



The Math of Climate Change and Fossil Fuels

by Paul Sanders

Last year 350.org held “Do the Math” rallies in 21 cities across the U.S to persuade the fossil fuel industry to leave most of their fossil fuel reserves in the ground so we can avoid the worst impacts of climate change. According to 350.org, the math is simple:

“...we can emit 565 more gigatons of carbon dioxide and stay below 2°C of warming - anything more than that risks catastrophe for life on earth. The only problem? Burning the fossil fuel that corporations now have in their reserves would result in emitting 2,795 gigatons of carbon dioxide - five times the safe amount. Fossil fuel companies are planning to burn it all — unless we rise up to stop them.”

To that end, 350.org and others are advocating for a large-scale divestment campaign, modeled on the anti-apartheid campaign of the 1980s, to hit the fossil fuel industry where it hurts - in the pocket book. The campaign targets the 200 companies that own the vast majority of the world’s coal, oil and gas reserves, which totals five times more carbon than can be emitted and still keep warming below 2°C, a limit that nearly every country on Earth, including the United States, has agreed to meet.

Since the Do the Math Tour concluded, numerous divestment campaigns have arisen in the U.S. and around the world. They started last Fall at a few colleges and universities and have now spread to over 300 campuses across the country. At least ten cities, including Seattle, San Francisco, and Ithaca have committed to divest, and petitions are moving forward in 100 other cities and states across the country, according to 350.org. Regrettably, many

environmental groups do not have divestment policies in place. Fortunately the Sierra Club does. According to Executive Director Michael Brune, the Sierra Club “has a policy of not investing in nor accepting donations from companies that profit from the extraction of natural resources, including mining, timber, oil, coal and gas.”

In addition to damage from climate change, there is also an economic argument for divesting from fossil fuels, even though many argue the contrary. According to a new report by HSBC, if countries agree to meet the 2°C target increase and keep 75-80% of their reserves in the ground, the write off of the value of those reserves could cause a market loss of up to 60% for companies like BP, Shell, and Chevron. This is referred to as the “carbon bubble.” Fossil fuel reserves will either be left in the ground, causing monumental market losses devastating to the economy, or will be burned and will exacerbate climate change. Either way, there

will be pain. Consequently, some argue that divestment can in fact blunt the impacts to the economy when the carbon bubble bursts while simultaneously addressing climate change. That is, divesting now will lower the value of fossil fuel investments, so that if and when the carbon bubble bursts (when the industry is prohibited from extracting reserves), the damage to the economy will be minimized.

With carbon content in the atmosphere now surpassing the critical milestone of 400 ppm, the issue of divestment is especially timely. The Sierra Club is co-sponsoring a showing of a documentary about 350.org’s “Do the Math” movement which is not to be missed.



From the Chair: Global Warming - How Can We Not Act?

On May 9, the Mauna Loa National Observatory in Hawaii registered an atmospheric carbon dioxide concentration of 400 parts per million (ppm) for the first time ever. A maximum of 350 ppm has long been held to be the maximum safe concentration “if humanity wishes to preserve a planet similar to that on which civilization developed and to which life on Earth is adapted” per Dr. James Hansen, former NASA climatologist. Those are very strong words! They mean that we are entering conditions that life on Earth has never experienced before. That is worth repeating: The conditions on Earth are changing, generally becoming warmer, and we do not know how hospitable to life these future conditions will be. Here’s just a tiny bit of what we do know:

- The water cycle is changing. With more water evaporating due to higher temperatures, there are more flash floods in some places and more droughts in others. Our Great Lakes are at lower levels than ever before.
- Our food supply is “under assault” (Dr. Robert S. Lawrence,

Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, NBC News 5-16-13). Rain patterns are wreaking havoc with corn and other US food commodities. Plus, the warmer, moister air creates the conditions that certain pathogens such as fungi thrive on, thereby ruining coffee and citrus crops, according to Dr. Lawrence.

For many of us, this is an ethical issue. How can we knowingly go about our lives in a business as usual manner when we know that our children will inherit a world in which their very survival may be a challenge? “Business as usual” is, among other things, continuing to pour carbon dioxide into the atmosphere at ever increasing rates with our ever-increasing global rate of fossil fuel combustion. I want to look back on my life a few decades from now, when food and water scarcity are issues we feel daily, and know that I did everything I could to minimize the problem.

So what can we do? That IS the million dollar question. How do we tackle a problem so huge and seemingly so amorphous? For starters, we can use energy con-

servation measures in our daily lives. That’s essential, but even if every single American did that in a big way, it still would not make a large enough dent in carbon emissions to make difference. No, we need to change the system. We need to transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy here at home, and we need our national leaders to work with the large developing countries to cooperatively establish a global plan for carbon emission curtailment.

How can we push towards these goals? How can we simply raise awareness so that more people are pushing for these goals? Sierra Club and other organizations (350.org in particular) have some good ideas. To work with others on this biggest challenge of our time, come to one of our Global Warming & Energy Committee meetings. See back page for details.

Linda Isaacson Fedele
Chairperson, Sierra Club
Rochester Regional Group

Washington Grove Forest Nature Walk and Coffee/Brunch

Sunday, June 30

**9:00-10:30am:
Nature Walk**

Meet at the kiosk behind the pines at the top of the reservoir road off Highland Avenue.

**10:45am - until finished:
Coffee/Brunch
Corner Bakery Café
3300 Monroe Ave., 14618**

Join us and meet some of the staff and volunteers from our Albany-based state-wide Atlantic Chapter!

All are invited to enjoy the tranquility and mystery of a beautiful old growth forest at Cobb’s Hill Park in the city of Rochester. Peter Debes, a life-long naturalist (and Vice Chair of our Rochester Group) will identify some of the giant trees and will share the stories of their long lives—some exceeding 250 years—from tell-tale scars on their trunks. Peter will explain how he organized,

with the support of the Atlantic chapter, City of Rochester, and community volunteers, a project to restore and protect the Grove. Now in its fifth year, many invasive plants have been removed and native species planted.

When we’re finished in the Grove, we’ll go to the Corner Bakery in Pittsford for some coffee, brunch, and conversation.

RSVP appreciated but not required: 585-234-1056.

Seeing the Great Lakes Through New Eyes

by Wayne Howard,
Great Lakes Committee

The 15th Annual Sierra Club Environmental Forum, April 25 and 26, “Great Lakes Need Great Friends: Protecting the Great Lakes Forever,” was a huge success! Maude Barlow of the Council of Canadians (COC) inspired us with a clarion call to action, to look at the protection of our precious water through new eyes. She asked us to consider “a new water ethic... that puts water at the center of everything we do,” based upon Native American precepts, “where these lakes would be shared equitably and fiercely protected for seven generations.” She suggested that we, as a regional, cross-border community, view the Great Lakes as one watershed that has inherent rights as an ecosystem. This new governance would treat the Great Lakes “as a common heritage, a public trust, a human right, which should be protected as a bioregion, or perhaps, as a binational park.” If you missed her riveting address, you may view it on our website:

www.newyork.sierraclub.org/rochester. Please also see her document, “Our Great Lakes Commons,” on COC’s website: www.canadians.org/water.

Why would we do this? Simply

put, our current rules and regulations are inadequate to protect our water. In today’s world, private interests have trumped the rights of citizens and that of our natural ecosystems. As Jim Olson of FLOW illustrated in our workshop, the Public Trust can be used as a powerful tool to help fill in these regulatory gaps. (www.flowforwater.org)

Hydrofracking is exempt from the Clean Water and Safe Drinking Water Acts. Drilling will consume about five million gallons of water per well. NYS CAFO (Confined Animal Feeding Operations) permit regulations have been relaxed to accommodate more cows in support of the new Greek yogurt industry, despite high levels of phosphorus that have led to increased algal growth and beach closings. In the President’s new budget, the Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund was cut 25 percent despite the Congressional Budget Office’s estimate that we need \$40 billion in water infrastructure repairs per year for at least a decade.

Much of our nation’s water infrastructure dates back to the 1940s. In the city of Rochester, seven percent of it is leaking and will soon need to be repaired. (The national average is 14 percent.)

These repairs are expensive. To fill this funding gap, many municipalities have chosen to privatize their water systems. In 2003, Stockton California’s water was privatized by RWE/Thames. Their rates shot up 8.5 percent. When the community regained control in 2006, millions in repairs were needed since required maintenance was not completed. Buffalo NY’s water supply was privatized by Veolia in 2010. Their rates are three times that of the City of Rochester and almost four times that of the Monroe County Water Authority. Mountain Glacier, a subsidiary of Nestle, has already begun to bottle Hemlock Lake water. What can we do to protect our community’s water from becoming privatized?

The Forum served to expand the community’s conversation about the need to protect our fresh water, and it’s not over. Maude challenged us to think boldly and to act broadly. This will continue to be a focus over the next year and beyond, as we hold additional educational programs and take action to protect our Great Lakes Basin. If you are interested in participating, please contact our Great Lakes Committee at GreatLakesCommitteeSC@gmail.com.



Maude Barlow delivered a powerful, motivating speech at the forum

“Like” Us!

If you’re on Facebook, be sure to “like” us at 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. And please feel free to 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.

What is Fracking? More Than Just Drilling For Gas!

by Barbara Boyce

www.GrandmasThinking.Blogspot.com

What is *fracking*? High volume hydraulic fracturing, HVHF-fracking, involves injecting chemicals, sand and water into shale formations through a drilled horizontal well to fracture rock. The industry claims the process is safe and necessary for economic growth and energy independence. Environmentalists, health professionals, scientists and many concerned citizens tend to view HVHF in a much broader scope. Fracking is about political power, corruption, wealth, citizen vs. corporate rights, human health, animal health, home rule, states' rights, money, the environment and more! Here are a few examples.

Fracking creates a quagmire for regulations. Most early scientific data comes from the industry itself, and goes unchallenged. The gas industry lobbied successfully to be exempt from Federal Clean Water and Clean Air Acts and other environmental protections. States are left to regulate an industry that is complex, changing, and growing at an unprecedented pace. Since production is not contained within one state's border, the interstate commerce operations fall under regulations established by the Federal Government. It is a monumental task for financially strapped state governments to draft effective regulations protecting citizens and fostering economic growth.

Land rights for gas mining are established by lease agreements. Many Marcellus and Utica Shale leases were executed in the early development years before the general population knew about potential ramifications. Mortgages, insurance, use rights and



Marcellus Shale gas well in Jackson Township/Butler County, PA
Photo courtesy of WCN 24/7 on Flickr

home sales are all affected by a gas lease. Aside from gas production, the practice of selling the leases is another financial instrument for the industry. Recently, Chesapeake Energy Corporation sold 619,000 acres of land assets in the Ohio region for over \$2B to Total SA, France. America has become a patchwork of land that is controlled by national and foreign corporations. Land leases are creating a potential house of cards for America's economy.

Although natural gas is promoted as clean energy, the process by which it is obtained is far from clean or healthy. The physical impacts of heavy industrialized operations are taking a toll. Air pollution from methane and increased diesel fumes knows no boundaries. Sand mining fosters erosion and produces unhealthy silica dust. Chemical leaks and spills release toxins with long-lasting, devastating effects. Industry operations disrupt natural habitats and farmlands. Naturally occurring radioactive materials (NORMs)

are being brought to the Earth's surface. No one wants permanent toxic waste storage injection wells nearby!

Another major topic around fracking is the considerable use of *fresh* water. About five million gallons of fresh water are used every time a well is fracked. The water issue is critical because 1) fresh water is removed from the natural ecosystem, and 2) the impact across the nation is cumulative. Earth's water supply contains less than 3% fresh water. It is not a commodity to exhaust!

Fracking touches every fiber of our society's fabric. Even if drilling technology improves, we still lose overall. This massive corporate industrialization of our regions and devastation of our planet must stop. Fracking fosters damaging fossil fuel energy dependence and obscures alternative, sustainable energy developments. Fracking is more than a drilling process. Become aware.

A Student's Perspective on the 15th Annual Environmental Forum

by Joe McLean, MCC Student

When I decided to attend the lecture being held by Maude Barlow on Thursday, I honestly didn't know what to expect. Would it be simply an informative speech about what dangers face the Great Lakes from all the water processing that occurs there? A desperate plea for awareness and action over the damage done? Or merely a retrospective on how beautiful the lakes used to be before industry stepped in? I admit, it was all of these things, but it was also something else.

I had read a few articles that Ms.

Barlow had written on the Great Lakes so I had somewhat of an understanding of what she was trying to say. But what I didn't expect to see at the lecture, and what I certainly didn't glean from her articles, is the emotion and closeness she felt for the Great Lakes. She exuded such love and care for them that when coupled with the statistics and facts of the state of the Lakes, I felt truly moved. Here was a woman who had dedicated her adult life to the conservation of a part of nature that was quite obviously being exploited and blatantly disrespected and no one in power seemed to care enough to bring it up to

levels of government that could actually do something to make a difference.

It made me feel guilty for ever buying bottled water and it further made me feel guilty just for showing up to receive extra credit. As soon as I got home, I googled everything I could find about her work as well as what I could do to perhaps bring awareness and action to my own circle of friends and family. I'm certainly glad I attended the lecture and will continue to do my small part to help save the Great Lakes.

Join Our New Volunteer Green Team!

by Margie Campaigne

Have a few hours here or there to help your local Sierra Club group "explore, enjoy and protect the planet"? If you are willing to be called on occasionally to assist with our efforts, then join our Volunteer Green Team! All new and returning helpers will receive a token of our appreciation, which you can also wear at events to identify yourself as a Sierra Club volunteer!

Here are just a few ways in which we can use your help, and which you might enjoy:

1. Help us staff our table at one of these events:
 - June 8, 9am-4pm, ADK Outdoor Expo, Mendon Ponds Park
 - June 9, 9am-1pm, Color Brighton Green Energy Fair, Twelve Corners High School parking lot



Executive Committee volunteers gather at the Port of Rochester on Lake Ontario

2. Help co-lead a hike or outing to make sure that all goes smoothly and all participants are accounted for.
 - July 27-28, 10am-5pm, Native American Festival of Music and Dance at Ganondagan State Historic Site in Victor
 - Sept. 14-15, approximately 10am-5pm, Greentopia Festival, High Falls

3. Help our Wetlands committee maintain the plantings and do some weeding at Buckland Creek at Twelve Corners.

4. At Cobb's Hill Park's Washington Grove, help cull invasive species, replant native species and maintain trails on specified work days.

5. Creative, artistic minds might enjoy helping us improve our tri-fold tabling display or create fun games to engage kids and adults at various events

New to volunteering? No worries! We pair

new volunteers with experienced ones so you can learn and have backup. If you can help with any of the above, please email Mcampaigne@hotmail.com with your name, address, phone number and the activities that interest you.

Moving Towards “Zero Waste” Summer Events

by Dave Goldman, Frank Regan and Linda Isaacson Fedele

By the time you read this, the American Diabetes Association’s June 2nd Tour De Cure bike ride will be over, and the Ganondagan Native American Festival of Dance & Music at the end of July may still be greatly anticipated. These events have in common the goal of approaching “zero waste.” That is, instead of sending to the landfill truckloads of plastic and styrofoam food and beverage containers that were only used once, they are seeking to recycle as much as possible and to ensure that the food waste is turned into compost or something else useful.

Your Sierra Club is involved in these efforts. With our support and Ganondagan’s determination to be good stewards of the Earth and its resources, the Native American Festival has diverted over 95% of its waste from landfills the last few years. But most Festivals and outdoor events don’t seek to minimize waste, and produce tons of it. Why? In some cases, they just don’t think it’s important enough to warrant the trouble. After all, dozens of volunteers are needed to staff the waste stations to ensure that event participants put their waste in the correct bins, there has to be an appropriate company or facility to receive the materials, and those separated materials need to be transported. The transportation in particular can come with a high price tag. And to really do it right, vendors selling food should use paper instead of plastic, and most definitely instead of Styrofoam, which is hard to recycle and breaks down extremely slowly.

As we are working on making the Tour De Cure as Zero Waste as possible, we are running into these and other challenges. But it’s worth it. The organizers are alerting the bicycle riding participants to the “green” event saying “We want to demonstrate that



Zero Waste volunteers at Greentopia 2012 helped ensure that nothing compostable or recyclable was thrown in the trash by festival attendees.

all Rochester, NY events can be made nearly zero waste events and encourage all events to be waste free.... Wouldn’t it be great to help Stop Diabetes and do so in a way that helps both our bodies and our environment stay healthy?” We can’t say it any better!

What You Can Do:

- Write or call the City of Rochester and Monroe County and encourage them to make “zero waste” a priority at events that they coordinate
- Write a Letter to the Editor about the importance of the “zero waste” goal at summer festivals/events
- Make a donation to Sierra Club to assist with zero waste costs that we incur when we help make events “zero waste”
- Contact us to volunteer to take a 2-hour shift at a waste station at the Ganondagan Native American Festival (July 27-28)

- Join our Zero Waste committee to help in this effort. We can’t transform Rochester’s tons of summer festivals without you!

Join Our Email List!

Did you know that you can get updates on what we’re up to sent right to your inbox? Join our email list and you will receive an email once a week that will inform you of upcoming Sierra Club activities, keep you up to date on local environmental issues, and give you tips on actions you can take for our local environment. To sign up, visit: <http://newyork.sierraclub.org/rochester/> and scroll to the bottom of the page. Enter your email address under “Subscribe to Rochester Regional Group” and click the “Subscribe” button.

Sierra Club Calls for Creation of a Unique Area for Hemlock-Canadice

by Hugh Mitchell

We thought when the City sold over 6,500 acres of the Upland Watershed properties which provide pure natural water to our Hemlock-Canadice reservoirs, that would be the end of the struggle – but unfortunately it wasn't. After two years of study, the State DEC has come up with a somewhat unsatisfactory draft "Unit Management Plan" (UMP) for the area. Some elements of this plan were roundly condemned at the first public hearing. Multiple objections were



Hugh Mitchell captures the beauty of Hemlock-Canadice

expressed over the vague language related to hydrofracking. Specifically, the catch phrase in the UMP was, "It is unlikely that drilling for natural gas ... will occur in this area because of limited gas reserve potential..." We want an absolute, iron-proof law which states that there will be NO hydrofracking in the H-C watershed area. Further, since State Forests were basically set up in the early twentieth century to accommodate the logging industry, we want assurance there will be no

commercial logging in the area – only necessary localized forest management.

To achieve these objectives, but also retain the customary recreational uses and key assurances of pure drinking water for 250,000 Rochester regional water users, a number of environmental groups including Sierra Club, Adirondack Mountain Club, the Nature Conservancy, etc. have been working in Albany to launch a "Hemlock-Canadice Unique Area"

bill under DEC law Section 45-0117 to be included in the State Nature and Historic Preservation section of the State Constitution. This takes an act of the State legislature. Once this bill is put into law it will be very difficult for commercial interests to operate in the former City forest lands. The current status of these efforts is in the balance, partly related to the lateness of this legislative session, but stay tuned - other plans are afoot.

Sierra Club Outing: Canadice (Finger Lake) Nature Walk

When: Saturday July 27th,
8:30am – 1:30pm

Where: Cobbs Hill Park, parking lot at Culver Rd. & Norris Drive (by Lake Riley) - we'll meet here at 8:30am to carpool.

What: Walk the beautiful natural areas beside the City's Canadice reservoir, which has been preserved for over 135 years.

Your Leaders: Sierra Club's volunteer extraordinaire, Hugh Mitchell and Naturalist Peter Debes

Optional: Lunch (pay for your own) on the way home at the beautiful old American Hotel in Lima. Please join us if you can!

Difficulty level: Easy two miles.

Bring: Walking shoes, camera and/or binoculars, mosquito lotion, sun cream, hat.

For questions or to register (appreciated but not required):
585-234-1056

The Case of the Broken CFL

by Margie Campaigne

I was recently asked about what to do with a broken or spent CFL (compact fluorescent lightbulb). A broken CFL is treated much differently from one that has burned out, or is simply at the end of its useful life. You can put the latter in the collection area provided by Home Depot or Lowe's. Another option is to take them with you when you are bringing hard-to-recycle materials to our new Monroe County Eco Park, at 10 Avion Drive, near the airport.

When a CFL is broken, the first thing to do is open a window in the room for a few minutes to allow any mercury in the air

to vent outside. This is a VERY miniscule amount. (*The total volume of mercury in a CFL is only about the size of the tip of a ballpoint pen. Also, most of it is still actually clinging to the inside surface of the bulb. You likely get more exposure from eating seafood, or breathing air downwind of a coal-burning power plant.*) To be sure each glass splinter is recovered, after sweeping up any large pieces, use a moist paper towel to wipe up the entire area where the bulb broke. Place the towel and broken pieces in a plastic bag, seal it, and place it in your trash. It is no longer hazardous. Close the window again, and you're done!



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Summer 2013 Calendar

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

Date	Day	Time	Calendar/Event	Place
June 4	Tuesday	6:30-8:30pm	Executive Committee Meeting	Harro East Bldg., 400 Andrews St., Ste 600
June 8	Saturday	9:00am-4:00pm	ADK Outdoor Expo	Mendon Ponds Park
June 9	Sunday	9:00am-1:00pm	Color Brighton Green Energy Fair	Brighton High School Parking Lot
June 10	Monday	6:30-8:30pm	Global Warming & Energy Committee Meeting	Grapevine Restaurant & Sports Bar 122 Main St., East Rochester 14445
June 25	Tuesday	4:30-6:00pm	Zero Waste Committee Meeting	Rochester Greenovation, 1199 E. Main St., Contact Frank for ?s: fjregan@gmail.com
June TBD	TBD	TBD	Great Lakes Committee Meeting	A meeting will be held in June, but there will be none in July or August. However, social activities are in the planning stages. Email GreatLakesCommitteeSC@gmail.com to be informed of upcoming events.
June 30	Sunday	9:00am-until	Washington Grove Nature Walk and Coffee/Brunch (see p. 2 for details)	See p. 3 for details
June 30	Sunday	7:30pm	Film "Do the Math" & panel discussion (see p. 1 for details)	First Unitarian Church of Rochester 220 South Winton Rd., Rochester 14610
July 2	Tuesday	6:30-8:30pm	Executive Committee Meeting	Harro East Bldg., 400 Andrews St., Ste 600
July 8	Monday	6:30-8:30pm	Global Warming & Energy Committee Meeting	Grapevine Restaurant & Sports Bar 122 Main St., East Rochester 14445
July 23	Tuesday	4:30-6:00pm	Zero Waste Committee Meeting	Rochester Greenovation, 1199 E. Main St., Contact Frank for ?s: fjregan@gmail.com
July 27	Saturday	8:30am	Sierra Club Outing: Canadice (Finger Lake) Nature Walk (see p. 7 for details)	Canadice Reservoir (see p. 7 for details)
July 27	Saturday	10:00am-5:00pm	Ganondagan Native American Festival of Dance and Music	Ganondagan State Historic Site, Victor
July 28	Sunday	10:00am-5:00pm	Ganondagan Native American Festival of Dance and Music	Ganondagan State Historic Site, Victor
Aug. 5	Tuesday	6:30-8:30pm	Executive Committee Meeting	Harro East Bldg., 400 Andrews St., Ste 600
Aug. 12	Monday	6:30-8:30pm	Global Warming & Energy Committee Meeting	Grapevine Restaurant & Sports Bar 122 Main St., East Rochester 14445
Aug. 27	Tuesday	4:30-6:00pm	Zero Waste Committee Meeting	Rochester Greenovation, 1199 E. Main St., Contact Frank for ?s: fjregan@gmail.com

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

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