



# eco-logue

Explore, enjoy  
and protect  
the planet

ROCHESTER REGIONAL GROUP

Volume 34, No. 2  
April/May 2004

## Sixth Annual Sierra Club Environmental Forum

*"Protecting and Policing New York's Environment"*

Keynote Speaker: Peter Lehner, JD

Chief of the Environmental Protection Bureau of the NY Attorney General's Office

Tuesday, April 20, 2004, 6:00 - 9:30 PM, First Unitarian Church, 220 Winton Rd. South

This program is co-sponsored by the Choices & Environment Task Force of First Unitarian Church

\* *Group Displays*

\* *Information Sharing*

Good news! With the help of friends both here and in Albany we are offering the community another free Environmental Forum. It will be

bigger and better than before. We have again invited all regional environmental groups and key government offices to set up booths and attend a major environmental talk. This year our keynote speaker will be Peter Lehner, JD, head of the New York State Attorney General's Environmental Protection Bureau. Mr. Lehner is a major environmental attorney with a national reputation. Formerly he was senior attorney for the Natural Resource Defense Council and director of the New York Clean Water Project.

As many environmentalists know,

Attorney General Eliot Spitzer's office has been fighting to enforce state and national environmental laws which the Bush administration has consistently and continually sought to subvert and undermine. Some of the recent initiatives of the AG's office have included lawsuits against coal-fired power plants like RG&E's Russell Station, efforts to protect community gardens in NYC, and lawsuits aimed at cleaning up the Bronx and Hudson Rivers. Mr. Lehner is expected to discuss the current high level of non-compliance with environmental laws and he will demonstrate the need

### Schedule

5:15 - 6:00 PM: Groups set up displays.  
News conference at 6pm.  
6:00 - 7:15 PM: Doors open to public for visits and networking.  
7:15 - 9:30 PM: Program, including Q&A, discussion.

for more active enforcement.

The talk will be followed by a question and answer session.

Last year the Environmental Forum attracted

over 22 environmental and government groups. This year we expect more and the schedule will permit more time to visit various organizations' booths and time for you to network with other environmentalists. We hope to offer simply the best program ever - so - "See you at the free Sierra Club Environmental Forum!" on Tuesday, April 20<sup>th</sup>.

Note: If you know of a group which may want a table, please suggest they call the Sierra Club @ 244-2625 soon. Limited space is available as of this writing.

\* *Free Admission*

\* *Food & Beverages Available*

### Genesee River Recreation

by Laura E. Arney

Clean Air/Clean Water committee

The Rochester Regional Sierra Club project *Rediscovering the Genesee River* began in 2001 as a way to highlight the recreational opportunities for our closest waterway. At first we thought that the River was very under-utilized. But after a few years of canoeing the various sections on the river we came to realize

that there are many people who love this river, paddle it, and are fascinated by its seasonal variations and its regional personalities.

A tangible result of the project has been a **Canoe Access Map**. Distribution of the map will be free to Sierra Club members first and then offered to the public for a nominal fee.

Many thanks for the moral support from the Executive Committee of the Rochester Regional Group of the Sierra

Club. Thanks to my canoeing partner and GPS enthusiast Jonathan Arney, to Bob Kraus and Sue Mihalyi for our scouting expeditions, to Charlie Appel for insights on the river, to Bob Pierson for canoe expertise and editing, and especially to Don Welch for making the map a reality. And the many paddlers who enjoyed the Genesee River outings. Grant money came from the education fund of the Atlantic Chapter of the Sierra Club.

## FROM THE CHAIR



by Hugh Mitchell

When I was a boy at summer camp we went on nature hikes and “The Chief” said, “Boys, always leave the

*trail a little better than you found it.”*

This folksy piece of wisdom became the quintessence of my environmental philosophy, which I have tried to apply over the last six years by serving as Chair of our Rochester Regional Group.

I don't mind saying I am proud of the fact that for 2004 we have the strongest Executive Committee in years and this is the reason I feel confident enough about the local scene to devote more time to helping run the Atlantic Chapter. I have been elected to a one year term as Chairperson of the Conservation Committee of the state Sierra Club. I'm sure the local group leaders will be able to pick up many of the administrative tasks involved in running the regional group while I focus more on state matters. For the rest of this year we will be relying more on our veteran leaders like Frank Regan, Ray Nelson, Laura Arney, David Ruckberg, Michael Dahl and Deb Muratore. Deb has already taken over organizing the April 20<sup>th</sup> Environmental Forum. We can also look forward to benefitting from our talented new Ex-Com members Bonnie Besette, Janice Clements, and Bob Siegel.

The view from the window of the Atlantic Chapter office in Albany is troubling. It is amazing how many environmental problems New York State is facing. These range from serious threats to the New York City water supply, to a major second-home sprawl development in the Catskills, to an expansion (next to a Buffalo school) of the only legal toxic waste landfill in New York. To address these multiple problems we need the strongest possible Sierra Club and I hope to do all I can on the Atlantic Chapter level to “*Leave the trail a little better.*”

## Energy Notes: The Good, The Bad and the Ugly

by Robert Siegel

### *The Good*

New York City has unveiled a new program that will convert waste gas into electricity at eight of the city's sewage treatment plants, reducing smelly fumes and saving up to 3,000 barrels of fuel oil a year.

In Spain, Bay of Biscay, the first wave power generating station is being set up to produce 1.25 megawatts. The turbines will operate under all but the heaviest and calmest conditions. They are expecting to have 80-90% availability as compared to 30-45% for wind and 20-30% for solar.

### *The Bad*

The Italy Town Board will vote in mid-March on a six-month moratorium on wind farms. This could dramatically affect wind development in neighboring Prattsburgh. Wind farms have been a divisive issue in the town. There is a surprising amount of opposition to wind energy in our area. A South Bristol wind farm proposal was recently defeated by vigorous local opposition.

Wind is not a perfect solution, although it is clean and it does not contribute to global warming. There are issues associated with it such as bird kills, noise, safety concerns such as thrown blades or ice and of course aesthetic concerns. The fact that they are heavily subsidized at this point raises questions about their economics. The Sierra Club policy on Wind Energy

says it is an important alternative to fossil fuel-based power generating systems though great care must be taken in the selection of sites.

Lord Peter Levene, chair of Lloyd's of London, says that terrorism is not the insurance industry's biggest worry, despite the fact that his company was the largest single insurer of the World Trade Center. Lloyd's is bracing for an increase in weather disasters related to global warming.

### *The Ugly*

The Bush Administration appears to be using a deliberate strategy of encouraging the public to believe that there is no scientific consensus on the dangers of global warming. A confidential memo prepared for Republican leaders by consultant Frank Luntz, and obtained by the Environmental Working Group, contains these quotes:

“The scientific debate is closing [against us] but not yet closed. There is still a window of opportunity to challenge the science.” .... “Voters believe that there is no consensus about global warming within the scientific community. Should the public come to believe that the scientific issues are settled, their views about global warming will change accordingly. Therefore, you need to continue to make the lack of scientific certainty a primary issue in the debate.”

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### Conservation Committee Meeting

Wednesday, April 14 at 7:00 PM

by Frank J. Regan

Would you like to see Rochester become a cleaner, healthier, environmentally wiser place to live? Why not attend our Conservation Committee and help us tackle some local environmental issues like sprawl, brownfields/Superfund, solid /toxic waste, recycling, food, pesticides and

herbicides, and an educational program in need of a coordinator. Or, any conservation issues you are interested in. We meet every second Wednesday of the month at 7 PM at the Corner Place, 983 Monroe Ave. For more information contact Frank Regan at [FrankRegan@RochesterEnvironment.com](mailto:FrankRegan@RochesterEnvironment.com)

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.

## Outings etc.

Date/Time	Destination	Leader
April 17 at 9:30 AM Meet at Unitarian Church, 220 Winton Rd. S. for instructions and car pooling.	<b>Toxic Tour</b> We caravan for brief tours of several sites currently threatening the Monroe County environment. See article below.	Hugh Mitchell
May 15 at 9:30 AM Car pool from Unitarian Church to the 1000 Acre Swamp, arriving around 10:00 am.	<b>Thousand Acre Swamp</b> A naturalist will discuss flora, fauna and geology of the Thousand Acre Swamp , a prime wilderness resource in our region. See article below.	Robert Siegel
June 5 Call 218-0688 for information on meeting place and time.	<b>Unpaved highways at Mendon Ponds</b> Participate in a deeper involvement with pond life and an awareness of unseen natural patterns in our largest county park.	Bonnie Bessette
July 17 at 9:30 AM	<b>Helmer Nature Center</b> Explore natural features of a little-known gem in Irondequoit.	Howard Camp
August 14 Meet at Hopkins Point at Mendon Ponds Park ; call 218-0688 to check meeting time.	<b>Canoe on Hundred Acre Pond -</b> while learning about animal and bird life as well as natural progression. Option: some members may help to open a culvert between the ponds; bring boots if you'd like to be a part of this option.	Bonnie Bessette
Sept. 18 at 9:30 AM Meet at parking lot near picnic area in Genesee Valley Park	<b>Biking the Genesee Valley Greenway</b> Bring your bicycle: ride the Genesee Valley Greenway trail to Scottsville along a deserted canal. View the remnants of locks.	Howard Camp

### Toxic Tour

Saturday, April 17

For over 100 years Rochester's Genesee River Gorge was considered a convenient place to dump - EVERYTHING. Now we have a series of toxic waste sites. These sites pose environmental, legal, and financial burdens on our community and taxpayers. If you have the stomach for it and want to learn about the underside of our industrial history, join our Sierra Club Toxic Tour back into the wastes which unfortunately still fester today.

Caravan stops include: the old Beebee Station coal plant and the Highfalls clean-up location; the little-known Brewer Street site where RG&E dumped coal tar substances near the Genesee Middle Falls; a Kodak air pollution site; the superfund site at the former Odenbach factory on Dewey Avenue; and lastly RG&E's coal fired Russell Station plant on the shore of Lake Ontario.

Meet at the lower parking lot of the First Unitarian Church at 9:30 AM, Saturday, April 17th for directions.

### Thousand Acre Swamp

9:30 AM, Saturday, May 15

The Thousand Acre Swamp preserve is administered by the Nature Conservancy. Our tour will be led by Bob Siegel and guest naturalist Dick Adamus. We will focus primarily on the native plants and birds found in the swamp and explore the various habitats. Bring binoculars, sturdy shoes and insect repellent.

### Compost Anyone?

Starbucks is starting a coffee grounds compost project. Anyone can bring their own container to any of the 10 Starbucks in the Rochester area. They will provide you with a 40 lb garbage bag of coffee grounds for use in your home compost. For more information please contact Norma-Jane at the Monroe Ave. Starbucks 244-4545 OR stop by any Starbucks.

### Earth Month Event

Saturday, April 17

The Rochester Regional Group of the Sierra Club and Starbucks will be partnering together to help out on this year's Scout Sweep. The event is sponsored by the City of Rochester Parks & Recreation Department. For the past four years, area scouts have cleaned the entire length of the Genesee Riverway Trail from Turning Point Park to Genesee Valley Park.

Join us as we work with them starting at Genesee Valley Park West. All supplies will be handed out on-site.

We meet at the Genesee Valley Park Pool Parking Lot, 131 Elmwood Ave. at 10 AM, Saturday, April 17. Bring work gloves and dress for the weather. Starbucks will also provide coffee to the volunteers.

In addition, Starbucks has applied for a grant to pay \$10.00/hour per Sierra Club member. This will help the Rochester Regional Group continue our local work. Pre-registration is required. Please call Deb Muratore @ 385-9743 to register.

# CALENDAR

April 8	Thursday	6:30 PM	----- ExCom meeting <sup>2</sup> -----	St. John's Meadows
April 14	Wednesday	7:00 PM	Conservation Committee	Corner Place, 983 Monroe Ave.
April 15	Thursday	7:30 PM	----- Alternative Energy Committee -----	52 Woodside Dr., Penfield <sup>3</sup>
<b>April 17</b>	<b>Saturday</b>	<b>9:30 AM</b>	<b>Outing: "A Toxic Tour" (see page 3)</b>	<b>meet at First Unitarian Church<sup>1</sup></b>
April 17	Saturday	10:00 AM	----- Scout Sweep with Starbucks (see page 3) -----	meet at pool parking lot, 131 Elmwood Ave. <sup>4</sup>
April 19	Monday	6:30 PM	ExCom supper with Chapter Chairperson	
<b>April 20</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>6:00 PM</b>	<b>----- Sierra Club Environmental Forum (see page 1) -----</b>	<b>First Unitarian Church<sup>1</sup></b>
April 23	Friday	10 AM - 3 PM	Students' Sierra Club Earth Day Tabling Event	Wilson Quad, U of R
April 28	Wednesday	7:30 PM	----- Wetlands Committee -----	150 Sunset Drive, Brighton
May 9	Sunday		Eco-logue deadline	
May 13	Thursday	6:30 PM	----- ExCom meeting <sup>2</sup> -----	St. John's Meadows
<b>May 15</b>	<b>Saturday</b>	<b>9:30 AM</b>	<b>Outing: 1,000 Acre Swamp (see page 3)</b>	<b>meet at First Unitarian Church<sup>1</sup></b>
May 18	Tuesday	7:30 PM	----- Alternative Energy Committee -----	52 Woodside Dr., Penfield <sup>3</sup>
May 26	Wednesday	7:30 PM	Wetlands Committee	150 Sunset Drive, Brighton
<b>June 5</b>	<b>Saturday</b>	<b>9:30 AM</b>	<b>----- Outing: Unpaved Highways of Mendon Ponds (see pg 3) -----</b>	<b>call 218-0688 for info/sign-up</b>

<sup>1</sup>First Unitarian Chrch, 220 Winton R. South

<sup>3</sup>Call Bob Siegel 381-9348 for directions

<sup>2</sup>Open to members. Call Hugh Mitchell at 244-2625.

<sup>4</sup>Call Deb Muratore 385-9743 to register

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](mailto: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.