S., Rochester, NY 14610
Jan. 27	Tuesday	7:00-9:00pm	Great Lakes Committee Meeting	Asbury First UMC 1010 East Ave. (smaller bldg. just west of main bldg.)
Feb. 2	Tuesday	6:30-8:30pm	Executive Committee Meeting	Harro East Bldg., 400 Andrews St., Ste 600
Feb. 23	Monday	6:30-8:30pm	Global Warming & Energy Committee Meeting	First Unitarian Church, Room 201, 220 Winton Rd. S., Rochester, NY 14610
Feb. 24	Tuesday	7:00-9:00pm	Great Lakes Committee Meeting	Asbury First UMC 1010 East Ave. (smaller bldg. just west of main bldg.)

Executive Committee meetings are open to Sierra Club members. All other meetings are open to everyone.

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