

The Quiet Environmentalists: Our Regional Land Trusts

Nature photos, maps, talks on preserving and protecting the land

Wednesday, February 18th, 7pm at Brighton Town Hall

What better way to spend a late winter evening than looking at beautiful slides of nature. Come and see some of the precious endangered natural areas that have been saved by these quiet environmentalists. On Wednesday evening, February 18th, Sierra Club will sponsor talks by both the Finger Lakes Land Trust and the Genesee Land Trust.

Andy Zepp, Director of the Finger Lakes Land Trust, will show slides of some of the 7,115 acres of natural areas the Trust has saved by purchase or donation. Their holdings include the beautiful, recently acquired Wesley Nature Preserve above the east side of Honeoye Lake (see photo) where we ran several hikes last summer. The FLLT has also been quietly working to preserve an area of particular local interest, the rare and endangered Hemlock/Canadice Lakes watershed, our only undeveloped



Briggs Gully, Wesley Nature Preserve

Finger Lakes. You can learn more about the Finger Lakes Land Trust at <http://www.fllt.org/>.

Closer to home, the Genesee Land Trust has been preserving and protecting lands in the Greater Rochester area. By acquiring property, development rights or by helping government agencies or private individuals, they have achieved an admirable record of success in quietly saving the land. Gay Mills, Director, will show slides and speak about some of the GLT land holdings including their success in the preservation of Corbett's Glen in Brighton. You can learn more about the Genesee Land Trust at their web site: <http://www.geneseeandtrust.org/>.

Come to our Sierra Club program at 7pm, February 18th at Brighton Town Hall on 'The Quiet Environmentalists: Our Regional Land Trusts'.

Great Lawns

Thursday, March 18th at 7PM, Brighton Town Hall, 2300 Elmwood Ave.

Great looking lawns spur thousands of Rochesterians to launch a blitzkrieg of fertilizers and pesticides on our property each spring. The desired result is usually achieved. Just look around the Flower City. But unseen are the noxious chemicals that poison children, pets, and create a dangerous runoff which seeps into our water supply.

But things are changing. Nearby communities are beginning to limit the use of chemicals for lawn aesthetics. Toronto now allows the use of herbicides only in extreme cases. And Erie County just adopted the

Neighborhood Notification Law.

Join with the Sierra Club to learn about Cornell Cooperative's *Great Lawns/Great Lakes* program. This program uses Integrated Pest Management techniques researched at Cornell University. It is for residents who want to learn environmentally friendly lawn care practices. Program participants learn about easy soil-testing, weed-free mowing, and practical, cost-saving lawn tips.

Then, learn why the overuse of chemicals on your lawn is a bad idea from one of Rochester's most influential

activists, Judy Braiman, president of Rochesterians Against the Misuse of Pesticides (RAMP). Judy will discuss the health-related and environmental costs of using various chemicals on your lawn. She will also include in her talk a recent New York State law (greatly influenced by RAMP) that minimizes human exposure to picnic tables that have been treated with arsenic.

So, set aside this date and bring along your friends, neighbors, groups, and neighborhood associations to learn how to spruce up their properties and protect our environment.

FROM THE CHAIR



by Hugh Mitchell

Thanks to Hal Bauer, one of our strong Sierra Club members, I recently had the opportunity to address a committee he heads called "Choices & the Environment." It's the First Unitarian Church group that regularly supports our Environmental Forum. The topic was "New Era Environmentalism - the Bush Record". My research revealed the depth and cynicism of this Administration's attack on our environment, the virulence of which surprised even me. I found myself asking why this group of corporate owners, industry lobbyists and 'neo-con' believers want to dismantle 20 years of environmental progress? Don't they have children and grand children who need to breath the air, drink the water, have opportunities to visit the wilderness?

The addictions of this Administration are not some abstract global issue but have very real local effects. Take for example the so called 'Clear Skies' initiative which Sierra Club calls 'Clear Lies'. In Spring 2002 George

Bush traveled to the Adirondacks and declared "We will do more to reduce power plant emissions than ever before in our national history." Locally we took this to mean no more acid rain would pollute our local streams, rivers, and lakes. The exact opposite proved to be true. The Administration abandoned the 'New Source Review' (NSR) policy whereby old power plants were to be upgraded with the most recent anti-pollution devices. Under his proposal we would be exposed to three times more toxic mercury emissions from coal fired plants than if the Clean Air Act were simply enforced. Ten states filed emergency stay motions seeking to halt the implementation of the Administration's anti-NSR policy.

When you understand that the coherent, multi-faceted, well planned attacks on our environmental laws do have effects which reach straight into the lungs of our children, you may ask the same questions I have been asking myself: Why? Why does this Administration want to poison the very air their own children breath and destroy the very earth they have such a large stake in owning? Their actions make it appear they have an insatiable lust for wealth and power.

The Environmental Lies of George W. Bush (excerpts)

Suppressed or falsified science documented by Waxman Report and New York Times

Reprinted with permission from The Ventana, Vol. 42, No. 6, 2003

by Richard Stover

Criticism has been growing about the Bush administration's interference in the scientific research and analysis done by federal agencies. Much of that research involves environmental issues. Bush's interference has led to false statements by the President, false statements given to Congress, suppressed reports, altered web sites, and more.

Congressional Representative Henry A. Waxman (D-CA) commissioned a study to document these falsehoods. The report by the Special Investigations Division of the House Committee on Government Reform can be reviewed at www.skyhighway.com/~rjs.

While many of us have heard about the Administration's lies, distortions, and interference, it is still shocking to see so many of them documented in one publication. The report identifies one common attribute of the interference: it benefits powerful Bush supporters including business interests and political conservatives. The interference sacrifices the credibility of Federal research and harms the American public (and the world) in order to promote a political and ideological agenda.

A few of the many specific examples are summarized below:

Feedlots The US Department of Agriculture suppresses research and information related to agricultural pollution. In one case they prevented a researcher from presenting his results from a study showing antibiotic-

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Recycling Commitment

by Frank J. Regan

Despite a low turnout on our excellent program on recycling last October, we here at the Sierra Club are more committed than ever to help Monroe County and its recycling efforts. Mr. Patrick Collins, Monroe County Senior Industrial Waste Technician, discussed the practical ramifications of recycling in Monroe County, and Professor Ann Howard of the Environmental Science Department of R.I.T, explained the importance of recycling and creating a sustainable society. They gave us a complete picture of why recycling is so vital to our economic and environmental health.

The county has few monies to promote the expanded list for blue

box recycling, so we are going to stay on this issue. What else can so many people do to help the environment with so little effort? Where is the expanded list for the blue box? Right at the end of the blue pages of the new telephone book. We hope you will cut out that page, magnet it to your refrigerator, and inform all your friends and neighbors to do the same. It will make a great difference to our local environment if a lot more trash goes into making new products instead of filling up a landfill. Look for more information on recycling in Rochester at: <http://newyork.sierraclub.org/rochester/recycling.htm>.

Eco-logue is published five times a year by the Rochester Regional Group of the Sierra Club, PO Box 39516, Rochester, NY 14604-9516. Subscriptions are free to Sierra Club members living in the Rochester Region, and available at \$10 per year to others.

Welcome New ExCom Members

The votes are in, the ballots counted and there were no “hanging chads” to cloud the issue. We welcome three new ExCom members each of whom brings unique talents and abilities to our leadership group. **Bonnie Bessette**, a retired teacher and world traveler has volunteered to be our new Membership Chairperson. Bonnie, who is an outdoor person and bicyclist, will also help Howard Camp with Outings. **Janice Clements** recently completed her MBA from Roberts Wesleyan. Janice provides corporate training for project management methodologies. We are fortunate to have her bring her professional training to our Board and she has agreed to do the much needed job of Secretary. Finally, **Bob Siegel** is an engineer recently with Xerox and an inventor with an outstanding record of original patents. He also is a novel writer, published poet, and long distance bike rider. Bob has volunteered to lead the Energy committee as our former chair, Eric Smith, was promoted by his company to coordinate manufacturing with their German based operations.

Rochester Regional Group Leadership - 2004		
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Fund Raising	Dave Ruekberg	538-6463 david@restory.net

Environmental Lies (from page 2)

resistant bacteria in the air near hog confinements in Iowa and Missouri. The USDA suppressed this research at the request of someone from the National Pork Producers Council. USDA scientists must now seek prior approval (from USDA Bush appointees) for any manuscripts related to agricultural practices with negative health or environmental issues.

Arctic Refuge Interior Secretary Gale Norton gave false written testimony to Congress regarding drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge when she said that ANWR’s caribou calving occurred mostly outside ANWR while her own department’s research showed the opposite. She also deleted important

findings by her own scientists that indicated that caribou calving and survival could be harmed by drilling activities in ANWR.

Wetlands Soon after Bush took office the U.S Army Corps of Engineers changed its policy from protecting wetlands to one of destroying wetlands. U.S. Fish and Wildlife scientists concluded that proposed rule changes on wetlands would lead to significant environmental damage and that the Corps’ own data supported this conclusion. Interior Secretary Norton suppressed this information by failing to present the Fish and Wildlife scientists’ report to the Corps. The proposed harmful rules were enacted.

World Trade Center In a sickening disregard for the health and lives of Americans, the White House pressured the EPA not to warn the public about the potential health effects of the smoke, dust, and debris from the collapse of the World Trade Center. This was apparently done in order to get the New York Stock Market reopened as quickly as possible. The White House prevented the EPA from issuing guidelines about cleaning apartments and offices. Indeed the EPA made false statements about the safety of the debris and dust without any monitoring data to back it up, and they gave false advice on how to do the cleanup.

Alternative Energy News

by Bob Siegel

Wind

With tax credits expiring at year-end, there was a veritable flurry of activity in the wind energy arena. Nebraska authorized a 30 Megawatt(MW) plant with an option to expand to 75 MW. The AMP-Ohio/Green Mountain Energy Wind Farm near Bowling Green, Ohio went on-line in November with two 1.8-MW wind turbines, the largest wind turbines east of the Rockies. In Minnesota, a 13.5-MW wind plant consisting of nine 1.5-megawatt wind turbines was dedicated in late October. And in Vermont, East Haven Windfarm plans to build four 1.5-MW wind turbines in East Haven. The company hopes to eventually expand its 6-MW project into a 75-MW wind installation.

Geothermal

Geothermal energy development in Utah took a step forward last week, as the Utah Bureau of Land Management (BLM) leased nearly 6,600 acres of public land to geothermal energy companies.

Turning Waste Into Electricity

DOE-funded scientists have decoded and analyzed the genome of a bacterium, "Geobacter Sulfurreducens," which has the ability to produce electricity from waste matter. In an article published in the December 12th edition of Science magazine, researchers from The Institute for Genomic Research (TIGR) report that the bacterium has extraordinary capabilities to transport electrons and reduce metal ions (that is, add an electron to them) as part of its energy-generating metabolism. The results could potentially lead to genetically engineered microbes with an enhanced ability to convert waste into energy.

Solar

When it comes to solar cells, thin is in, at least for those made from crystalline silicon. The material cost of crystalline silicon is the most expensive part of these solar cells, and a thinner

cell uses less material and is, therefore, cheaper. The trick is to find a way to cut paper-thin slivers of silicon without wasting too much time, energy, or material. And about a year ago, Australia's Origin Energy claimed to have accomplished that trick; last week, Origin took a crucial step forward with that process when it announced it is building a \$20 million plant to produce solar modules using its ultra-thin "Sliver" solar cells.

Researchers at the Fraunhofer Institute for Solar Energy Systems (ISE) in Germany appear to be nipping at the heels of their Australian counterparts. The Fraunhofer ISE researchers claim to have produced a crystalline-silicon solar cell that is only 37 microns thick -- nearly half the thickness of the Origin Energy cells -- and achieves a slightly better solar energy conversion efficiency: 20.2 percent. They have also developed an inexpensive process to attach electrical connections to the cells.

While some companies are developing paper-thin solar cells, others are achieving success by trimming the silicon a little, rather than a lot. In August, Japan's MSK Corporation opened the world's largest solar module production plant, capable of producing enough modules each year to generate 100 megawatts of electricity.

Fuel Cells

A growing number of automakers are developing fuel-cell-powered cars and light trucks. The list now includes Mitsubishi Motor Corporation, Hyundai Motor Company, and FIAT Auto. Hyundai is working with UTC Fuel Cells to produce a vehicle that can withstand freezing conditions in hopes of leasing its vehicles to fleets in 2004. Mitsubishi has unveiled a car powered with a Ballard fuel cell engine, and is participating in a demonstration project in Japan. And in late October, Nuvera Fuel Cells announced that its product had been incorporated into two cars by FIAT Auto. But Anuvu Incorporated

leaped ahead of the pack last month, offering its fuel-cell-powered pickup truck for sale at just under \$100,000 per vehicle.

As the number of fuel-cell-powered cars proliferates, fuel cells are beginning to find their way into a wide variety of vehicles. The Fuelcell Propulsion Institute, for instance, is part of an international consortium that is developing the world's largest fuel cell powered vehicle, a locomotive. The five-year project aims to build a 109-metric-ton locomotive driven by a one-megawatt fuel cell. The institute is also involved in a project to develop a fuel cell powered mine loader. Hydrogenics Corporation is also pursuing the industrial market. The company announced in October that it is leading a consortium to build a fuel-cell-powered forklift. A fuel cell also took to the water in October, as Anuvu demonstrated an 18-passenger water taxi driven by its Power-X fuel cell technology.

Hybrid

Ford Motor Co is planning to announce a hybrid version of its Escape SUV next year which will have similar performance to the gas-guzzling standard version but will attain an impressive 36 mpg.

Meanwhile back at the ranch...

A dozen or more congressional Republicans will gather at a resort in balmy Phoenix the first week in January to hear the legislative wish lists of western coal, power and mining companies — and raise money from them. The four-day conference begins today with a \$1,500-per-person round of golf and private dinner, dubbed "Mulligans and Margaritas." The money raised from industry officials will be divided among the re-election campaigns of the lawmakers, most of whom serve on committees that oversee the mining and energy industries. Attendees include Sen. Pete Domenici,

(Continued on page 5)

Don't Use Mobil Gas

by Michael Dahl, Ph.D.
Energy Committee

Recently, the New York Times reported that Exxon Mobil, the world's largest oil and gas concern, has increased donations to Washington-based policy groups that, like Exxon itself, question the human role in global warming and argue that proposed government policies to limit carbon dioxide emissions associated with global warming are too heavy handed. Exxon now gives more than \$1 million a year to such organizations, which include the Competitive Enterprise Institute, Frontiers of Freedom, the George C. Marshall Institute, the American Council for Capital Formation Center for Policy Research and the American Legislative Exchange Council. The organizations are modest in size but have been outspoken in the global warming debate.

Exxon's backing of third-party groups is a marked contrast to its more public role in the Global Climate Coalition, an industry group formed in 1989 to challenge the science around

global warming. The group eventually disbanded when oil and auto companies started to withdraw. As companies were left to walk their own path, Exxon shifted money toward independent policy groups. "Now it's come down to a few of these groups to be the good foot soldiers of the corporate community on climate change," said Kert Davies, a research director for Greenpeace, which has tried to organize an international boycott of Exxon. Exxon's publicly disclosed documents reveal that donations to many of these organizations increased by more than 50 percent from 2000 to 2002. And money to the American Legislative Exchange Council, a conservative group that works with state legislators, has almost tripled as the policy debate has move to the state level.

Critics say that Exxon and these groups continue to muddle the debate even as scientific consensus has emerged, as much of the industry has taken a more conciliatory stance toward

the reality of global warming. As Exxon has become isolated from its peers, it has faced increasing pressure from shareholders and environmentalists. BP, Shell and Chevron Texaco have developed strategies that incorporate renewable energy, carbon trading and emissions reductions. You can help in this effort by switching away from buying Mobil Gas to some other gasoline brand such as Sunoco which uses 10 percent ethanol.

(Energy News, continued from page 4)

R-N.M., chairman of the Senate Energy Committee, and representatives of the Energy and Interior departments and the EPA. House members confirmed as attending include Reps. Rob Bishop and Chris Cannon of Utah; Jim Kolbe of Arizona; Denny Rehberg of Montana; Darrell Issa of California; and Tom Tancredo of Colorado.

For more information contact
<http://www.eere.energy.gov/>

Seen at the Solstice Party:



Kathy & Dan Grisley, George Parker, Sara Rubin

They're smiling.
They must be talking about wetlands.

Eric Smith receiving an award
from Hugh Mitchell
for service on the ExCom
and the Energy Committee.



They're smiling.
Eric is going to Germany.

CALENDAR

Feb. 11	Wednesday	7:30 PM	-----	Wetlands Committee	-----	150 Sunset Drive, Brighton
Feb. 12	Thursday	6:30 PM		ExCom meeting ²		St. John's Meadows
Feb. 18	Wednesday	7:00 PM	--	General Meeting, Our Regional Land Trusts (see page 1)	-----	Brighton Town Hall¹
Feb. 26	Thursday	7:30 PM		Energy Committee		52 Woodside Dr., Penfield ³
Mar. 11	Thursday	6:30 PM	-----	ExCom meeting ²	-----	St. John's Meadows
Mar. 14	Sunday			Eco-logue deadline		
Mar. 16	Wednesday	7:30 PM	-----	Energy Committee	-----	52 Woodside Dr., Penfield ³
Mar. 18	Thursday	7:00 PM		General Meeting, Great Lawns (see page 1)		Brighton Town Hall¹
Mar. 24	Wednesday	7:30 PM	-----	Wetlands Committee	-----	150 Sunset Drive, Brighton

¹2300 Elmwood Ave.

²Open to members. Call Hugh Mitchell at 244-2625.

³Call Bob Siegel 381-9348 for directions

Visit our web site at <http://newyork.sierraclub.org/rochester>

Also worth a visit: <http://rochesterenvironment.com>

To add your name to our E-mail list send your address to FrankRegan@RochesterEnvironment.com and put
"subscribe SC Mailing List" in the subject line.

Call 585-244-2625 for information about Sierra Club events and voice mail.