

Invite birds and butterflies into your home garden!

Environmental Landscaping: Restoring the Ecology of Our Own Backyards

Program & Talk, February 16, 2006, 7:00 to 9:00 PM
Brighton Town Hall auditorium

Can your yard become a sanctuary for birds and butterflies? Would you like to convert a traditional yard to a wildlife habitat? Would you like to “give back” to the earth some of what has been taken away?

Our program will feature techniques to transform your garden into a more natural environment. Late winter is a perfect time for planning your spring and summer garden. Even a modest beginning will be rewarded.

A National Wildlife Federation video “Backyard Wildlife Habitat” will explain how habitats have been established by individual homeowners, by schools and by large corporations. Sara Rubin, our wetlands co-chairperson and habitat gardener, will speak about her small certified Backyard Habitat, and will give an illustrated presentation on what is needed for successful habitat,



such as food, water, cover, rock, wood, brush piles and native plants. Specific information such as *the very best* plants to attract songbirds, hummingbirds, butterflies, amphibians and other animals will be discussed.

Whether you have sandy soil or clay, sun or shade, suggestions for plantings abound. Small garden ponds draw frogs breeding in the spring, and provide drinking water for birds in the summer.

Do you like to see butterflies in your garden? Would you even like to *raise butterflies*? With the proper larval and nectar food plantings you can!

And place-based plantings, more native shrubs, trees and herbs, can usher in a new era of less pesticide and herbicide use.

Laura Arney will introduce a new concept from Michigan: “Rain Gardens.” By taking advantage of a depression in the yard or

constructing a low area, these rain gardens, planted with native wetland plants, help recharge the ground water, reduce run-off into storm drains, and become valuable habitat themselves.

Sources for native plants, titles of helpful books and publications and other information will be available.

This meeting is free and open to the public.

Recycling Progress

by Mike Seager

On November 10, a dozen people from the Sierra Club toured the Monroe County Recycling Center. It was a very interesting tour and we peppered Pat Collins, the county’s environmental engineer, with questions throughout the session. Here are some of the interesting things we learned:

- The recycling program has to pay for itself. Waste haulers get paid to take recyclable material to the center. The

county hires a contractor to run the facility, and gets a percentage of the proceeds from selling recycled material. The county makes about one dollar for each ton of material recycled, and the center handles 6000-7000 tons of material each month.

- Most homes and large businesses do a good job of separating recyclable material from trash. Most small businesses (continued on page 3)

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>

FROM THE CHAIR



A Look Back at 2005
by Janice Clements

The year 2005 was a tumultuous time for environmentalists. At the national level one of the biggest fights was to stop drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. The Bush Administration included Arctic drilling in energy, budget and defense bills. Environmentalists prevailed saying a loud and resounding NO! A recent report from the U.S. Department of Energy's own Energy Information Administration (EIA) estimates that even 20 years down the road, when Arctic Refuge oil would be at or near peak production, gas prices would only be affected by about a penny per gallon. The United States sits on just 3 % of the world's known petroleum reserves. Government estimates indicate that there is less than a year's supply of oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, and

even the oil industry admits it would take 10 years to make it to US markets. One has to ask what is the point in destroying a natural beauty for such a shortsighted return on investment.

In September 2005 Sierra Club members throughout the U.S. gathered in San Francisco for the first annual Summit Meeting. The eight hundred delegates chose "Building a New Energy Future" as the Club's top priority for the next five years. Next in favor was "Building Vibrant, Healthy Communities," "Defending Public Lands/Public Waters," and "Protecting People and the Planet." With more than 750,000 members – your friends and neighbors – it is possible to successfully achieve these goals. But it takes more than goals. It takes time, effort, money, and human energy. Not only at the national level but also at the State and Local level.

The work of the Sierra Club is successfully achieved due to the commitment of national, state, and local volunteers. Are you interested in getting

involved? Check out our local web site at <http://newyork.sierraclub.org/rochester/>. Take part in one of the many committees the local chapter has to offer. There is a lot of work to do in 2006. Help make the voice of the environmentalist heard, and turn that voice into action.

Election Biographies

Biographies of all current officers may be found in the June/July/August eco-logue issue (available on our web site). Below are biographies of two candidates not currently officers.

The center of **Nancy Chalker-Tennant's** world has always been the Great Lakes. She has lived in Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Erie and Rochester. And now her center also includes the Finger Lakes. Her passion is making art using images and words. Along the way she looks deeply into the natural world, both admiring and questioning the patterns that can be found there, and how human activity affects our environment. In 2004 Janet Kauffman and she were recipients of a grant from Eastern Michigan University to make a booklet named *Another Account: The Life of a Stream*, which weaves together poetry, art, and science in the study of

a stream in Hudson, Michigan. She has taught art at several local colleges, and runs Chalker Editions, which produces handmade books.

Janet MacLeod works as a social scientist for the college of NTID at RIT, and also has experience doing research in hospital pediatric settings. Recent threats to Federal and State support for environmental preservation programs as well as persistent efforts to open up new domestic sites for oil drilling, have prompted her to become more actively involved in the Sierra Club. This past year her time was spent working with the Great Lakes Preservation Committee, and attending the Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter's environmental education training program in Utica, NY. She hopes to make a contribution to the club's continuing efforts.

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.

BALLOT

Sierra Club, Rochester Regional Group
January 2006

The proposed slate of officers for 2006 & 2007 is listed below. Officers elected last year and serving through the end of 2006 are: Hugh Mitchell, Deb Mura-tore, Frank Regan, David Ruekberg. Use the blanks for write-in candidates.

Member of Executive Committee

2-year term (2006-2007)

Vote for six

- Laura Arney
- Nancy Chalker-Tennant*
- Janet MacLeod*
- Ray Nelson
- Bob Siegel
- Dina Stein[†]
- _____
- _____

Member of Executive Committee

1-year term (2006)

Vote for two

- Sara Rubin
- Cecelia Crone
- _____
- _____

*Currently not an officer; see bios to the left.

[†]Current secretary.

For bios of all current officers, see the June/July/August issue of eco-logue (available on our web site).

PLEASE VOTE!

Cut out ballot, and mail by Feb. 16 to:
Sierra Club
P.O. Box 39516
Rochester, NY 14604-9516

Watering Sprawl

New Webster Water Treatment Plant Unnecessary

by Hugh Mitchell

A new Sierra Club “Green Paper,” written by Jack Bradigan Spula and funded by the Atlantic Chapter of the Sierra Club, reveals that the huge new water treatment plant in Webster, proposed by the Monroe County Water Authority (MCWA), is an extremely expensive and unnecessary development which will contribute significantly to sprawl in the Monroe - Finger Lakes region. This study, which will soon be available to members and later to the public, is written in “news style.” It sets the proposed project in a larger context and includes a number of interviews with key actors knowledgeable about the Webster plant development. Despite the fact that contracts on the plant are expected soon, there has been limited public information and no public debate on the merits of the project.

The paper, titled *Watering Sprawl*, is essentially a new chapter adding to our 2000 study *Sprawl Follows the Pipes* in which we demonstrated that beside providing clean, reasonably affordable water to the Monroe region, the MCWA is also a development agency and, as such, they significantly contribute to sprawl in Monroe County. Of course sprawl depends on infrastructure development and the potable water pipes provided by the Authority are basic to all new

development. Although they deny that new pipes actually contribute to sprawl, a close look at the behind the scenes operations of MCWA reveals that they have never turned down an application for water development and they have been one of the most aggressively expanding water authorities in New York State.

The new Webster plant will initially be constructed to provide 50 million gallons per day (mgd), but plans call for it eventually be able to provide 200 mgd, which is a huge overcapacity for this very slowly growing area. The paper quotes both the Authority and Ed Doherty, recent director of City Environmental Services, as being in agreement that water use by residential customers in the city and country has dropped 15% or more in the last 20 years. When the Authority was asked, “Why do we need a \$150 million dollar new Webster water treatment plant?” then Director Jim Smith argued that terrorists might attack our water supplies and he said that the water pipes are vulnerable to earthquakes. Considering this weak reply, Sierra Club would like to ask, “What is the real reason for a new water treatment plant in Webster?”

Although it is difficult, if not impossible to arrive at the “real politic” of unnecessary water

infrastructure development, it is safe to look at the financial gains such development offers the construction, real estate and political establishments of the County. According to one confidential source close to MCWA, “If the money is there, they will build.”

I have been a watchdog observing the chummy relationship between the Board of Directors of MCWA and the real estate, construction, development and government interests they represent. It seems to me citizens need to look very closely at the monopolistic relationship between poorly planned regional development and the aggressive growth water infrastructure. As Deep Throat said, “Follow the money.”

We hope this new Sierra Club study, *Watering Sprawl*, will precipitate more citizen involvement and perhaps lead local governments to take a second look at the unnecessary Webster water treatment plant. One other thing is clear, we need to build a strong Sierra Club Water Committee to follow MCWA’s many development schemes. Please feel free to call me if water and sprawl issues interest you. 244-2625.

Recycling (continued from page 1) do not, and according to Collins, “Schools are the worst.” About 40% of the material that goes to landfills is recyclable paper.

- Recycled plastic bottles can’t be re-used for food or drink. #1 plastic is used to make fleece clothing and carpeting; #2 goes into things like plastic chairs and lumber. Numbers 1

and 2 together comprise about 80% of household plastic waste. There is no market for the other types of plastics, and separating them would be labor-intensive, so the county program does not collect them.

- Recycling works: New York State used to have about 280 landfills. Today there are only about 28.

Volunteer Database

Join our Volunteer Database [http://newyork.sierraclub.org/rochester/helping_out.htm]. You can sign up for specific projects or help on one of our Committees. Just send an E-mail to: FrankRegan@RochesterEnvironment.com or call our Sierra Club Voice Box at 585-234-1056, or print out the online form and send it to: Rochester Regional Group P.O. Box 39516, Rochester, NY 14604-9516.

CALENDAR

Feb. 2	Thursday	6:30 PM	ExCom meeting ¹	Brighton Library ²
Feb. 14	Tuesday	7:30 PM	Alternative Energy Committee	149 Dartmouth St., Apt. D ⁴
Feb. 16	Thursday	7:00 PM	General Meeting: Environmental Landscaping (see page 1)	Brighton Town Hall²
Feb. 23	Thursday	7:30 PM	Wetlands Committee	150 Sunset Drive, Brighton ³
Feb. 28	Tuesday	7:00 PM	Great Lakes Committee meeting	Brighton Library ²
Mar. 9	Thursday	6:30 PM	ExCom meeting ¹	Brighton Library ²
Mar. 14	Tuesday	7:30 PM	Alternative Energy Committee	149 Dartmouth St., Apt. D ⁴
Mar. 23	Thursday	7:30 PM	Wetlands Committee	150 Sunset Drive, Brighton ³
Mar. 28	Tuesday	7:00 PM	Great Lakes Committee meeting	Brighton Library ²

¹Open to members. Call 234-1056

²2300 Elmwood Ave.

³Call Sara at 442-6890 or Dan at 671-5388 to confirm

⁴Call Bob at 576-8144 to confirm

⁵220 Winton Rd. South

⁶Call Wayne Howard at 359-0482 to confirm date

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.

Have a laptop computer that's just gathering dust?

The Atlantic Chapter is requesting that Treasurers submit their yearly tax reports in Quicken. Deb Muratore's computer does not have enough memory to run Quicken. Would you like to donate your old laptop to her? It will need to have a writable CD drive or a USB Port. Please call her at 385-9743 to discuss. Thanks.