



eco-logue

Explore, enjoy
and protect
the planet

ROCHESTER REGIONAL GROUP

Volume 35, No. 2
April/May 2005

- * Booths
- * Displays
- * Networking

Seventh Annual Environmental Forum

6:00 - 9:00 PM, Thursday, April 21, 2005
First Unitarian Church, 220 South Winton Road, Rochester

- * Free Admission
- * Food & Beverages Available

Keynote Speaker: Professor Joseph Makarewicz*
“Our Threatened Lakes: Getting Involved”

Presented by the Rochester Regional Group of the Sierra Club and
Co-hosted by The Choices & Environment Task Force of First Unitarian Church.

*Dr. Makarewicz is a Distinguished Professor, Department of Environmental Science & Biology, at SUNY Brockport. He is an expert in the area of fresh water ecosystems and pollution, and is the author of “New York’s North Coast: A troubled Coastline,” a report on environmental threats to Lake Ontario. 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.

Schedule	
5:30 - 6:00	Groups set up displays
6:00 - 7:30	Doors open for networking & touring displays
7:30 - 8:30	Forum program
8:30 - 9:00	Q & A

Meet 30 of the area’s most vital environmental groups. Groups will be available to provide information on their mission and activities. Learn what’s going on locally. Discover how you can get involved. Network and join forces with other groups.

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

**Lots of opportunities to make a difference for the environment.
Which one is right for you?**

Work for passage of the Neighborhood Notification Act to help people avoid contact with pesticides...see page 2.

Join a committee to chart clean-up of Lake Ontario...see page 2

Help convince our state legislature to protect more wetlands...see page 3

Join a Chapter campaign to educate the public about the need for greater State emphasis on environmental problems...see page 3.

Attend a conference on “Alternatives in Living.”...see page 5

Represent the Sierra Club at an Earth Day event at the U of R....see page 5

FROM THE CHAIR



by Janice Clements

Spring Into Action

Spring is just around the corner. It is a time of renewal and rebirth. After a long hearty winter, nature prepares for spring with new life, new energy, and a renewed spirit!

Spring is the perfect time to get outside and enjoy the outdoors. It is also a great time for Sierra Club members to *spring into action*.

There is a lot of opportunity for education and volunteerism at the local level. Our annual Environmental Forum is April 21st. Join us to meet and greet other local environmental groups in the Rochester area. Come listen to our keynote speaker – Professor Joseph Makarewicz – as he discusses issues related to the Great Lakes. Are you agreeable to having water from the Great Lakes exported and sold as a commodity? Join us to learn more.

Are you or your loved ones suffering from allergies? Want to know when pesticides are being applied in your neighborhood? Learn more about the 48-Hour Neighborhood Notification Bill. Let your voice be heard so your allergies can relax.

Other issues on the horizon: Renaissance Square (sprawl and air quality), Management of Hemlock Lake, U of R Earth Day April 16th, Rochester area Wetlands, plus much more.

We need our members to become more involved. What environmental issues do you care about?

Members can help by acting as Legislator Watchdogs, Hospitality Coordinators, Meeting Host/Hostess, FUNdraising committee member, and Table Coordinator. Check out our Website for these and other volunteer opportunities. Share some of your renewed spirit with the Sierra Club. *Spring into action!*

Be a Good Neighbor

by Frank J. Regan, Co-Chair

One of the reasons (I hope) why you joined the Sierra Club was to be a part of a community of people who wish to “explore, enjoy, and protect” our planet. Right now, we need our three thousand members in the Rochester area to help us do some protecting. The possible passage of the 48-Hour Neighborhood Notification Law is getting closer. On Tuesday, March 8, County lawmakers voted to hold a May 10 public hearing on the pesticide notification bill. When we learn of the exact time and place, we will post it on the web page given below. Please attend and let your voice be heard.

Neighbors should have a choice to take precautions on the day a neighboring yard is being sprayed with pesticides. According to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation’s Final Annual Report for New York State Pesticides Sales and Applications 2002, Monroe County applied over 83,000 gallons of pesticides, putting it 9th in total use of pesticides out of 57 counties in New York State. Hence, there is a real need to give our county residents a choice when

pesticides are applied near their homes. Seven other NYS counties have opted in on this law and the track record is good.

The Sierra Club does not endorse any volunteer notification measures by lawn care companies. Without the force of law behind it, a voluntary registration does not provide residents a real right to know because the lawn care companies hold all the cards - deciding when, where, and if, a resident gets the requested notice, and leaving no option to neighbors if notice is not provided. You can help in several ways: (1) contact Maggie Brooks, Monroe County Executive, 110 County Office Building, 39 West Main Street, Rochester, New York 14614 - Phone: (585) 428-5301 - Fax: (585) 428-2168 or Email to countyexecutive@monroecounty.gov and let her know you support this law; (2) contact your Monroe County Legislator and do the same; (3) surf over to our extensive web page on this law to get all the information you need on who to contact, and ways that you can help. <http://newyork.sierraclub.org/rochester/neighborhoodnotification.htm>

Great Lakes Committee Forming

2005 will be one of the most significant years for the future of the Great Lakes. There are very significant national, state and local initiatives now underway to protect and improve the Lakes. The Sierra Club is part of these efforts. Locally, our Seventh Annual Environmental Forum, April 21st at the First Unitarian Church, will focus on “Our Threatened Lakes: Getting Involved.” Professor Joseph Makarewicz will detail information about New York’s North Coast - Lake Ontario. The Environmental Forum will be followed by a major conference on Lake Ontario May 5-6 sponsored

by the Center For Environmental Information.

Before our Environmental Forum, Sierra Club members and friends are invited to join the organizing meeting of a Rochester Regional Great Lakes Committee. This initial meeting will detail the efforts to save our lakes and outline areas where individuals can be of help. It is also open to the public. If you are interested in joining this committee, please come to the Study Rooms at Brighton Library, 2200 Elmwood Ave. on Tuesday, April 5th, 7pm. For more information call the Sierra Club phone at 244-2625.

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.

Wetlands Threatened

Last year, aided by a Supreme Court decision, the federal government changed its wetlands policy and no longer protects “isolated” wetlands, i.e. those which are not obviously connected to navigable waterways. New York State law protects only wetlands that are 12.4 acres or more. The change in federal policy, and the weak state law, leaves a lot of important wetlands with no legal protection. They are now subject to being filled or otherwise destroyed by development projects.

Last year and again this year, the state Assembly has passed a bill that would dramatically reduce the size of wetlands protected in New York to one acre. Last year and again this year, the state Senate has failed to pass the bill. It has been stalled in committees and never gotten a floor vote.

Take five minutes to call your senator. Tell him (or his aide, or his answering machine) that you think wetlands are important and that they deserve state protection. Ask him to support legislation that protects wetlands, and to work with the Senate leadership to get the bill to the Governor.

Not sure who your senator is, or how to reach him? Go to <http://www.senate.state.ny.us/>. The ‘Senators’ link can help you find who your senator is and how to get in touch.

Protecting our wetlands helps protect our water, our wildlife, and our property. It can also help to curb urban sprawl. Asking your senator to strengthen New York’s wetland protection takes very little time, and it can make a big difference to all of us.

Atlantic Chapter Opportunity

The Atlantic Chapter of the Sierra Club is planning a major public education campaign. Rochester volunteers are being sought to help implement this activity.

Rochester members may not realize that our nine county Rochester Regional Group is one of eleven such Sierra Club groups in New York State. We are all members of the Atlantic Chapter which has approximately 44,000 members state-wide. A major thrust of the Chapter has always been to influence state government leaders on environmental issues. The Chapter employs two full time environmental lobbyists in Albany to carry out this effort. In a new approach to this end, John Stouffer, our senior staff, has designed a major Chapter plan to train community environmental volunteers and leaders in a public conservation education campaign. Once trained these leaders will coordinate and help others work on state conservation problems.

An indication of the need to be more effective in this effort is the fact that while New York State spending levels have increased by nearly 40 billion since 1994, spending on the environment has significantly declined as a percentage of the state budget. New York is listed nationally as last in environmental spending as a percentage of overall state spending.

The Rochester region has been picked as one of four areas of the state to conduct an environmental public education campaign. We need to recruit 4 or 5 volunteers interested in attending a weekend, all expense paid training retreat, which will probably occur in May. Once this core of people are trained in the basic concepts of public education campaign planning, they will develop issue forums and local projects.

If interested in volunteering call the Sierra Club phone at (585) 244-2625.

Sierra Summit in San Francisco

All Sierra Club members are invited to attend the September 8-11 Sierra Summit 2005 in San Francisco. This exciting gathering will offer program sessions on outdoor adventures, engaging youth, visioning solutions, natural heritage and a huge showcase on the outdoors. It will be held in the Expo hall. Side trips to California sights such as Yosemite are being planned. Members of our Chapter, one of the largest in the country, are invited to send as many as 24 delegates, providing they are willing to pay their own way. It is still not too late to apply to become an At-Large delegate from the Atlantic Chapter. Here’s how.

If interested in becoming an At-Large Summit Delegate, call the local Sierra Club telephone line at (585) 244-2625 right away to submit your name. At-large delegates may be self-nominated and will be chosen democratically at the next Chapter Executive Committee meeting on April 8th. The delegates will choose which working area they wish to join and will be expected to make recommendations on future national Sierra Club policies and programs.

Rochester Regional Group All Time Membership High

Every since last summer when the national Sierra Club ran a door-to-door membership campaign in Rochester our numbers have been climbing. Last year we averaged about 2,500 members from the nine county areas we touch on. But since the campaign and our publicity efforts, we have steadily gained members. We have now passed the 3,000 mark! This is significant on the State level because we now can have two Chapter delegates to the Atlantic Chapter Ex-Com. Hugh Mitchell has been serving as our delegate and now our Executive Committee has elected Janice Clements (our new Co-Chairperson) to be our second delegate.

Should Coyotes Be Hunted for Pleasure and Profit?

by Hugh Mitchell

Recently the Democrat & Chronicle published my letter about the distress I feel over Dick Kraft's real estate company offering \$500 for the largest coyote killed in the Honeoye Sport Club's "Ugly Coyote" contest. My point was that although it may be legal to kill coyotes for fun and profit, I feel it is morally questionable and ecologically wrong since, unlike humans, coyotes are environmentally helpful. The sport club spokesperson claimed that they were holding the hunt to "get rid of the coyotes - to keep the deer," that "home-owners are losing dogs and calves to coyotes, and some parents won't let their children walk to school alone."

The truth is that coyotes improve the health of the deer herd by taking the young and weak. Being extremely shy animals they are terrified of humans and no threat to children at all.

In response to my letter, a 75 year old farmer, who owns one of the largest dairy farms in Geneseo, called to tell me a lot of good things about coyotes, starting with how they cleared his fields of ground hogs which were the real threat to his cows because of their holes. I asked him if in all his years of farming he'd ever lost a calf to a coyote? He replied, "No. Not ever." And he proceeded to tell me an amazing story.

Once one of his sons saw a big black coyote watching a cow give birth in one of his fields. Darkness overtook the birthing so the men couldn't retrieve the calf, but when they went looking for it the next morning it was gone. They looked for three days and nights, suspecting that the coyote ate the calf, but on the third night they spotted it. It was strolling along following the large black coyote! The calf had bonded to the coyote, and the coyote permitted it to follow her around for three days.

I'd like to ask Dick Kraft who are more dangerous, coyotes or humans?



Hipp Brook

photo by C. Sevilla

Local Photographer Creates Book of Wetlands and Preserves

Over the past year, photographer and Sierra Club member Christine Sevilla has been photographing wetlands. Initially she was searching for a way to change attitudes toward wetlands and increase participation in conservation. She began working collegially with members of Sierra Club, Nature Conservancy, Genesee Land Trust, and Genesee Audubon Society, providing images when needed for protecting an endangered habitat, or photographs of local parks and preserves to foster public interest. This led her to realize that there is no compendium of information describing the great parks and preserves in the greater Monroe County area. "It seems natural that such a guide would be an effective way to get information about protecting the environment into the hands of area residents who enjoy the outdoors," she says. Christine's present project is to create such a compendium.

Her book will foster awareness of the issues of biodiversity, habitat, flood and erosion control, water quality and the importance and benefits of wetlands and habitat preservation. It will list

preserves and wetlands along with images and learning activities, including things to do immediately that will have an impact. "I view this new project as a hybrid between an artist book and a reference book, an exciting challenge." Also included are portraits of the volunteers who maintain preserves, who come from every possible background. "Portraits along with excerpts from interviews, will offer compelling proof of how easy it is to participate, and to make a difference."

Two exhibitions of Christine's images and books are planned to kick off distribution of the printed book. Everyone is invited. Entertainment and refreshments will be available. Members of local habitat preservation groups will be on hand to talk about their experiences with visitors. It's a great opportunity to meet people who share your interests, while looking at images of some of your favorite places! The first exhibition is on Friday, May 13 from 6 to 8 PM at the Center at High Falls, 60 Browns Race, Rochester. A second event is from 5 to 7 PM Friday, July 29, at the Rochester City Hall Link Gallery, 30 Church Street, Rochester.

Outings



Walking Tour of Walter Kingston Cow Farm

Saturday, April 30, 8:30am - 1:30pm. Visit a 1400 acre dairy farm which has a herd of 600 head, south of Geneseo. Get to know a conservation oriented commercial farm operations and

walk the fields. Meet at the lower parking lot, First Unitarian Church, 220 Winton Rd. South for car pooling (rain or shine). Bring camera & boots. The group may chose to go for diner lunch afterwards. Call 244-2625 for more information.

Harbec Plastics Saturday, May 7, 2005, 12 Noon. Back by popular demand.

Harbec is a cutting-edge, environmentally friendly manufacturer. Some of the alternative technology they are utilizing includes a 250 kW Furlander wind turbine, a combined heat and power system using advanced micro-turbine technology, absorption chillers that use industrial waste heat to generate air conditioning, and a fleet of hybrid vehicles. Bob Bechtold, Harbec's president is a fascinating guy with a passion for the environment. He is a living, breathing, walking, talking proof that it is possible to be a successful businessman while doing everything possible to help the environment at the

same time. Don't miss this terrific event!

Where: Harbec Plastics. 369 Route 104, Ontario, NY (Look for the windmill). Either meet out there at noon, or those interested in carpooling can meet at the Unitarian Church at 11:15. Call Bob Siegel for details at 585-256-3846

Spring Guided Birding Tour

Saturday, May 21st - 8:00am - noon. Visit Chili Black Creek marsh, a prime public bird breeding area, with a bird guide. Easy walk next to wetlands. Bring binoculars. Meet at 8:00am for car pooling at lower parking lot First Unitarian Church, 220 Winton Rd. S. or meet at 8:40am at Chili library/town complex off Rt. 31 in Chili. Call Bob Siegel for details at 585-256-3846.

Picnic & Tour at Peacework Organic Farm, Newark, N.Y. Saturday, July 23rd, 1:00pm - 6pm. Visit and tour the area's leading organic farm headed by Elizabeth Henderson at the height of production. Enjoy a healthy organic picnic for all ages. Meet at 1pm at the lower parking lot, First Unitarian Church, 220 Winton Rd. S. for carpooling or call Sierra Club for directions.

Hiking & Visit Weathersfield Wind Farm Saturday, September 17th - (tentative). Guided tour of the 10 wind generator wind farm near Gainsville, N.Y. plus hiking on local trails. All day outing. Details to follow.

ADK Event

by Mike Seager

On Saturday, June 11, from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm, the Genesee Valley Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club will host the Outdoor Expo at the beach area of Mendon Ponds Park. The ADK Expo is a gathering of lots of outdoor clubs and vendors, with table displays, opportunities to try canoes, kayaks, and other equipment, and a wide array of workshops. There is something of interest to anybody who likes the outdoors.

The Sierra Club will have a table there to promote our message of environmental stewardship to people who appreciate the outdoors. We need volunteers to help staff the table. Volunteering is easy: take a couple hours to chat with people who stop by, fill them in on what we are doing and what we are going to do, hand them some relevant fliers, and answer whatever questions they have. (We will have a couple people at the table all the time, so there will be somebody around to help with the tough questions.)

If you can spare the time, we would appreciate your help. I suggest planning to spend half a day, or even all day, at the Expo. Take a couple hours of that time to help at the Sierra Club table, and spend the rest of the time enjoying the show. If you can help, please call me (Mike Seager) at (585) 414-6511, or send me a note at

mike_seager@alum.rpi.edu.

2nd Annual "Alternatives in Living" Conference.

Saturday, April 9, 2005 8:15am - 5:00 pm.

Greet the spring with an uplifting conference presented by Seeking Common Ground at Rochester's School Without Walls. \$60 pays for four workshops, organic lunch, and a vendor fair. Enjoy a complimentary chair

massage. Early-bird rate and a limited number of work-study scholarships are also available. For registration/info: Lynn at 899-6803, or info@seekingcommonground.org, or www.seekingcommonground.org

Volunteers Needed

On April 16, 2005, the University of Rochester will host an Earth Day Celebration. Volunteers are needed to staff the Sierra Club information table. The celebration runs from noon until 8 PM. Please let us know if you can help staff our table for any part of this time. Contact Sunita Gupton at 585 244-3632 for additional information.

CALENDAR

April 14	Thursday	6:30 PM	----- ExCom meeting ¹ -----	Chestnut Court, St. John's Meadows
April 19	Tuesday	7:30 PM	Alternative Energy Committee	25 Brook Hill Lane, Apt. E ²
April 21	Thursday	6:00 PM	----- Sierra Club Environmental Forum (see page 1) -----	----- First Unitarian Church³
April 26	Tuesday	7:30 PM	Wetlands Committee	150 Sunset Drive, Brighton
April 30	Saturday	8:30 AM	----- Outing: Walter Kingston Cow Farm (see page 5) -----	----- Meet at First Unitarian Church³
May 7	Saturday	11:15 AM	----- Outing: Harbec Plastics (see page 5) -----	----- Meet at First Unitarian Church³
May 12	Thursday	6:30 PM	----- ExCom meeting ¹ -----	Chestnut Court, St. John's Meadows
May 15	Sunday		Eco-logue Deadline	
May 17	Tuesday	7:30 PM	----- Alternative Energy Committee -----	----- 25 Brook Hill Lane, Apt. E ²
May 21	Saturday	8:00 AM	----- Outing: Spring Guided Birding Tour (see page 5) -----	----- Meet at First Unitarian Church³
May 24	Wednesday	7:30 PM	----- Wetlands Committee -----	----- 150 Sunset Drive, Brighton
July 23	Saturday	1:00 PM	----- Outing: Peacework Organic Farm (see page 5) -----	----- Meet at First Unitarian Church³
Sept. 17	Saturday	TBD	----- Weathersfield Wind Farm (see page 5) -----	----- TBD

¹Open to members. Call Hugh Mitchell at 244-2625.

³220 Winton Rd. South

²Call Mike Dahl, 586-4618, 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.