



COOKED: SURVIVAL BY ZIP CODE
A Film Review by local students
Patrick Suter and Togzhan Seilkhanova

ROCHESTER REGIONAL GROUP—Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

SIERRA CLUB ECOLOGUE

In July of 1995, an unprecedented heat wave tormented the city of Chicago, resulting in 739 heat-related deaths. For five sweltering days, while Northsiders retreated to their air-conditioned homes and apartments, climate controlled semis made their way to relieve the city's overwhelmed morgue. It turns out that when the heat deaths are plotted on a map, a troubling trend emerges: neighborhoods that suffered the heaviest casualties coincide with the city's poorest, predominantly African-American areas on the city's southside, a fact that was willfully ignored by the media. Judith Helfand's documentary *Cooked: Survival by Zip Code* examines Chicago's devastating heat wave through the lens of a concerned outsider. Inspired by Eric Klinenberg's book *Heat Wave*, we hear from nurses, professors, activists and relatives of heat-death victims who attest to the social, cultural and environmental conditions that led to Chicago's deadliest natural disaster.

The film is sprawling and ambitious but earnestly drives home a single point: we must reevaluate our definition of 'natural disaster' to include man made agents of destruction such as segregation, racism and poverty. Social justice and poverty relief, contends Helfand in a narrated monologue, is a vital but overlooked component to disaster preparedness. If we collectively approached concentrated poverty the same way we currently approach disaster preparedness, people might just fight to end poverty with urgency and courage.

Helfand discovers that historically divested urban areas lacking air-conditioned public facilities such as libraries, cafes and grocery stores suffered disproportionately. Victims in substandard housing conditions, many of them elderly, disabled and isolated, were found days later in unventilated bedrooms with the windows shuttered. Some able-bodied victims refused to open the windows, choosing safety over comfort.

The film alludes to the climate crisis, stating that the number of global heat deaths is steadily rising, strengthening its claim as Mother Nature's greatest threat to human life. The potency of extreme heat is compounded in or near large cities that tend to heat up during the day and cling to heat at night. The film also explores the concept of

environmental justice in the face of climate change. To that end, we travel to Helfand's family home in an upper-middle class neighborhood on Long Island where her brother is preparing for Hurricane Sandy. As Helfand helps her brother haul jugs of water into the basement, she explains how wealth acts as buffer against extreme weather.

The film departs from its central theme to examine concentrated poverty in general which ultimately pays dividends. In one remarkable scene, Helfand visits a mobile food pantry handing out fresh produce to southside residents receiving supplemental nutrition benefits. There she meets a high school-aged boy who tries an apple for the first time. In this particular neighborhood, one man claims, its easier to buy a gun than a tomato. Perhaps unsurprisingly, this neighborhood was one the hardest hit by the heat wave.

The film concludes with a lovely shot of Chicago's nighttime skyline accompanied by a final monologue from the filmmaker. Helfand asks: What if your survival during a natural disaster wasn't determined by a zip code?

This film was screened at The Little on August 13 and was followed by a discussion with the filmmaker over Skype.

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FROM THE CHAIR: We Must Help Children Become Climate Change Activists

By Jessica A. Slaybaugh Jessica.A.Slaybaugh@gmail.com

We've had a lot of conversations lately within our executive committee about the importance of getting young people involved in the fight to save our planet from the disastrous effects of climate change. This seems to be a topic of growing popularity, and for many good reasons – the primary reason being that without their participation, we won't succeed.

If you haven't read it yet, I urge you to check out our very own executive committee member John Kastner's July 24 article in *City Newspaper* titled "Help Sierra Club help the earth." You can find it by going to www.rochestercitynewspaper.com and searching for the article title. In his article, John discusses the fact that so many people involved in the fight are "old grayheads" who will be long gone before "the social and agricultural underpinnings of civilization unravel," which some project could be as soon as 2050.

It's hard to say what the "most important" activity is that we should all focus on when it comes to fighting climate change, but I believe that *one* of the most important things we can do is to educate children and young adults, because we need them to carry our efforts forward. We must teach them to love, respect and appreciate the animals, plants, landscapes, and wildly varying ecosystems that knit together to create planet Earth.

There's a lot of misinformation out there that's being fed to children, misinformation that is believed in and propagated by the adults who continue to block our progress toward taking necessary actions. These people point to the planet's long history of fluctuations in climate as "proof" that the current changes are natural and nothing to be worried about. We need to teach these children that the rate of change now is unprecedented compared to natural changes in the past, that we are

the cause of that change, that something can be done about it, and that we need their help in order to succeed.

In addition to educating children about the facts of climate change, we can teach them lifestyle changes centered around reducing consumption and reusing everything they can (and recycling, too, but the other two "R's" have the biggest impact). We can teach them ways to "green" their home, and urge them to take on projects with their parents to improve their home's energy efficiency. We can teach them about the importance of reducing our planet's population, so that they might be more likely to choose not to have children, or to adopt or limit themselves to having only one child. And we can empower them to step up and let their voice be heard, to demand that the adults in power take action – to emulate impressive young adults like Greta Thunberg and Xiuhtezcatl Roske-Martinez.

The fact is that even if we manage to succeed now in enacting changes that help veer us away from the path of climate disaster, if future generations of adults have as much disregard and disrespect for our planet as current generations of adults do, then we'll slide back into a dire situation. We must instill values in younger generations that will endure for millennia to come. If we don't, I fear that there won't be many more generations of humans (or countless other animals) left.

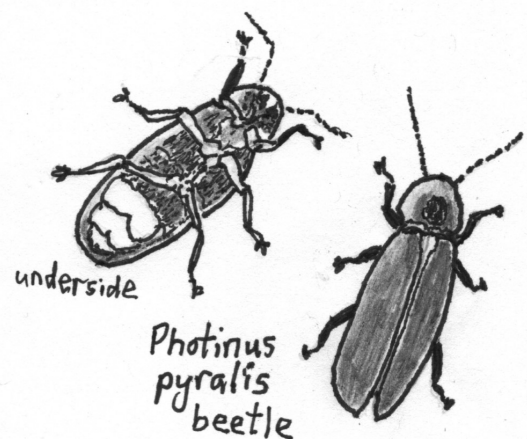
If you're interested in helping us undertake efforts to educate and inspire young people in our communities, please contact me or any other member of the Rochester Regional Group executive committee. You can find contact information on the back page of this newsletter.

Thank you for your support and commitment to helping us make a difference.

NATURALIST'S CORNER

By Peter Debes

Fireflies have really burst upon us this year. All around Rochester, people have thrilled to the yellow flashes of fireflies, which are actually beetles, not flies. Their outer two wings are hardened and lifted up and out of the way to let the under two wings carry them. Don't you wonder why they don't all get eaten, when "highlighting" themselves so openly at night? The reason is they taste terrible—to predators. The eggs of this species, *Photinus* hatch into little larvae that eat snails and slugs, and convert chemicals from them into evil-tasting steroid chemicals. So bats, spiders, and other predators quickly learn to avoid the flashing lights. The fireflies around Rochester are mostly the species *Photinus pyralis*. While flying, they flash on as they do an upward loop, as if writing the letter J in the air. This is how the male signals it is looking for a mate! But oh my! Nature is full of trickery too. There is another species of firefly that can signal back to the male, tricking it to land by her...and then she eats it! Watch out guys!



A Clean Energy Future is Ahead By David Alicea, NY Lead Organizing Representative David.Alicea@sierraclub.org

At the end of this legislative session New York passed some of the most ambitious climate legislation in the country. The Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act sets a goal of being carbon neutral by 2050 across all sectors (heating, transportation, electricity, industrial, and agricultural). It also sets some important short-term goals, including generating 70% of our electricity from renewable energy by 2030, 9,000MW of offshore wind, and 6,000MW of distributed solar.

These bold goals are important - but even more important is putting them into place. While many of us may be familiar with rooftop solar, technology like utility scale solar is key to making the giant leap to 100% clean energy within the timeframe needed to prevent the worst impacts of climate change. Experts like Professor Jacobson at Stanford estimate we may need as much as 30% of our electricity in NY generated by utility scale solar (and that's after energy efficiency and conservation!). Our own Sierra Club analysis shows that utility scale renewables like wind and solar are critical to moving towards 100% clean, renewable energy in our state.

Luckily, we're seeing renewable energy proposed right here in the Rochester region. Right now in Livingston County, there are two utility scale solar projects proposed, each of which could power over 35,000 homes. These types of projects are critical to meeting our climate goals and key to jumpstarting a clean energy economy right here in our region.

Projects like those in Livingston County will not only generate clean, renewable energy, but also deliver real economic benefits to communities and workers. Projects like these are set to bring hundreds of thousands of dollars a year in payments to local counties, towns, and school districts. The Town of Eagle in Wyoming County, which now hosts a utility scale wind project, was actually able to reduce its town property taxes to ZERO. In addition, most developers are looking to ensure that they co-locate some agricultural productions within their projects. For example sheep grazing, bee-keeping, and ground cover that will help ensure that the land can be returned to farming at the projects' end of life

It's going to take some work to get projects like these built. Local towns need to ensure they have the zoning and codes to balance the need to build utility scale solar with any concerns local residents may have. New York has a rigorous Article 10 siting process which gives community members ample time for review and ensures that developers are meeting the highest environmental standards.



Unfortunately, the fossil fuel industry is using this open stakeholder process to stymie projects. Fossil fuel-backed organizations and support networks are already working in other parts of NY to spread false information and fear about projects. But that's where Sierra Club members and supporters come in. With a base of people in nearly every town in the state, we can engage decision-makers and our neighbors, and advocate for solar and wind right here in our communities.

If you live in the towns of Caledonia, Rush, or Mt Morris, we need you to make your voice heard now. If you live in other parts of the region, take a look at your local town's solar zoning code. Does it support utility-scale solar? Is there even zoning on the books? Chances are, we need you to get involved as well.

If you'd like to learn more about how we can help the Rochester region become a hub of renewable energy development, please contact me at david.alicea@sierraclub.org

RESPONSIBLE DAIRY FARMING

By Bernard Marcus berniem1251@gmail.com

With all of the attention that been paid to the role of fossil fuels in global warming, it has become easy to overlook the role that livestock farming plays. Cattle are major sources of methane, the major component of natural gas and a far more potent greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide. Big cattle farming operations also produce large volumes of manure, which releases more methane, as well as carbon dioxide, as it decomposes. Moreover, cattle manure decay released nutrients that have been implicated in the growth of blue-green algae in lakes.

One Western New York farm is doing something about it. Noblehurst Farms in Livingston Country is a seven generation family farm, now family cooperative, that has 1500 milking cows and 1300 heifers, which produce a lot of manure. Instead of letting the manure decay in a lagoon or, worse, in the field, Noblehurst farms collects the manure in an anaerobic digester, and the methane that is produced is burned to generate electricity. The methane that would otherwise have gone into the air and contributed to climate change instead is used in the place of fossil fuel.

Admittedly, the burning does release carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas, but it is a less potent greenhouse gas than methane, and the released carbon was fixed during a recent growing season rather than eons ago. Furthermore, Noblehurst Farms is transitioning from an all Holstein herd to Holstein-Jersey hybrids. The smaller hybrid cows



produce a richer milk, but they also require less feed and water, and they produce less manure, thus putting less stress on the environment.

In addition to fermenting manure, Noblehurst Farms accepts discarded food and contained beverages from various suppliers. Rather than allowing these materials to be landfilled, and thus generate methane as they decay, the farm adds them to its manure supplies, feeds them into the digester, and uses the resulting methane in their electricity generation. The beverage containers are then recycled.

In addition to the dairy farm, Noblehurst Farms operates an on-site creamery and cheese plant. In the former, the cream is separated from

the milk and is transported to New York City for processing into various dairy products. The milk is delivered to a regional cooperative. The cheese plant produces cheddar, which is marketed locally under the brand Craig's Creamery. (I tried it; it's good!) Waste solids from the cheese plant are recycled through the methane digester, and waste water is treated, made potable, and provided to the cattle for drinking.

Finally, the waste products from the methane digester are stored, any generated gas is trapped and flared, and ultimately the wastes are injected into the soil twice a year, rather than being spread on the surface continually, thus reducing runoff into the watershed.

John Noble, who showed me around the property, explained that, basically, they're trying to be good neighbors by reducing the wastes and odors of a large animal farm. I would argue that they are succeeding in being responsible environmentalists as well.



THE UNINHABITABLE EARTH

by David Wallace-Wells, a review by John Kastner

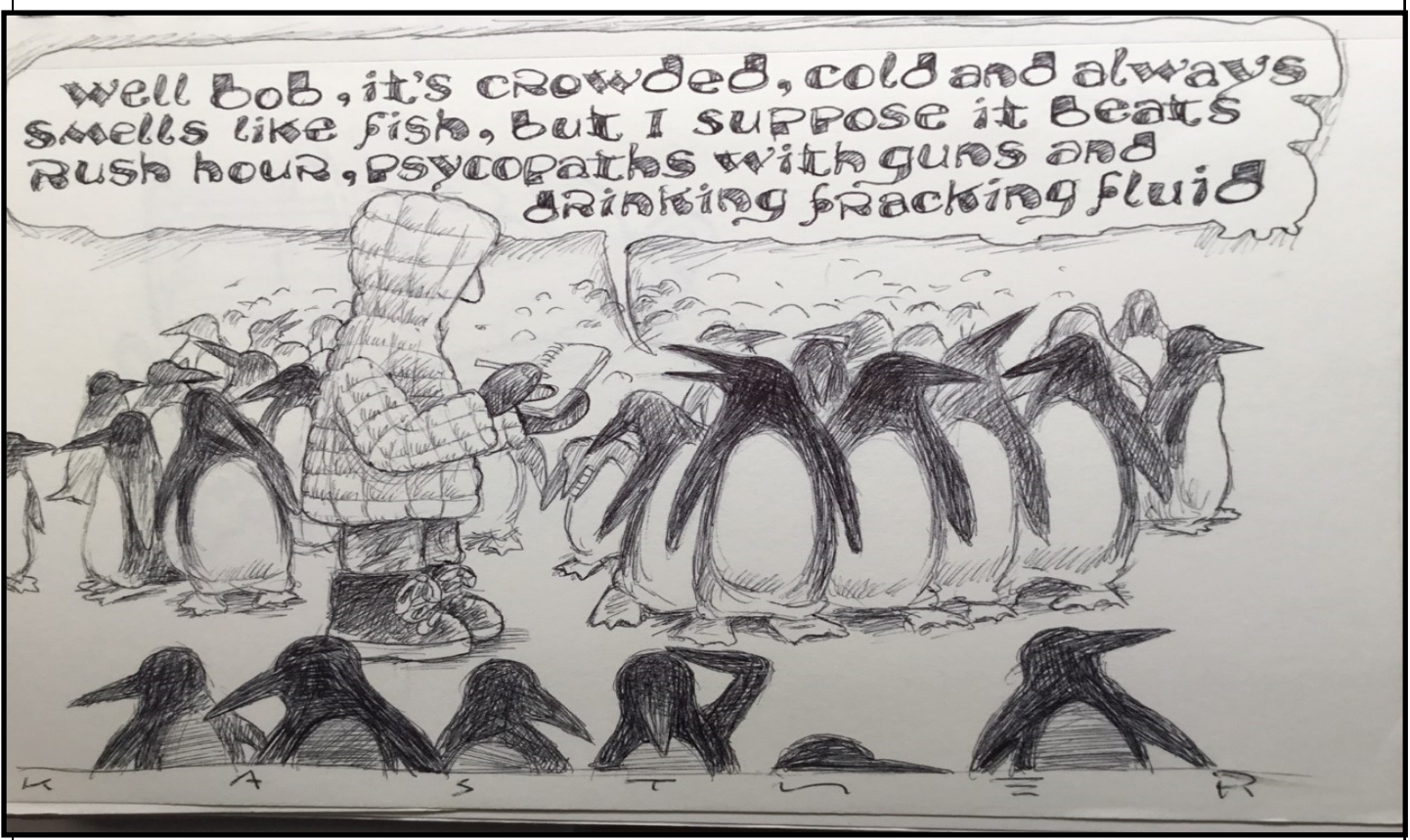
"It's worse, much worse than you think "...so begins the 228-page catalogue of climate horrors in New York Times editor, David Wallace-Wells' book. This extremely well documented book (65 pages of meticulously bibliographic notes) takes the reader on a shocking tour of a current and coming devastation so immense in scope it seems more cinematic than real. You keep wanting to emerge from the movie theater relieved that the terror is over, only you know the nightmare is real. It's the fossil fueled comfort, convenience and abundance we've been living at the expense of the environment that's the fantasy.

The first part of the book, "Elements of Chaos," articulates in grizzly detail what is unfolding and what we can expect from a steadily warming planet...temperatures that will literally cook us from the inside out, drought and floods that will destroy our food supply, our drinking water and our communities, wildfires that will make the air unbreathable and pour yet more heat stoking carbon into the atmosphere. The oceans are heating to the point where, not only are they generating one monster hurricane after another, but their coral reefs are dying out as well. These reefs are the grocery store for huge populations of fish. Phytoplankton that breathe oxygen into the air and zooplankton, the bottom of the mid ocean food chain, are also succumbing to acidification from atmospheric carbon. Air temperatures exceeding the limits of human endurance and agricultural collapse are creating social unrest and wars that are driving refugee crises. Sea level rise from melting glaciers is a also contributing factor. The author points out that these things are occurring now, not in some distant future. The severity of these conditions is progressively scaled to the extent we allow the planet to simmer between two degrees and five degrees of warming.

If we continue to do nothing about climate change, somewhere in the last half of this century the amount of money required to deal with all these problems will exceed the entire cash output of the world economy. The only variable in the mathematics of this scenario is what humans will or will not do about addressing this inescapable existential dilemma.

The Uninhabitable Earth is a totally frightening book to read, so much so, that halfway through it, the author commends the courage of the reader who has gotten this far into it. And courage is what it will take to go forward from here. Wallace-Wells has not written this book because there is no hope, for then there would have been no point in writing it. He takes his hope in the knowledge that climate change, in this case, is not in any way a natural phenomenon, but a totally human created one. Therefore, humans can do something about it.

The power of our imaginations rivals the wonders of the cosmos. So does the power of our greed and selfishness. Which will determine our future is up to you and me. I sincerely hope that you will find the courage to read this small, powerful book and think on what you will do with its revelations.



Save the Date! Rue Mapp of Outdoor Afro event September 19th

The Rochester Regional Group of the Sierra Club is joining with the Genesee Land Trust to bring Rue Mapp to Rochester on September 19. Rue is founder and CEO of Outdoor Afro, an organization committed to connecting black people to nature. Our country's long history of enslavement of African and indigenous people made it dangerous for them to travel to many parts of the country and especially remote areas. As a leader of eco-tours in our country for 20 years, I had noticed that the preponderance of people visiting our national parks were white people. Ms. Mapp will be speaking about her personal story and how she is changing this situation through her program to build diversity, equity, and leadership in the outdoors.

This program is an excellent follow-up to our Environmental Forum of 2016 when Aaron Mair, the first African-American president of the Sierra Club, came to Rochester to relate the history of the Sierra Club which began as an exclusive white-only organization. The Sierra Club's motto, *Explore, Enjoy, and Protect* is a reflection of our commitment to bring people of all races and ethnicities closer to nature. We are also working actively to diversify our organization.

The highlight of Rue Mapp's visit will be her keynote address on September 19th at the Edgerton Recreation Center. The program begins at 5:30pm with networking and vendors from Rochester organizations that are committed to getting everyone outdoors. At 6:30pm doors open and the evening's program will begin featuring Ms. Mapp's presentation.

Please join us at this key event and spread the word to others through all of your networks, formal and informal!

The event is free but registration is required. To register for the event and to see more details:
<https://www.geneseelandtrust.org/master-calendar/rue-mapp>.

Our goal after the event is to continue the conversation and inspiration that Ms. Mapp brings and work the messages we learn from her into new community programming in cooperation with other organizations who would like to be part of this effort.

Wanted: Secretary for ExCom monthly meetings

Are you a natural note-taker? Would you like to work with a great group of personable and dedicated people? We meet downtown at the Harro East Athletic Club, 6th floor, on Andrews Street the first Tuesday of each month. We'd need a detailed account of our discussion. We ask that you email your notes to the ExCom members by the end of the week to facilitate action items. Our meetings last about 2 hours, from 6:30 to 8:30, and you may want another couple of hours to pull your notes together, and possibly revise them with input from board members. Occasionally there may be some other correspondence to prepare and send. **BONUS!** You will be privy to the workings of the RRG Executive Committee and have input too! If we have wetted your whistle, please email our Chair, Jessica Slaybaugh at Jessica.A.Slaybaugh@gmail.com.

Forming a Political Committee for 2020 Elections

Joe Grinnan, our treasurer, has offered to start up a political committee to promote Sierra Club values regarding the environment. In the past, various candidates have sought endorsement from us, and we have sent out questionnaires to major local candidates regarding their positions on a number of issues.

If you would be interested in helping with this (and as you know, the environment needs champions right now), please leave a message on our warm line, (585) 234-1056 and include your name, phone number, and email address. Joe will contact you!

LISTEN! Sounds of the Night - FALL

Tune in to the mystical panoply of sounds of insects, birds, and animals at twilight. Discover the amazing ways living things have evolved through the ages to communicate their presence, announce their territory, or lure a mate. Activity varies with weather and temperature, but we'll hope for an ample chorus. Dress for the weather- we will go even in a very light rain. Waterproof footwear essential for mud. Headlamp or flashlight needed. Total distance walking will be a max of 1 mile on trails. Led by naturalist Peter Debes. Meets Saturday Sept. 7 at 7:30 PM by the Oak Tree lodge on Woolston Rd. in Powder Mills Park. Thunder or heavy rain—we'll try Sunday Sept 8. Call 585-820-2018 if in doubt.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2019

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND LEADERSHIP OUTDOORS



PRESENTING

RUE MAPP

FOUNDER AND CEO

OUTDOOR AFRO

“WHERE BLACK PEOPLE
AND NATURE MEET”

EDGERTON RECREATION CENTER

41 Backus Street, Rochester

5:30 PM Networking and vendors

6:30 PM Doors open for presentation

FREE event but registration required at:

www.geneseelandtrust.org/special-events

Presented by:



In partnership with:

Sierra Club

City of Rochester

Rochester Area Community Foundation

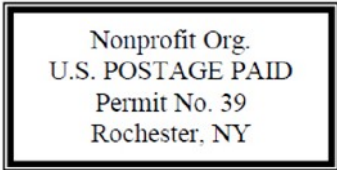
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***The opinions expressed in the articles within are those of the authors and are not necessarily an official Sierra Club position or policy.**

Autumn 2019 Calendar			SIERRA CLUB and other environmental events	
DATE	DAY	TIME	MEETING/EVENT	LOCATION
September 19th	Thursday	5:30, 6:30	Rue Mapp Outdoor Afro presentation	Edgerton Recreation Center, 41 Backus Street
September 3rd	Tuesday	6:30-8:30 pm	Executive Committee Meeting	Harro East Bldg., 400 Andrews St., Suite 600
September 26th	Thursday	6:30-8:30 pm	Home Heating Education Series by CBG	Brighton Memorial Library, 2300 Elmwood Ave.
October 1st	Tuesday	6:30—8:30 pm	Executive Committee Meeting	Harro East Bldg., 400 Andrews St., Suite 600
Sept. 20th-27th	All week	various	GLOBAL CLIMATE STRIKE	See https://rocpc.org/ for details closer to event date
November 5th	Tuesday	6:30—8:30 pm	Executive Committee Meeting	Harro East Bldg., 400 Andrews St., Suite 600
May 12th to November 24th	Sundays	9 am –1 pm	Brighton SUMMER Farmers Market *Rain or Shine*	Brighton HS parking lot, 1150 Winton Rd South
All year	Every day	M-F 8am-9pm Sat-Sun 9am-8pm	Abundance Coop Food Market: local, organic, sustainable food, open to public	571 South Ave., Rochester, NY in South Wedge (585) 454-2667 www.Abundance.coop
Sept. 7th or 8th	Sat. or Sun.	7:30 pm	SOUNDS OF THE NIGHT—FALL	Oaktree Lodge, Woolston Road, Powder Mills Park

*****Watch our Facebook page and website for information on upcoming community meetings, outings & other activities*****

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

Follow us on Facebook to keep up-to-date on new events throughout the year—www.facebook.com/SierraROC

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

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