



eco-logue

Explore, enjoy
and protect
the planet

ROCHESTER REGIONAL GROUP

Volume 38, No. 2
April/May 2008

SIERRA CLUB TENTH ANNUAL ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM

Transportation Alternatives for Rochester A Vision for the Future

6:00pm– 9:30pm, Thursday, April 17th

First Unitarian Church, 220 S. Winton Rd, Rochester, N.Y.

*A free, public event. 30 organizations. Booths open at 6pm, program starts at 7:15pm.
This event is jointly sponsored by the First Unitarian Church Environmental Committee*

Did you know that U.S. transportation is responsible for approximately 30% of all U.S. CO₂ carbon released to the atmosphere? Considering this major contribution to global warming, plus the fact of rising fuel costs, shrinking oil supplies, rising infrastructure and environmental costs, the future of transportation is crucial for both environmentalists and taxpayers. As a lead-up to Earth Day 2008 we will hold our 10th annual Environmental Forum titled Transportation Alternatives for Rochester: A Vision for the Future. The Forum will consist of several brief addresses and a panel discussion which will address written questions from the audience. As in prior years the Forum is presented in conjunction with the First Unitarian Church Environmental Committee.

At this 10th annual event we will hear how Rochester's transportation planners are considering a leaner greener future. Our plan is to have the panel moderated by RIT Professor **James Winebrake**, Chair of the Department of Public Policy and director of the Energy

Partnership Program. **Richard Perrin**, Executive Director of the Genesee Transportation Council (GTC) will tell about the TIP plan, which is a \$517million dollar federal and state initiative planning a "staged, multi-year program" of transportation projects including bicycle and pedestrian paths. The GTC is responsible for transportation policy, planning and investment decisions for our nine county region. They make recommendations on millions of dollars of transportation costs.

Also on the panel will be **David Keefe** and **John Thomas**. David is a Professor of Public Administration at SUNY-Brockport involved with the Genesee Regional Clean Communities. This committee recently received a five million dollar government grant which he will tell us about. John Thomas is Senior Engineer with the City of Rochester working as Transportation Specialist planning Rochester's transportation future. He will address such topics as multi-use trails, air quality, green fueling stations, and traffic calming.

As in the past the Environmental Forum will be a "strong draw" for environmental and government groups from around the region. We expect there will be up to 30 groups who display their materials. Booths will be open beginning at 6pm. The public will have a good opportunity to meet, discuss, and learn first-hand about the regional environmental movement. This is also a good chance for networking.

For more information about the forum, go to our Sierra Club web site at http://newyork.sierraclub.org/rochester/10th_forum.htm this web site includes a 5-minute interview of Hugh Mitchell by Linda IsaacsonFedele. More information about the local Sierra Club Group can be found at our new Rochester Sierra Club Blog <http://rochestersierraclubblog.blogspot.com/>.

Mark your calendars now for the free 10th annual Environmental Forum at the First Unitarian Church, 220 Winton Rd. South, to be held Thursday, April 17th. Doors open to public at 6pm. The program will start at 7:15pm.

From the Chair



Tree Planting
Partnership
by Deborah Muratore

Spring is almost here so please mark your calendars for Saturday May 17th at 9:00am for a tree planting. This event is co-sponsored by the City of Rochester's Environmental Services Department - Forestry, the Sojourner House and the Sierra Club. The City of Rochester will donate (3-5) trees and dig the holes. Volunteers (this means you) will need to bring shovels & gloves. We will put the trees in the holes, fill in with dirt and water.

This is the first of an annual event to help reduce our carbon footprint. Please join us at the Sojourner House, 30 Millbank St. at 9:00am on May 17th. (Millbank St. runs north from Brooks Ave. and is the third street west of Genesee St.)

Sojourner House was initiated by Nancy Dean a former active leader in the Sierra Club. She was chairperson of the Rochester Regional Group in 1990. Nancy recognized that there was no place for women in transition to go, and she was instrumental in forming Sojourner House to meet that need.

Go Green Series

by Deborah Muratore

Katrina Irwin, News 8 Anchor, met with the Ex-com recently. She would like the Sierra Club to work with her in developing some of her stories. The Go Green stories can be seen on the web at: <http://rochesterhomepage.net/content/green> They also air on TV every Thursday at 6pm on "News 8 Now" and at 10pm on "Fox First at 10."

If you have any suggestions, connect to Katrina at kirwin@rochesterhomepage.net or call her at 224-8888 x715.

Seeking Volunteers Who Want to Have Fun

by Linda Isaacson Fedele

Earth Day is just around the corner. It will kick off a season full of local festivals and fairs. The Sierra Club will have a table set up at these family events where we will talk informally with adults and/or kids of all ages about our local activities and teach them some environmental basics. So far, we will have tables at events on April 16th at RIT, May 3rd at the Zoo, and May 4th at the Energy Fair in Brighton. We hope to add more as the season progresses.

Volunteers will team up with other active members to meet and greet the public and pass out literature. Each shift will be about 2-3 hours. No experience or knowledge of specific environmental issues is necessary. If you are outgoing, have a friendly smile and some energy, and enjoy talking with kids and grown-ups alike, please give us a call. You'll

No experience or knowledge of specific environmental issues is necessary.

have an opportunity to learn about other environmental organizations and to enjoy the festival or fair on your own before and/or after your volunteer time.

We need you!

We also need volunteers to develop an educational display to teach kids of all ages about renewable sources of energy. If you are an educator, have a little artistic talent, or if your forte is coming up with creative ideas, please give us a call. We'd like to put together a small team to work on developing this teaching tool that can then be used at multiple events. It needs to be completed by the beginning of May.

Call 234-1056.

Looking For a Committed Individual

by Linda Isaacson Fedele

The Rochester Regional Group is seeking an energetic individual to fill the position of Political Chair. Do you have an interest in working to improve our environment through political engagement? Do you believe that not only must individuals minimize our footprints upon the earth, but that government must encourage citizens and industry, through legislation, to protect our environment? Do you want to help ensure that true environmental advocates are elected in November?

As Political Chair, you must be or become a Sierra Club member. You will work with our local active members and the Executive Committee. You will recruit volunteers interested in political activities, and work with the Chapter Political Chair (state-wide) to assemble information on candidates for office and make decisions regarding endorsements. You will work with local representatives from all political parties. Some training is available, and our experienced members can help to mentor you. If you are interested in applying, or are even just a little bit curious, please call us at 234-1056.

Book Study Group

by Nancy Chalker-Tennant

Everyone is welcome to join us. The next meeting is April 14, 7:00 - 8:30 pm, at the Friends Meeting House, corner of Scio and Charlotte Streets. We will study *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson in order to think about how much has or has not changed since Rachel's time.

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 and available at \$10 per year to others.

Return of the Bald Eagle, Follow up

by Deborah Muratore

There were over 200 people who attended this presentation. For those of you who missed it - here's some of the highlights. We will ask Mike for another visit next year.

New York's bald eagle restoration program began meagerly in 1976 with the release of two young eagles obtained from the state of Wisconsin. Between that fledgling effort and 1988 a total of 198 eagles were released to the skies over New York. Throughout the course of the release program young birds were obtained from Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota, Alaska and a few captive breeding locations. A total of four locations were utilized across the state with the hope of reestablishing a viable bald eagle population. The theory behind the "hacking" process was that young birds would associate the areas where they were released as home and might return there when they matured four to five years later. Although the process was slow in yielding results, once the birds released reached suitable numbers at a mature level the nesting population in New York really began to soar. By 2007 the estimated number of eagle territories in New York has reached 148. Although not all of those sites were active during the 2007 season at least 116 were and they produced a total of 153 young eaglets. Almost 5 times the maximum number of birds released during the busiest of seasons during the hacking program.

At present, increases in eagle numbers are expected to continue. New territories have already been identified early in the 2008 nesting season with literally no end in sight. The bald eagle is officially listed as a threatened species on the New

York State endangered species list and while its future looks much brighter than it did just a few years ago, continued monitoring of the individual nest sites will persist until the species is no longer considered to be at risk.

If you come across a pair of nesting bald eagles it is recommended that you keep your distance because the birds are usually sensitive to human disturbance. It is also recommended that you report your sighting to the nearest DEC office. In Region 8, those offices are in Avon (585-226-5380) and Bath (607-776-2165) It is also suggested that you contact Mike Allen, who is the regional bald eagle monitor at 585-526-6596. <http://www.dec.ny.gov/>

Auburn Trail Extension

by Nancy Chalker-Tennant

The Coalition to save the Railroad Mills Trail Special Environmental Area in Victor (approx. 1.5 miles on the Auburn Trail) is working to protect this delicate trail segment. The coalition includes the Sierra Club of Rochester, the Burroughs Audubon Nature Club, the Butterfly Club, the Rochester Birding Association, and the Genesee Valley Audubon Club. This coalition recommends trail development that will highlight the environmental significance of the area with as little impact as possible. We recommend that the existing short section of the trail be widened to no more than three feet (to be ADA compliant) while concurrently developing the area as a model for environmental education and interpretation. [see page 5 for an opportunity to see this trail first hand.]

Hemlock/Canadice Update

by Hugh Mitchell

Last year at this time Sierra Club ran a very successful Environmental Forum addressing the future of the city-owned natural lands around Hemlock/Canadice Lakes. This initiated and contributed to a community-wide effort to facilitate the sale of the rare 7,200 acre watershed of "Our Little Lakes" to New York State. In a win-win situation it is proposed that the State buy the lands from the City and preserve them in perpetuity while providing the city with much needed revenue.

Such a sale is more complex than would appear and is also moving more slowly than we like. Part of the complexity is that the future of the whole City water system is under discussion with the Monroe County Water Authority. Another complexity is the economic downturn which has hampered NYS revenues. The Environmental Protection Fund, which had been identified as the most likely source of state monies to purchase the lands has not received the expected 2008 revenues.

Currently both the City and States are in the final stages of completing separate land value assessments which are expected to be complete and released to the public in March. This should make it possible to start serious discussions on the future of the watershed lands. In the mean time, the 20 year water sharing agreement between the City and Monroe County Water Authority which was set to expire this April has been extended for one year while the City and MCWA continue their regular round of talks.

Sierra Club recommends that all individuals and groups interested in the preservation of Hemlock/Canadice lands continue to express our keen interest in the preservation of these wonderful assets. The city, county and state representatives all need to hear from environmentalists that we expect preservation of Hemlock/Canadice lands forever into the future.

Deforestation

by Mike Seager

Peter Debes's essay, "The Next Great Wave of Deforestation?" in the Feb/March 2008 eco-logue raises some valid concerns but also omits some important aspects of a very complex issue. As a member of both the Sierra Club and the New York Forest Owners' Association (NYFOA), I want to offer these thoughts to advance the conversation on a topic that is important to all of us.

I agree with Debes that conversion of land from scrub or forest to the production of crops has a detrimental effect on wildlife habitat. Row crops such as corn often impose additional environmental costs in topsoil erosion and pesticide pollution. I also agree that any serious attempt to reduce global warming must focus on reducing energy consumption. I believe this point is often overlooked in the enthusiasm for finding a solution to environmental problems without affecting a lifestyle characterized by profligate energy consumption.

However, limiting opportunities to use forest products as part of a comprehensive energy strategy imposes unnecessary restrictions and can have detrimental environmental effects as well.

A well-managed woodlot can yield a variety of products – firewood, timber, raw material for cellulosic ethanol – and improve the health of the forest and the quality of wildlife habitat at the same time. Cutting firewood, for example, does not necessarily mean cutting large and/or dead trees; as Debes notes, such

trees are important aspects of a healthy forest ecosystem. Cutting firewood can mean reducing invasive species such as Russian olive or buckthorn, or over-represented species such as beech or hop hornbeam, or trees that are diseased can be suppressed so healthier trees have less competition. The key here is that the woodlot be well-managed;



the owner should have a vision for the woodlot, and a plan to reach that vision. Firewood production, timber harvesting, and other activities should be done to move toward that vision. It is possible to have a win-win situation, where the woodlot provides economic and other benefits to the owner, to the environment and to society in general,

but it takes care and planning, not to mention work.

Limiting opportunities to get some financial benefit from woodland can have detrimental environmental effects, especially in view of New York's property tax levels. Many landowners need some economic benefit from their land to justify owning it. The economic benefit might be in the form of cash from selling timber or some other forest crop, or in savings of heating costs by producing firewood. Precluding such benefits encourages landowners to sell their woodlots, which in turn results in many cases in increased parcelization, habitat fragmentation, conversion of rural land to residential development, and the ensuing suburban sprawl. Sprawl, of course, means both habitat destruction and increased energy consumption. Government policies should encourage responsible woodlot management, rather than restricting the use of forest products.

Sound woodlot management practices make it possible to preserve forested land, improve its wildlife value, and derive wood products at the same time. Both NYFOA and the Sierra Club have a stake in encouraging such enlightened woodlot management and government policies that promote it.

NYFOA has frequent events to highlight various forest management topics. Almost all of them are free and open to the public, and I encourage other Sierra Club members to attend some. Event listings can be found at www.nyfoa.org.

A New Blog

by Frank Regan

Our group now has a blog: <http://rochestersierraclubblog.blogspot.com/> -- The purpose of this blog is to provide information and enhance both communication and participation of Sierra Club members and concerned

citizens in preserving our environment. Surf over and makes some comments or begin a dialogue about a new environmental issue.

What is a blog? <http://www.sierraclub.org/policy/blogs/>

**If you haven't already done it
DO IT NOW**

Sign up for our e-mail list. It comes out weekly and it's full of news and events for our group.
http://newyork.sierraclub.org/rochester/e-mail_list.htm

Sierra Club Outings - Spring, 2008

All of these outing groups will gather at the parking lot of the Unitarian Church at 220 South Winton Road in Rochester, unless stated otherwise in the outing description. Walks range from 1½ to 4 miles. None are difficult.



The Auburn Trail

April 12 at 9:30 AM

This historical hiking area, near Victor, is now an objective for environmental protection by the Sierra Club. Led by Nancy Chalker-Tennant and Howard Camp, we will be exploring this currently endangered area. We will have a naturalist with us to help sensitize us to the natural environment of the trail surroundings.

Bare Hill

May 17 at 9:30

Led by Steve Lewendowski, an expert on the region, we'll traverse this beautiful hill overlooking Canandaigua Lake. It is fabled to be the birthplace of the Seneca Nation. **Bring a lunch.**

Corbett's Glen Nature Park

May 31 at 10:00 AM

A beautiful valley very close to Rochester, often overlooked even by near neighbor's. We will see a waterfall and rapids and hear about the history. Led by Jean Baric, we will meet at 10:00 am at the trailhead (well marked) on the south side of Penfield Rd., located a few hundred yards east of I490.

The Project HOUSE

The Project HOUSE website (Household Opportunity to Upgrade & Save the Environment), designed by Margie Campaigne of the Sierra Energy & Climate Committee, has won the December '07 Environmental Site of the Month Award from Frank Regan's Rochester, NY Environment blogspot. Margie conceived Project HOUSE in the seventies as a way for households to become aware of and reduce their use of energy and resources. It was a typewritten document. Upon joining the energy committee, she was inspired to make Project HOUSE 21st century-friendly. Voila www.Project-HOUSE.us

The following is excerpted from Frank's website:



**Environmental Site of the Month
December, 2007**



ROCHESTER REGIONAL GROUP
OF THE SIERRA CLUB
P.O. Box 39516
ROCHESTER, NY 14604-9516

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CALENDAR

April 1	Tuesday	6:30 PM	ExCom meeting ¹	Harro East, suite 600
April 12	Saturday	9:30 AM	Outing, The Auburn Trail (see page 5)	First Unitarian Church parking lot⁴
April 14	Monday	7:00 PM	Book Study Group	Friends Meeting House ⁵
April 15	Tuesday	7:00 PM	Global Warming and Energy Committee	Saint Thomas Episcopal Church ³
April 15	Tuesday	7:30 PM	Wetlands Committee	150 Sunset Drive, Brighton ⁷
April 17	Thursday	6:00 PM	Environmental Forum (see page 1)	First Unitarian Church⁴
April 22	Tuesday	7:00 PM	Great Lakes Committee	Brighton Library ²
May 6	Tuesday	6:30 PM	ExCom meeting ¹	Harro East, suite 600
May 11	Sunday		eco-logue deadline	
May 17	Saturday	9:00 AM	Tree Planting (see article page 2)	Sojourner House⁶
May 17	Saturday	9:30 AM	Outing, Bare Hill (see page 5)	First Unitarian Church parking lot⁴
May 20	Tuesday	7:00 PM	Global Warming and Energy Committee	Saint Thomas Episcopal Church ³
May 20	Tuesday	7:30 PM	Wetlands Committee	150 Sunset Drive, Brighton ⁷
May 27	Tuesday	7:00 PM	Great Lakes Committee	Brighton Library ²
May 31	Saturday	9:30 AM	Outing, Corbett's Glen (see page 5)	see page 5 for meeting place

¹Open to members. Call 234-1056

³2000 Highland Ave. (at corner of S. Winton Rd.)

⁵84 Scio Street

⁷Call Sara at 442-6890 for information

²2300 Elmwood Ave.

⁴220 Winton Road South

⁶30 Millbank St.

Visit our web site at <http://newyork.sierraclub.org/rochester>

Check out our blog: <http://www.sierraclub.org/policy/blogs/>

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.