



eco-logue

Explore, enjoy
and protect
the planet

ROCHESTER REGIONAL GROUP

Volume 35, No. 4
Sept./Oct. 2005

General Meeting The Sierra Club, John Muir, and You

7:15 PM, October 6, 2005, Brighton Town Hall

Over the years, we have conducted many educational programs on environmental issues for the Rochester area. On October 6th at 7:15PM at the Brighton Town Hall, we will step back and explain in more detail who we are and what we do. With a quick summary and a great film, we will answer the question: What is there about the Sierra Club that causes so many people (over 700,000 nationwide) to reach out to their neighbors to "Explore, Enjoy, and Protect the planet."

These are disturbing times. Everyday brings more evidence that our environment is in trouble and little demonstration that our government cares. Our goal is to give you, our

members, an overview of the group, so you can see how ordinary busy people like yourselves can affect change in our local environment. This orientation meeting gives you an opportunity to glimpse the inner workings of our group. You can see where your interests and abilities can fit in. Following the presentation we'll see a film about the club's founder.

Past and future come together in this presentation and the film *Wilderness Idea: John Muir, Gifford Pinchot and the First Great Battle for Wilderness* (1992), directed by Diane Garey and Lawrence R. Hott. The founding movement of the national Sierra Club began with John Muir and his passionate plea that

areas be set aside for nature to thrive unhampered. Another point of view comes from Gifford Pinchot, the first chief of the U.S. Forestry Service. Amazingly, today the focus comes back to the same fight for the Hetch Hetchy Valley in Yosemite National Park that was flooded in 1913 to build a drinking water reservoir for San Francisco.

Join us this October for a relaxing overview and orientation to the most effective environmental organization in the country.

This meeting is free and open to the public. Come to the Brighton Town Hall, 2300 Elmwood Ave. at 7:15 PM, Thursday, October 6.

New Sierra Global Warming & Energy Network

by Bob Siegel

A new national network group within the Sierra Club has recently formed consisting of Global Warming & Energy Chairs from regional groups all over the country. At this time there are approximately 300 members in this group. There is a Newsgroup type list and a monthly conference call which are used to disseminate and discuss Sierra Club national policy on these issues. The group is organized under both Conservation and the Strategies for a Sustainable Planet. On the first call, the Expose Exxon campaign was discussed

(www.exxposeexxon.com) as well as the strategy for deliberation on these issues at the upcoming Sierra Summit (<http://www.sierrasummit2005.org>). The next meeting will discuss the Club's new initiatives for Cities for Climate Protection. Fortunately the battle over energy policy does not take place only in Washington. This group is not limited to energy chairs. Anyone with a keen interest in these issues is welcome to join in. For more information contact Bob Siegel at bobolink@rochester.rr.com

E-mail List Up and Running

Our unofficial Rochester Regional Group's e-mail list is now active. It is easy to subscribe and unsubscribe. We will only contact you for our Group's meetings, programs, and actions. Just add your e-mail to the Google Groups box at <http://newyork.sierraclub.org/rochester/index.html>

New Phone Number

The Rochester Regional Group has a new voice mailbox. Call 585-234-1056 to leave a message. We'll get back to you as soon as we can.

FROM THE CHAIR



by Janice Clements

As I've enjoyed this fabulous summer I can't help but wonder if this heat wave is indicative

of global warming. Over the years scientist have been observing a trend in which the average temperature is rising. Although it is nice to have warm temperatures it does not come without a cost. Warmer temperatures increase melting of mountain glaciers, increase ocean heat content and cause ocean water to expand. Sea levels have risen 4 to 10 inches over the past 100 years. If the warming trend continues it is projected that the sea level will rise another 3 feet in the next 100 years. For every foot of sea-level rise, 50 to 100 feet of beach land is lost. We risk lost glaciers, reduced sea ice and ice

shelves, pest infestations which affect native plants and animals that provide food and resources to many people, heat related illnesses and death, stress on plants, increasing erosion and frequency of landslides, and a disruption to the animal kingdom in regards to natural food sources, shelter, and natural habitat.

At issue is increasing levels of greenhouse gases. Currently, land and oceans absorb half of the carbon dioxide produced by human activity. As heat and drought increase, plants cut back on their intake of carbon dioxide and oceans heat up which creates a struggle to absorb carbon dioxide. Plants cannot absorb these emissions if we continue to destroy our natural resources – strip mining, forest harvesting, and continuation of air and water pollution. Harmful emissions released into the atmosphere can be as small as microwaving food in plastic packaging, to large amounts

such as carbon emissions being pumped into the atmosphere by a variety of transportation modes. We as consumer need to be cognizant of our actions, through what we purchase, how we recycle, what we support.

As you enjoy this great summer, take time to reflect on the environment. Please help to protect the environment by taking action. Contact your legislative representatives – both state and national level – and urge them for tougher environmental protections laws. Get involved in renewable energy solutions. Protest against the destruction of our forest. Insist on responsibility and accountability of corporations to clean up their air and water emissions. Protest for the protection of animals in the wild – polar bears, wolves, grizzly bears, mountain lions – to name a few. Actions, big and small can define consequences. Help build an environment that protects nature, the wild, and the human race.

Rochester & Syracuse Sierra Club Groups Visit Seneca Meadows Landfill

by Hugh Mitchell

Seneca Meadows, the largest landfill in New York (currently 1550 active acres), is seeking to expand by 75 more acres. This requires a new license from DEC. The landfill owner, Innovative Energy Systems (IES), has hired the Nixon Peabody law firm to pursue this difficult objective. The firm invited the Sierra Club to visit the scientifically designed landfill located in Seneca Falls in hopes that we would endorse or speak favorably about the project. Although the Atlantic Chapter policy on solid waste makes such an endorsement unlikely, we were impressed with their efforts to make Seneca Meadows as environmentally benign and non-toxic as possible. Further, IES is using a number of positive and economically useful techniques, such as collecting methane from the rotting wastes. Instead of burning off the gas, the methane is used to drive nine electric generators to meet all the

electricity needs of running the landfill. They are also in the process of doubling this capacity to produce enough electricity to meet the electric needs equivalent to 8,000 to 10,000 homes.



Another interesting environmental development is the used tire chipping facility which can even chop up steel belted radials. The rubber pellets produced are used for landfill liners and in road building.

Questions remain about the Seneca Land fill, such as the plan to move the

appropriately named Black Creek so it may or may not produce new wetlands. Further, there is a question about the adequacy of treating wastewater collected from the hills of garbage.

Currently it is shipped off-site to four different public treatment facilities.

The larger question our group raised concerns the broader issue behind Seneca Meadows which is about our excessively wasteful society. It is amazing that we can produce such a huge mountain of garbage that the landfill could easily be used as a ski center. We are, indeed, a gigantic throw-away society, but the bill for this profligate waste is yet to come due.

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.

Lessons Just Waiting to be Learned

by Frank J. Regan

The Rochester Regional Group was instrumental in the passage of the 48 Hour Neighborhood Notification Law in Monroe County. We and our neighbors can now choose to take precautions on the day a neighboring yard is being sprayed with pesticides. What we learned here in Rochester about working with other groups to get this law passed can help other Sierra Club groups in the remaining NYS counties.

Recent stories on the Rochester Fast Ferry in the *Democrat and Chronicle*—“Whomp of Ferry Waves Stirs Shoreline Concerns” (July 13, 2005) and “Ecological Issues Pursue Fast Ferry” (July 14, 2005, by Cory Ireland) may be instructional to us as well. The Fast Ferry project promises to bolster our local economy, but unfortunately comes with a large environmental price tag. According to the articles,

we are now reaping the consequences of a fast ferry system where various predictable problems have arisen: air pollution, fuel consumption, noise, and “the potential to erode beaches, disturb shoreline habitats, and stir up sediments.” Many of these problems were anticipated (see various articles I wrote in *City* and the *Democrat and Chronicle* at the time the ferry was being developed). My concerns came about at that time because several representatives from far-flung communities that had purchased fast ferry systems contacted me. They tried to inform communities considering this move that a fast ferry system would not be all peaches and cream—there would be consequences.

Now we are watching the development of the Renaissance Square project, far larger in scope than the Fast ferry, hoping that this time environmental concerns are taken into account as such a large project develops.

Though it seems aggravating to those in a hurry to ‘save’ their city, it is far easier to anticipate potential environmental problems and solve them before construction begins, rather than attempt to correct them later.

Finally, by publication time of this article, Cory Ireland, who brought these environmental concerns of the fast ferry to the pages of the *Democrat and Chronicle*, will be gone. Our major print media will have lost its most accomplished environmental reporter. Cory Ireland has been instrumental in the ability of environmental groups like the Sierra Club to monitor our area’s environment. Without his keen eye for important issues on our environment, his objectivity and fairness, and his long-time familiarity with the region, it will not be so easy to connect the dots when the first signs of environmental degradation surface in the future.

Willowpoint DEC Public Hearing Announced

by Dan Grisley, Wetlands Committee Member

As noted in the June/July/August 2005 Eco-logue, “At the Willowpoint townhouse development in Webster, the builder, Mark IV, has made a proposal to the New York Department of Conservation (NYDEC), which, if permitted, will negatively impact the environmentally sensitive steep slopes and coastal area of Irondequoit Bay. The plan would involve widening and paving a narrow dirt road over the slopes from the plateau to the Bay. In addition, a dock extending 270 feet into the Bay having 46 boat slips is proposed.” Currently, storm water from the development is neither correctly retained nor filtered before dumping silt into a class I wetland. In addition, construction practices have resulted in severe erosion both on the slopes and on

the road.

The steep slopes and shoreline in this beautiful area should be preserved in their natural state. They are part of the largely-undeveloped southeast shore of the Bay, one of the last such pristine areas.

A public legislative hearing will be held by the NYDEC on Sept. 12, 2005 at 7pm in the cafeteria/auditorium of the Plank Road North Elementary School, 705 Plank Road (at the corner of Plank and Scribner Roads) in Webster. One can submit oral or written comments to the hearing. It is not necessary to file in advance to speak at the hearing. Lengthy statements should be in writing and summarized for oral presentation. Written comments will be accepted until ten days after the close

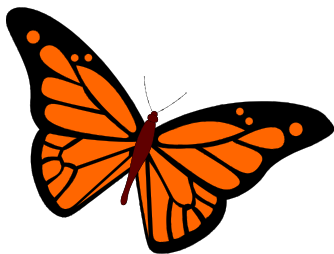
of the hearing. On Sept. 13, 2005, at 10am at the Webster Community Center, 985 Ebner Drive, there may be an Issues Conference depending on the reception of petitions to DEC for party status by Sept. 6, 2005 at 4pm. Further details about the Willowpoint plan and these hearings may be found in the Aug. 17 Webster Herald page 13. For further information contact Robert Shearer, NYDEC, Region 8 Headquarters 6274 East Avon-Lima Road, Avon NY 14414; phone: 585-226-5397; E-mail: risheare@gw.dec.state.ny.us

Only a strong turnout of people speaking in favor of preserving this ecologically valuable area may convince the NYDEC to reject the permitting of this environmentally unfavorable project.

Fall: a Great Time to Raise Butterflies

by Sara Rubin

Now is the time to go out looking for butterfly eggs! They may be hard to spot if you've never seen them. They are quite small, smaller than the head of a pin. But by monitoring



larval host plants, such as milkweeds for the Monarch Butterfly and dill, fennel, Queen Anne's Lace for the Black Swallowtail, and Pearly Everlasting for the American Painted Lady, you may notice a butterfly that is not sipping nectar from flowers, i.e. is not feeding, but is repeatedly flitting around and among the leaves of the plant. Try to note where the butterfly has been and check those leaves for eggs.

(Note: Monarchs light on the plant and lay their eggs on the underside of tender leaves, but Black Swallowtails do not land on the delicate dill or fennel leaves. They lay their eggs on the upper surface by just flitting or hovering near the leaves.) You can get information at www.monarchwatch.com and www.naba.org (North American Butterfly Assn.)

Once you find butterfly eggs, (after

you recover from the excitement) you may want to pick the leaves on which the eggs were laid and bring them into the safety of your house. We usually have several windowsills full of milkweed or fennel or Pearly Everlasting stalks, awaiting the hatching of the tiny caterpillars.

Actually, from my experience, you are doing a great favor to any species you bring inside, because remaining outside subjects them to a multitude of predators and other dangers. Several years ago I wondered about the swarm of wasps circling our Pearly Everlasting plant, until I finally noticed small caterpillars developing in little tent-like structures they had fashioned from the leaves. The wasps were impossible to dissuade, even with elaborate netting. They got through every barrier and sucked the insides from every little caterpillar, leaving only shriveled furry husks. The one way to assure that a good proportion of eggs will make it to maturity is to bring them into a protected situation.

So various caterpillars enjoy their larval foods in our own kitchen and grow until they reach their final instar and begin to wander, looking for a surface on which to form their chrysalises. At this point you will need a net or cage of some kind to keep them contained while they search, or you may

be surprised in 10 days or so by having butterflies hatch out from underneath your table or from behind your window drapes.

We presently have 17 Black Swallowtail and 29 Monarch chrysalises in a screen house in the side yard. The Swallowtails will be released when they hatch, but I am planning to raise one more generation of Monarchs. The pupas we now have will hatch into beautiful Monarch adults, and they will mate and lay eggs on the milkweed growing in the screen house. This second generation will emerge by the end of September.

Then, a few days after they hatch and gain strength, we will finally release them, and watch them zigzag into the fall blue sky, wishing them warm breezes



and plenty of wildflowers as they set out southward toward Mexico.

Then, quickly into the house, to make notes on where to plant more milkweed and fennel for next summer's butterflies.

Keep Your Membership Current

by Cecelia Crone, Membership Chairperson

Membership to the Sierra Club should be renewed annually. The Sierra Club depends on membership dues to help to preserve irreplaceable wildlands, save endangered and threatened wildlife, and protect this fragile environment we call home.

Please do not become frustrated if you are getting multiple new member

applications. The national Sierra Club organization is addressing a glitch that has been doing this.

A quick and efficient way to renew your membership is on the Club website at

<https://ww2.sierraclub.org/membership/renewal/>

If you want to join the Sierra Club, a

way that provides more help to our local group is to download the membership application from our local website,

<http://newyork.sierraclub.org/rochester/pdf/506%20Brochure.pdf> print it, fill it out, and mail it.

Or, you can write us and we will send you one of our local applications.

20th Annual
International Coastal Clean-up
8:30 AM, Saturday, Sept. 17

Again Sierra Club Rochester Regional Group will be participating in the environmental effort to pick up trash along our own waterways. This effort is lead by the Water Education Collaborative, housed at the Rochester Museum and Science Center. Last year 2,475 people participated in the Great Lakes region of 11 counties, cleaned 76 sites, about 122.5 miles traversed. This project is a great way to actually do something instead of talking about it. Many hands make light work. *The event will take place rain or shine, so have rain gear handy.*

You can volunteer to work in the morning **(8:30 to 11:30)** at 8 selected locations on Lake Ontario shoreline and Genesee River banks. *Please register so the right amount of supplies and drinks will get to each location.* You can register on-line with the Water Education Collaborative at : www.thewec.org or call Noreen Mazurowski at 271-4552 ext 324. Laura Arney will also be heading a Sierra Club-specific group working along the Genesee River. To join this group for the clean-up day, call Laura at 334-8548.

Lake Ontario Water Levels

by Sara Rubin

Interest in freshwater is increasing worldwide as people begin to realize that already there is not enough clean water for all those who need it. There is much discussion focusing on the Great Lakes, as they hold a large proportion of the world's freshwater. The IJC (International Joint Commission), the Great Lakes Regional Collaborative, and Annex 2001 are all studying ways to regulate and protect Great Lakes waters. Scientists and environmentalists are putting forth ideas on how to best safeguard the Lakes.

One principle often cited is the necessity of retaining the flushing and cleansing **flood pulse action** in natural bodies of water, which can be likened to "inhaling and exhaling." Studies have shown that since the 1960's, when the flood pulse action of Lake Ontario was severely reduced, plant and animal populations became static, and then suffered the declines we see today.

Re-establishing the natural flood pulse cycle on Lake Ontario would allow periods, usually several years, of high water levels followed by a period of low water levels. The low water level, when the lake "exhales," provides opportunity for a whole range of

shoreline wetland plants in areas that otherwise would be dominated by only cattails. With several years of decreased water levels cattails die back and other plants of the drier "wetland meadow" grow. The increased biodiversity of plants leads to increased biodiversity of animals and to rejuvenation and health of the whole ecosystem.

It has also been suggested that periods of low water can actually help rebuild eroded shoreline. Periods of low water expose more beach and allow the wind to drive the sand further inland, thus rebuilding the shoreline for when water levels again rise. It seems possible that shorelines could rebuild in many places on Lake Ontario if the flood pulse cycle is once again allowed to occur.

Here in the various Lake Ontario studies we do have some control. We can influence policy makers to re-establish the natural water cycle rhythm and restore the ecosystem to more vibrant health. This would demonstrate responsible stewardship of our world-class resource, and would ultimately benefit the entire region, and even, perhaps, the whole country, in ways we probably don't even yet realize.

Biking the Erie Canal Trail

by Laura Arney

Did you see the listings of all the great places the Sierra Club goes for hiking, biking, paddling, etc. in the January issue of Sierra magazine? Biking along the Erie Canal trail for a week was one choice this year. Some members from our executive committee were on hand to welcome the group when they came through. Frank Regan, a bike enthusiast, rode out to Albion to meet the ten cyclists and lead them



through the construction sections to our rendezvous point. Hugh Mitchell talked to the group about our successes in building a better environment in the Rochester area. Rich DeSarra local biking organizer discussed biking opportunities in the region. Laura Arney co-ordinated a take-out dinner for 15 people. Hosting the gathering was all about communicating with the wider Sierra Club and putting Rochester NY on the map.

Aviary Wildlife Art

Quality renditions of wild birds in their natural habitat

Cheryl Birmingham is providing quality fine art with emphasis on aviary wildlife in local habitats. Her artwork media presently includes oil paintings, giclee prints, and feather-edged greeting cards. Samples can be viewed at The Frame Shop of Henrietta, Town Line Plaza, 3047 West Henrietta Road, and at www.cherylbirmingham.com.

For more information call Cheryl at 585-742-2463.

ADVERTISEMENT

CALENDAR

Sept. 8	Thursday	6:30 PM	----- ExCom meeting ¹ -----	Brighton Library, 2300 Elmwood Ave. ⁶
Sept. 17	Saturday	8:30 AM	Coastal Cleanup (see page 3)	Call Laura Arney for information
Sept. 20	Tuesday	7:30 PM	----- Alternative Energy Committee -----	25 Brook Hill Lane, Apt. E ^{4,5}
Sept. 27	Tuesday	7:30 PM	Wetlands Committee	150 Sunset Drive, Brighton ³
Sept. 27	Tuesday	7:00 PM	----- Great Lakes Committee meeting -----	Brighton Library, 2300 Elmwood Ave. ⁶
Oct. 6	Thursday	7:15 PM	General Meeting: The Sierra Club, John Muir and You (see Page 1)	Brighton Town Hall²
Oct. 13	Thursday	6:30 PM	----- ExCom meeting ¹ -----	Brighton Library, 2300 Elmwood Ave. ⁶
Oct. 16	Sunday		Eco-logue Deadline	
Oct. 18	Tuesday	7:30 PM	----- Alternative Energy Committee -----	25 Brook Hill Lane, Apt. E ^{4,5}
Oct. 25	Tuesday	7:00 PM	Great Lakes Committee meeting	Brighton Library, 2300 Elmwood Ave. ⁶
Oct. 25	Tuesday	7:30 PM	----- Wetlands Committee -----	150 Sunset Drive, Brighton ³

¹Open to members. Call 234-1056

²2300 Elmwood Ave.

³Call Sara at 442-6890 to confirm

⁴Call Bob at 256-3846 to confirm date

⁵Call Michael Dahl, 586-4618 for directions

⁶In large public room off of magazine room

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 585-234-1056 for Sierra Club voice mail.