



# eco-logue

Explore, enjoy  
and protect  
the planet

ROCHESTER REGIONAL GROUP

Volume 35, No. 1  
Feb/March 2005

## Environmental Forum Coming

Mark your calendars. The 2005 Environmental Forum will take place on Thursday, April 21, at the First Unitarian Church. As in previous years, the Forum will host local environmental groups who will set up tables to present information about their activities. This year's keynote speaker will be Professor Joseph Makarewicz, Distinguished Professor of Environmental Science at SUNY Brockport. He will speak on water issues related to the Great Lakes. In a time when pollution controls are threatened and lake water itself has become a saleable commodity, Professor Makarewicz's talk is sure to be of interest to all in the Lake Ontario watershed.

The Forum is now in its final planning stages. Volunteers are needed to help with correspondence, tabling, and baking goodies to sell. Please contact David Ruekberg at 538-6463 or SierraRochTix@hotmail.com if you can help, or if your group would like to host a table.

*General Meeting*

## **THIRST** A Provocative Film about the Commercialization of Water

Thursday February 24, 2005, 7:15PM.  
St Thomas' Episcopal Church, 2000 Highland Ave.

The film THIRST\* takes us from South America to India to California, presenting the people most affected by privatized water and what it means to them. Scenes from the 3rd World Water Forum provide arguments for organized development of water resources. Stockton CA residents are shown as they advocate for publicly-run water services. East Indian villagers make rainwater harvesting a method of sustaining their community's farming and drinking water.

Locally, the issue has come to our Great Lakes. Canadian and Great Lakes States' representatives grapple with the issue of exporting water. "Who owns the water?" We as citizens and environmentalists will need to be informed about the issue as decisions are made concerning water on the local, national, and the international level. What does it all mean? What about the environment?

The movie will be followed by a brief update on the Great Lakes and Canadian efforts to protect water from export and diversion.

We will meet at St Thomas' Episcopal Church, 2000 Highland Ave., at the corner of South Winton Road and Highland (just down the street from First Unitarian Church). St. Thomas' Church has handicap parking and is handicap accessible. Come to the lower fellowship hall. We will have popcorn, snacks and drinks. (Bring some to share too.)

\*This is a production of Bullfrog Films. Contact Laura Arney 334-8548 if you would like the film to be used by your church or community group.

# GREAT ENDEAVORS ON THE GREAT LAKES

by Hugh Mitchell

No one in Rochester has to be told that we live on the shores of a magnificent Great Lake. But not every one appreciates the multiple threats to Lake Ontario or the enormity of upcoming national, state and local efforts to restore the Great Lakes chain. Here are a few of these multiple efforts which will soon become more public:

National. The EPA has established The Great Lakes Collaborative which is a major national study due for completion in 2005. It is designed to address the multiple threats to the Great Lakes eco-systems. These threats include pollution runoff, contamination or loss of wetlands, invasive species, toxic waste, and so on. It is expected that this study will be used to move Congress in 2006 to approve funding up to \$6 billion for the restoration of the Great Lakes ecosystems.

State. The Pataki administration is behind the national Great Lakes restoration efforts, particularly as New York stands to be awarded as much as \$1.3 billion for clean-up of Lakes Erie and Ontario. Another multi-state effort, Annex 2001, is a proposal to strengthen water management and assure that there is no net water loss from the Great Lakes. Currently our states manage the waters under a patchwork of rules and policies. Annex 2001 provides an opportunity for clear and consistent water management policy.

Local. The Center for Environmental Information (CEI) has received a \$250,000 grant by EPA to create a plan for clean up of Lake Ontario. The plan is called the Lake Ontario North Coast Initiative (LOCI), and EPA is expected to fund this work again in 2006. On May 4 & 5th, CEI is planning a major conference in Rochester on LOCI and the future of Lake Ontario

Sierra Club. We have been working on the national, state and local Sierra Club levels to energize conservation work focused on the Great Lakes. As

the Chapter Conservation Chairperson I was fortunate to represent the Chapter at the recent EPA sponsored Great Lakes Collaborative organization meeting in Chicago. The Chapter will be creating a Great Lakes Conservation Committee and our local ExCom has approved the creation of a companion Rochester Group Committee.

Rochester Regional Group. Last but not least our Group has chosen Lake Ontario and the Great Lakes as the major topic for our annual spring Environmental Forum which will take place on Thursday, April 21<sup>st</sup> at the Unitarian Church. Our keynote speaker will be Distinguished Professor Joseph Makarewicz of SUNY-Brockport, an internationally recognized expert on the Great Lakes.

If you would like to become involved with any of these initiatives I hope you will join our new Great Lakes Committee. If interested please give me a call at 244-2625.

## Sierra Club Calendars Discounted

If you didn't get around to purchasing a Sierra Club calendar yet, it's not too late! We have several beautiful wall calendars left, and for a limited time you can get them at a 25% discount. That means instead of the published price of \$11.95, you pay only \$8.96 per calendar – tax included. (Shipping is \$4, but calendars may be available for delivery or pick-up locally.) Contact David Ruekberg before March 29 to find out what's left and make arrangements. As ever, proceeds from calendar sales go to support your local club. Call 538-6463 or email [SierraRochTix@hotmail.com](mailto:SierraRochTix@hotmail.com).

## Thinking about wetlands?

Everybody reading this already knows that wetlands are an invaluable resource for the natural world as well as the human environment. In addition to being the habitat for hundreds of species of plants and animals, they filter our drinking water, protect us from floods, and reduce erosion.

The Wetlands Committee consists of a handful of people who meet every month to join the battle to protect wetlands. There are several ways you can help:

- Join us. We can always use new people, ideas, and energy.

- Talk to us. If you know of a wetland in your area that is threatened by development or other activity, tell us about it. We can help people get involved in protecting their neighborhoods and local wetlands.

- Talk about us. If you know somebody who would like to get involved, pass this information along. For more information or to get involved, contact Sara Rubin at 585 442 6890, [Rubin150@aol.com](mailto:Rubin150@aol.com) or Dan Grisley at 585 671 5388, [cdgris55@frontiernet.net](mailto:cdgris55@frontiernet.net)

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.

# Environmentalism - The Next Four Years

By Frank J. Regan, Communications and Conservation Chairperson

One of our most popular programs last year, "Global Warming in the Northeast," the lecture in November by Dr. David Wolfe from Cornell University, highlighted a new purposefulness and urgency of our educational programs. We had a large turnout for this program which zeroed in on the potential ramifications of climate change on agriculture in our area. The skinny is that some crops should do well (weeds) and others may not (such as cauliflower) as our area continues to warm up.

An added benefit of this event, one we should always consider in our programs, is the opportunity for creating new relationships. Dr. Wolfe describes this: "I am glad that I now have this connection to the Sierra Club in the Rochester area. I think sometime down the road there may be opportunities to bring some of the local

leadership of your organization together with farmers in the area to address particular issues and search for common ground."

In the next four years, these kinds of programs that help us develop a closer rapport with environmental experts will become critical. The reelection of George W. Bush, with his dismal record on the environment, and the media that seems less inclined to report on the environment, heralds a new era where concerned individuals and groups like the Sierra Club must take charge of their information gathering. Just because our major news sources are not talking about these issues does not mean they are not critical: clean air, corporate accountability, ecoregions protection, environmental education, environmental justice, factory farms, genetic engineering, grazing, marine wildlife protection, species

preservation, nuclear waste, recreation issues, sustainable consumption, lifestyle choices, toxics, trash transfer, transportation, and wetlands.

More than ever, we need the dedication of scientists like Dr. Wolfe to inform and engage the public on critical environmental matters. During an administration hostile to the basic tenets of environmental science, a vacuum must be replaced by our active pursuit of knowledge and actions to keep our environment healthy.

Please come to the new year's educational programs, and bring your friends. Give us your suggestions for new programs for the Rochester Regional Group of the Sierra Club. Programs that you believe will be useful in informing Rochester-area citizens about environmental issues. Call us at 244-2625 with your ideas. In short:

**get involved.**

## ExCom Election Results A Mandate?

Nationally, there is a question as to whether or not President Bush's 51% majority in the November election was a mandate. Although results for election to the Executive Committee (ExCom) of the Rochester Regional Group of the Sierra Club were unanimous, the same question might be posed of our Group. With only seven of our nearly 3,000 members voting, it's hard to imagine what the "mandate" of the membership might be. Continue doing as we're doing? Begin selling cookies to compete with the Girl Scouts? Commandeer the Fast Ferry and go on a high-speed tour of environmentally sensitive wetlands adjoining Lake Ontario? Is anybody out there? As usual, the twelve or so

members of the Executive Committee and an additional five or six members of our other committees, such as Energy, Clean Air and Water, and Wetlands Committees, are stretched thin keeping the Rochester Group active. Where is everybody?

Results (number of votes follow in parentheses): Hugh Mitchell (7), Deb Muratore (6), Frank Regan (6), David Ruekberg (6), Sara Rubin (1 write-in). In addition, Cecelia Crone was nominated to fill a one-year vacancy on the Ex-Com. (Two other write-ins included a former member no longer in the area, and a member who had not been contacted and confirmed as of this writing.)

# CALENDAR

Feb. 10	Thursday	6:30 PM	ExCom meeting <sup>1</sup>	Chestnut Court, St. John's Meadows
Feb. 15	Tuesday	7:30 PM	-----Alternative Energy Committee -----	-----25 Brook Hill Lane, Apt. E <sup>2</sup>
Feb. 16	Wednesday	7:30 PM	Wetlands Committee	150 Sunset Drive, Brighton
<b>Feb. 24</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>7:15 PM</b>	<b>-----General Meeting: Thirst (see page 1) -----</b>	<b>-----St Thomas' Episcopal Church<sup>3</sup></b>
March 10	Thursday	6:30 PM	ExCom meeting <sup>1</sup>	Chestnut Court, St. John's Meadows
March 13	Sunday		Eco-logue Deadline	
March 15	Tuesday	7:30 PM	-----Alternative Energy Committee -----	-----25 Brook Hill Lane, Apt. E <sup>2</sup>
March 16	Wednesday	7:30 PM	-----Wetlands Committee -----	-----150 Sunset Drive, Brighton
<b>April 21</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>6:00 PM</b>	<b>-----Sierra Club Environmental Forum -----</b>	<b>-----First Unitarian Church<sup>4</sup></b>

<sup>1</sup>Open to members. Call Hugh Mitchell at 244-2625.

<sup>3</sup>2000 Winton Rd. South

<sup>2</sup>Call Mike Dahl, 586-4618, for directions

<sup>4</sup>220 Winton Rd. South

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.