

The Lookout

Newsletter of the Sierra Club Huron Valley

APRIL 2022

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Welcome to Spring: Thoughts from the Chair

Jason Frenzel, HVG Executive Committee Chair

As I write this article, a gentle, quiet rain is helping usher in spring. My partner and I are working up plans for the gardens, and I'm boiling maple sap for our second batch of syrup. It feels like it was a long winter. And, at the same time, it also went by seemingly quickly. As I age, time goes by more readily, but I'm prone to blame the pandemic this year.

Spring, aging, and the gifts of nature cause me to reflect on the ever evolving and non-permanence of our reality. As William says in his article on page 5, "the very essence of life is change and relationships change all the same." You'll see this reflected in this edition of The Lookout – HVG's efforts and leadership team are also evolving.

In some ways we remain

the same – we are back to political advocacy focused on the midterm elections and our outings continue to engage many folks. Change must also come.

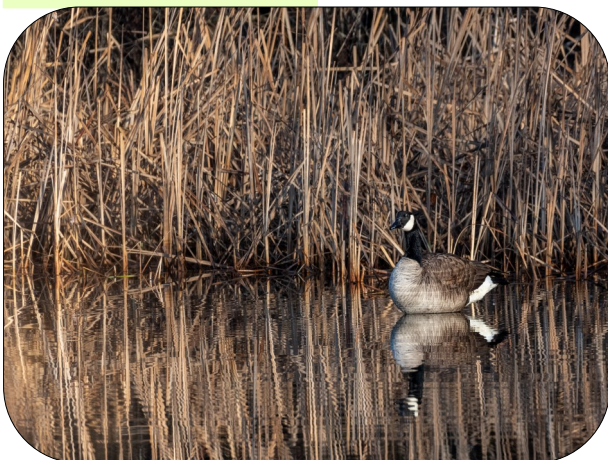
Our communications team has changed significantly, with Jaime Magiera needing to engage less with HVG due to new work and family priorities. He has set us up with many systems which will serve us well. Thus, thank you very much Jaime for your service in this role. Jaime will continue to work on other initiatives with HVG, so happily this isn't goodbye.

HVG has just enough leadership to catch most of the communications team's efforts with this change. With John Metzler, Erica Ackerman, and Tajalli Hodge are now working on comms, you'll see

some changes in the format of this newsletter. I am also thankful to these HVG leaders for their stepping up. Please see our Help Wanted section to get involved in the comms team.

One of the goals of the main set of articles in this issue, related to native plant gardening, is to inspire, educate, and empower readers to start creating relationships with these beautiful species. The benefits are numerous, including the health of gardeners and their (human) community.

As you read this edition of The Lookout, and witness our ongoing evolution, please reach out and let us know what you are finding resonant. Better yet, offer to help, as it will take all of us to fulfill the Sierra Club's mission.



Goose Duet on Ford Lake

Peggy Lubhan

I was down by the lake a little while ago. It was very quiet and very beautiful, with the snow falling silently on the gray waves. Then I heard the honks of a pair of Canada geese (*Branta canadensis*) heading my way. As they flew in front of me, I realized their honks were not random noises. The two were repeating

phrases back and forth between them, and adding to the phrases, all in the form of honks. I think it's fair to describe this as singing, "goose style". I don't remember ever hearing anything like this before. If any of you have any experience with this, will you let me know? It was really quite charming!

Part of the Sierra Club's mission is to explore, enjoy, and protect the wild places of the earth.



Rue anemone (Thalictrum thalictroides)

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Do you have a question you'd like the Sierra Club to address? Email us at hvgsierraclub@gmail.com
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Editor's Welcome

John Metzler

On behalf of Huron Valley Group's new communications team, Welcome! We hope you find this edition of *The Lookout* informative and enjoyable.

Our overarching goal for *The Lookout* is to motivate you to action on behalf of the environment. We hope to present stimulating ideas and helpful information, along with tools to combine them into action.

Very generally, everything in *The Lookout* will fall under the three components of the Sierra Club motto: Explore, Enjoy, and Protect.

- Explore – helping people to explore more of the earth and learn more about it through educational articles, ranging

from glacial geology to local environmental justice topics

- Enjoy - celebrate, share, and create camaraderie around our shared passions for the Earth and being outdoors
- Protect – ways our readers and members can protect the environment, fight climate change, work for environmental justice

We hope you will reciprocate. We'd like your feedback to motivate the evolution of *The Lookout*. With this issue of *The Lookout*, we are introducing a Letters to the Editor column. We welcome your comments about our articles, any questions you have about Sierra Club or

Sierra Club's views on various topics, or even our advice on things environmental.

If you want to go farther, we welcome articles flowing from your passion for the Earth and its inhabitants. If you just have an idea, a topic, we're happy to discuss it and see if we can develop an article together.

Lastly, we are introducing another new feature, possibly the most important section of *The Lookout: Help Wanted!* We want your help, your time, to improve HVG's ability to address local and regional environmental issues. Please take the time to review the openings and respond if one piques your interest or stimulates your sense of responsibility.

Letter to the Editor: DTE's Clean Vision MI Green Power Program

Steve and Molly in Ypsilanti asked "We are writing because we trust your organization's views and are less trusting of DTE and would like your input. We received a mailing today about the Clean Vision MI Green Power program with DTE. Is this something your organization supports?"

Mike Berkowitz, the Michigan Chapter's Senior Representative for the Beyond Coal Campaign, responds:

DTE's MI Green Power is one of a handful of Voluntary Green Pricing (VGP) programs offered by MI utilities. Be aware, utility VGP programs

charge customers a premium for clean energy. DTE and other utilities have two separate VGP programs - one for gas and one for electric.

DO NOT enroll in gas VGP programs because they largely fund false solutions like "[Renewable Natural Gas](#)" and [this DNR/DTE forest carbon offset](#). Electric VGP programs are less problematic. If you are not able to go solar on your own and are willing to pay a surcharge, [electric VGP programs are a good option](#).

If you don't want to do enroll in an electric VGP program through your utility company, you can sign up for

a similar program with [Arcadia](#). You'll pay a surcharge and they'll offset your energy use with wind and solar power generation as locally as possible.

[Customer-owned solar](#) and [electrifying](#) your home are the ideal solutions. However, in addition to significant up-front costs, Michigan law limits and disincentivizes small-scale distributed energy generation and community renewable energy projects, so this isn't always an option. Lobbying for changes to our state and federal energy laws are a crucial piece of the solution.



New England aster (*Symphotrichum novae-angliae*)

Spring into Action

As you think about your garden this spring, we encourage you to think native, with a set of articles focused on native plant gardening. From interesting woody plants, to rain gardens, to connecting with your community and a list of native plant providers, we hope you find inspiration to go native. Our list of [Michigan native plant providers](#) is on page 9.

Native Gardening in Your Yard

Chris Kosal

As an avid gardener, I am slowly replacing plants in my yard with native plants that serve a purpose. I am selecting shrubs that are native to Michigan and provide a home for insects that are beneficial to my garden. Woody shrubs are generally easy to care for and, once established, require little maintenance other than occasional pruning.

Red osier dogwood (*Cornus sericea*) is a beautiful addition to any yard, as it provides four season interest. In winter, the twigs of this shrub are a bright red, providing a pop of color. In spring, the red twigs turn green and leaves appear, along with creamy white flowers that bloom in May. The flowers produce berries and the leaves change color in the fall. It is also a larval host for the spring azure butterfly.

This shrub can grow from 6-12 feet tall but can be pruned and kept contained to a certain size. Red osier dogwood can

tolerate nearly all soil conditions including wet feet. In my yard, it has survived seasonal flooding issues.

If you need a shrub for a smaller space, try the lovely New Jersey tea (*Ceanothus americanus*). This shrub has glossy green leaves and creamy white flowers that attract hummingbirds.

It grows to only three feet high so it can make a lovely low-growing hedge. During the Revolutionary War era, the leaves of this shrub were used as a tea substitute. Once established, New Jersey Tea is drought tolerant. Patience is

needed, as it can take a few years to become established and produce flowers, but the reward is an easy to care for shrub.

Another possible interesting addition to your yard is the spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*). Yellow flowers come out in April before the leaves. Its green leaves give off a spicy smell when rubbed together. This shrub can grow up to 10 feet tall and is host to the spicebush swallowtail butterfly. This shrub can tolerate both sun and shade and does not require much care once it is established.

Spring is a great time of year to assess your yard and decide what you would like to plant. Please consider the purpose of your plants when making selections for your garden not only to beautify your landscape, but also to promote and sustain animal life.

Chris Kosal is HVG Outings leader and avid gardener.



Red osier dogwood (*Cornus sericea*) in winter

The Benefits of Rain Gardens

Catie Wytychak

Rain gardens are a stormwater management feature that captures runoff before it pollutes our local rivers while providing beautiful gardenscapes throughout the growing season.

A rain garden is an attractive landscaping feature planted with perennial native plants. Its bowl-shaped design allows it to efficiently capture and absorb stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces such as roofs and parking lots.

By letting water soak through the ground, rain gardens effectively filter out pollutants such as phosphorus and nitrogen from fertilizers, bacteria from animal waste, along with oil, grease and heavy metals from cars and loose sediment.

This attractive feature is a power-

ful tool for enhancing water quality. Since rain gardens are full of native plants, they are a habitat and food source for native pollinators and amphibians.



Small rain garden. Photo courtesy of Washtenaw County

Once established, rain garden plants require less watering during hot summer months than regular gardens. This is because they capture and use the water from your roof or parking lot.

These plants have naturally deep root systems and are adapted to sur-

vive in varying weather conditions. A rain garden feature can reduce your water consumption and help you save money on your water bill!

In addition to protecting our nearby

water bodies by filtering and soaking water back into the ground, rain gardens provide some additional benefits.

Rain gardens also:

- Slow water down so large amounts of warm water do not rush into the water system.
- Support pollinators! These areas provide habitat for beneficial insects, birds, and butterflies.
- Beautify the surrounding

landscape. Creating an attractive landscape can increase the happiness of your employees while providing an inviting space for customers.

Catie is a Water Resource Specialist with the Washtenaw County Water Resources Office.

*The City of Ann Arbor offers
stormwater bill
credits for rain gardens and barrels!*

Did You Know?

You can become a master rain gardener for free! Learn, design, and plant your very own rain garden. You can also get support from Washtenaw County Water Resource Office staff for one-to-one advice AND they offer personalized design advice. [Find out more.](#)



Additional Resources

Check out these additional resources for rain gardens!

[Washtenaw County Rain Garden page](#)

[Certified Rain Garden Contractors](#)

[Rain Garden Plant List](#)

Adapt: Cultivating a Relationship with Your Garden

William Kirst

I could feel the anger and frustration radiating from Mary as soon as she opened the door. “I can’t believe we have to cut down all these @#%\$#@# plants. Don’t they know the plants make their city more beautiful?!” If I thought this gorgeous late summer morning was going to portend an easy and joyful volunteer planting day, the world had a different plan.

I steadied myself, took a deep breath and remembered that moments like this are exactly why we started Adapt. I remembered back to our discussions of the various meanings of community within an ecological context and how we so easily lose sight of our human community therein. How community, ecological and human forever entwined, relies on mutual and unending support. I now had the opportunity to put Community Supported Ecology into unambiguous practice.

I exhaled and replied, “I totally understand. This IS really difficult. But I promise those beautiful sunchokes will survive and that the garden we plant together here today will become like an old friend as you get to know each other.”

Our mission at [Adapt: Community Supported Ecology](#) is to sustain and promote the connections between people and the land that supports us through the community co-creation of native plant and perennial food landscapes. While we also offer consultative services and DIY planting kits in order to achieve our mission, the service that gets the most attention, the service that had brought Mary to Adapt, is the installation of small “micromeadow” native plant gardens.

These 50 square foot gardens are

designed with the local ecosystem in mind. We make sure to refer to the historic vegetation of the area as well as the existing soil types. We always use local genotype native species purchased from the nearest grower we can find.

“If we are in relationship with something, we have an emotional investment in it”

We select species based on their ecological benefit (pollen and nectar sources, larval hosts, carbon sequestration, forage and cover, etc.), their height and aggressiveness, their ability to withstand the harsh conditions of Midwestern climate. Importantly, we also think carefully about how the planting will impact the human community around where the garden is planted.

Thinking about and planning for the community brings the native garden directly into the cultural sphere. This, we believe, is the most im-

portant aspect of gardening with native species. This is where a small garden, that might otherwise be able to attract

and maintain only a small but decent diversity of native animals, can begin to have a truly outsized impact on local ecology.

These small gardens, maybe any single garden, makes very little difference in and of itself to the ecological functioning of a landscape. But if it inspires and connects the local human community to a deeper sense of beauty and wonder and possibility, then the garden will begin to grow far beyond the confines of its planter’s yard.

It is because of this possibility – of home gardens having a broader and deeper cultural influence – that we at Adapt center our philosophy in helping individuals create a meaningful relationship with our native landscape. If we are in relationship with something, we have an emotional investment in it. When that thing is a garden full of life that we have helped steward onto the land, our emotional investment, like Mary’s, is deep and palpable. Our life becomes one that begins to understand the positive creative power of ecological restoration, a power that is especially im-



Wild bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*) with pollinator

Adapt: Cultivating a Relationship with Your Garden con't

portant when things seem hopeless.

We begin to realize that we are not so different from all of those plants and animals with whom we share this land. Our empathy strengthens. Our compassion and generosity grow as we see the cycles of life and death, of giving and taking, of ceaseless change, all as our garden grows, and we understand that this is how all of life goes.

There is a fundamentally important consideration to make here. This relationship we are speaking of is already present. It exists for everyone and every species. We are all in an inextricable relationship by virtue of evolution and the shared dependence of our co-existence. All we have to do to know it is to experience it and learn from the experience.

Mary knew and felt that connection deeply through her sunchoke. They sparked a joy and contentment in her that seemed untouchable. In all of our efforts at Adapt, we seek to set the stage for that experiential connection of relationship to the land and the positive power of ecological restoration through native plant gardening.

However, it's important to note that it is rather easy to turn people away from an experience of this relationship. Many of us know it too well. Mary bore the brunt of it. Neighbors calling the "weed police" for plants

that are too tall ([Helianthus tuberosus](#), the sunchoke, can exceed 9 ft!). Our choices in our garden can make a profound difference as to whether or not the garden becomes an inspiration or a source of contention.

If we slow down on the giddy planting part and center ourselves

to garden because it makes *us* feel good. It doesn't feel like a chore, and it's not something we check off our to-do list. We'd love to share a secret with you that we have learned from our own experience and from working with others in their gardening journeys: when we no longer view our garden as essentially an aesthetic

piece of outdoor furnishing, but rather as a community of individuals who we can get to know and interact with, any time spent in the garden becomes energizing, fulfilling and rewarding, even if there is hard work involved.

This is the biggest secret that long time gardeners hold that beginners miss out on. When you are in relationship with



Mary's Garden (Photo courtesy of William Kirst)

within the relational aspects of the garden, we quickly realize that our neighbors, and the culture of our neighborhood, is just as much a part of this relationship. If we take our neighbors' needs, aesthetics, hopes and (yes) fears into consideration, and give them the weight and respect they deserve, we will create a garden that will, at the very least, not turn them away, and at best, will strengthen our relationship with them. Your neighbors are just as much a part of your garden as are the plants! If we get this, then we are truly creating Community Supported Ecology.

We do have a confession to make. The truth is that our gardening is not entirely driven by altruism. We all like

your garden, there is no garden maintenance. Those of us who love our gardens have the elusive, much-coveted and magical no-maintenance garden. You may see us working outside for 25 hours a week. But we promise you, not a moment of that felt like a chore. It was all joy and toil and play and conversation (admit it, some of you thank the [Monarda for bringing the Hummingbird Clearwing moth](#). So do we, it's awesome!).

As the spring gathers and the air and soil grow warm, your friends will venture their first leaves through the soft earth toward the sunlit sky. Say hello. Get to know them as friends. Learn their names (the Latin, the Anishinaabe, the Potawatomi, the common). Learn what friends visit them

Adapt: Cultivating a Relationship with Your Garden con't

(there are ants on the violets; who's that on silver maple flowers?). Ask questions of them (plants and insects can tell you a lot if you watch and learn from them). You may feel a little crazy at first. You may be bowled over. It'll certainly feel weird, but what new relationship isn't?

Finally, remember that the very essence of life is change and relationships change all the same. What you love now will pass from this world. If you are open to the deepest experi-

ence of this world, new love will grow again. If you keep your heart open, despite the pain of loss, and develop these relationships every chance you get, you will see that you are absolutely surrounded by the love that the Earth has bestowed upon us.

That morning at Mary's, the sunchokes were cut down and transplanted to a new bed. In their place we added 8 native species that will thrive in the sandy soil of this neighborhood that was once a [black oak barren](#). It

was difficult for Mary to trust that this would be alright. But her faith in us and the process, the building of our relationship, has given her neighborhood a more diverse garden and clearer sight lines and comfort for pedestrians and drivers alike. Mary herself received the gift of a micro-meadow and in the process learned about transplanting, made friends with eight new native species, discovered that [Miscanthus](#) is a naughty plant, and felt for the first time that her garden can be beautiful AND serve the needs of her community in a way that builds a positive relationship for all.

William Kirst is the co-founder of Adapt: Community Supported Ecology. Adapt: Community Supported Ecology is always looking to grow our relationship with the communities we serve. Please join us as a [volunteer](#) to create gardens, remove invasive plants, or be a Leader in your neighborhood. If you have the means, [sponsor a garden](#)! And please check out the [services we offer](#). Follow Adapt on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)



False sunflower (*Heliopsis helianthodes*)

Free Concerts With Spring Peepers

Peggy Lubhan

Like many people, every year I look forward to the concert debut of the Spring Peepers, and I heard them the first time at Delhi Metro-park today.

You can find them all over the place in watery roadside ditches, ponds and swamps. The simple-looking pattern on the frog's back does an amazing job of camouflage in the brushy ponds they love to live in.

These little charmers only reach about 1.5 inches in length, but they have enough personality and lung power to be major players (AND big favorites) among Michigan's amphibians!

Peepers are our most common frog, and they're found all over the state and even in the Upper Peninsula. And like all our wildlife, they are protected by state law.

There are tons of good websites that can help you identify just about any kind of critter you can name, so get out there this weekend and get yourself some Vitamin N -- the Nature Vitamin!



Spring peeper (*Pseudacris crucifer*)

Exercise Guide: Montibeller Park

John Metzler

If you want an easy walk with some nice ephemerals, visit Montibeller Park in Pittsfield Township. It is on the north side of Ellsworth Rd, just east of Carpenter Rd.

In this unassuming little park, there are at least Bloodroot, Cut-Leaved Toothwort, Trillium, Trout Lilies, Wild Geranium, and Early Meadow Rue.

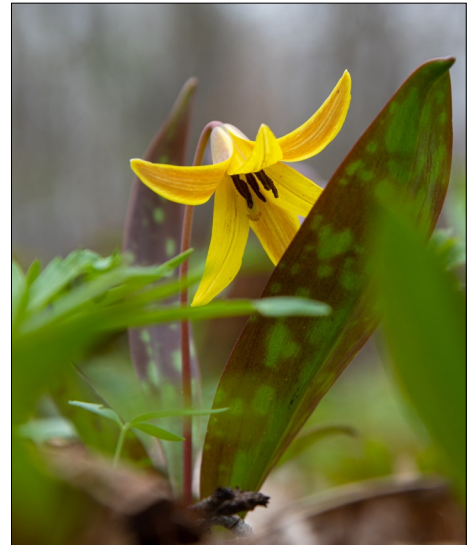
The walk described here is 1.4 miles roundtrip, short enough to do several times over a period of a few weeks, to ensure you catch the many different flowers Montibeller has to offer.

From the parking lot, head northeast along the path, past the bath-

rooms and then west over the foot-bridge across Paint Creek. Turn north and go between the creek and the old tennis courts, continuing along the trees beside the creek to the "Nature Trails" sign at the edge of the woods.

Take the left fork at the Nature Trails sign. The first bit of the nature trails may have some trash in the woods - you're behind the Carpenter Rd. Meijer. But the trash fades and ephemerals increase as you get farther into the woods. When you come to a fork, continue north rather than taking the sharp right turn that goes back south (you will go down that trail after viewing the north end of the park).

Continue along the trail to the north end of the park, turning east (right) just before the edge of the woods. Follow the trail across the north end, enjoying more ephemerals. When the trail turns south (right), turn around and head back across the north end. Return south along your prior trail, but at the fork take the left trail. This is the trail you didn't take earlier. At the right time (usually late-April), there are masses of Trillium along this path.

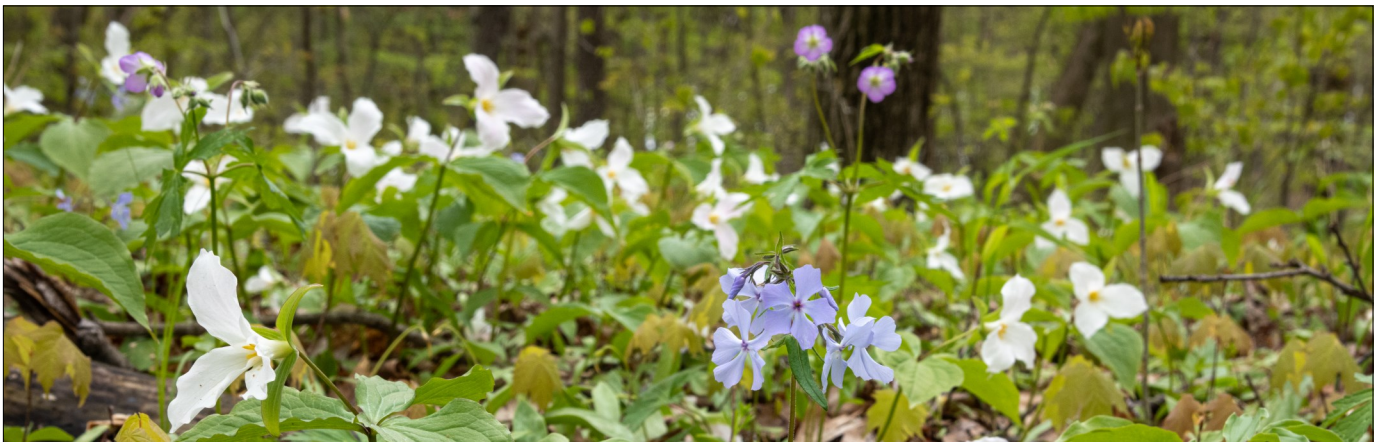


Trout lily (*Erythronium Americanum*)



Bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*)

Montibeller park is located at 4305 Ellsworth Rd in Pittsfield Township.



Trillium (*Trillium grandiflorum*) and wild blue phlox (*Phlox divaricata*)

Select Spring Ephemerals



Above: Dutchman's Breeches (*Dicentra cucullaria*)



Center: Bishop's cap (*Mitella diphylla*)



Above: *Hepatica acutiloba*



Spring beauty (*Claytonia virginica*)



Marsh marigold (*Caltha palustris*)

Native Plant Providers

Washtenaw County

[Feral Flora](#) (Ann Arbor)

[Abbot's Nursery](#) (Ann Arbor)

Native Plant Nursery (Ann Arbor)

Phone: 734-904-0061

Plants with Purpose at Windy Rock Farm
(Ann Arbor)

Phone: 734-223-3242

E-mail: vjste.marie@sbcglobal.net

[Native Restoration Solutions](#) (Chelsea)

[Washtenaw County Conservation District](#) (Chelsea)

[Hickory Nut Homestead](#) (Dexter)

[New Leaf Native Plant Nursery](#) (Ypsilanti)

[Ypsilanti Native Plant Nursery](#) (Ypsilanti)

Monroe & Livingston

[Monroe Conservation District](#) (Monroe)

[Sideoats Farm and Native Nursery](#) (Pinckney)

Other

[Michiganese Natives](#) (Northville)

[Plants for Ecology](#) (Troy)

[East Michigan Native Plants](#) (Durand)

[BetterFinds Native Plants](#) (Saginaw)

[Wildtype Native Pant & Seed](#) (Mason)

[Hidden Savanna Nursery](#) (Kalamazoo)

[Michigan Wildflower Farm](#) (Portage)

[Four Seasons Nursery](#) (Traverse City)

Why I Lead HVG Hikes

Chris Kosal

It is a cold, late winter Sunday morning, with just enough snow falling to make the roads a bit tricky to navigate. If it was a day I was planning a solitary hike, I probably would have been tempted to pull the covers up and hang out at home. This day, however, was my Sierra Club Hike at Hidden Lake

Gardens and I had people counting on me to lead the hike. Volunteering to lead hikes keeps me motivated because it connects me to a hiking community that I have made a commitment to.

Don't get the idea that this is so noble of me. There's a lot of self interest in being a hike leader. As previously mentioned, it keeps me motivated to hike. I usually do a pre hike a day or two before the group does the same walk. Second, I hike in all kinds of weather, like back in my Girl Scout days - rain, snow, or sunshine.

Finally, I learn and experience so much more when I hike with others. On my hikes I have met engi-

neers who worked with the Army Corps of Engineers, bird watchers with varying levels of expertise, plant experts who seem to spot those unusual wildflowers in a thicket of green, and people skilled at tree identification. I have been challenged to keep going by youthful hikers who easily sprint along

for speed. As a hike leader, it's your call.

During that late winter morning of the Hidden Lake Garden hike, we walked over the hills and experienced the stunning beauty of softly falling snow. We were able to observe the topography of the area in a way that only a winter hike al-



Hiker's Trail in winter, Hidden Lake Gardens

lows. Following the hike, some of us visited the conservatory for a breath of spring provided by the Flower Show. People enjoyed the hike, and their happiness provided me with good feelings that I would not

the hills and elderly hikers who enjoy a walk in the woods well into their 80's.

I invite you to consider the joys of leading hikes. You can select the location, set the pace, and lead the way. Listening to your fellow hikers, you can learn a lot about the flora and fauna you encounter, as well as the unique geology of the ground you trod. Or perhaps you prefer the challenge of a fitness hike and walk

have experienced had I stayed at home. Being part of a hiking community and providing the opportunity for others to enjoy nature enriches the outdoor experience for me and keeps me interested in leading hikes for Sierra Club.

Chris Kosal is an HVG outings leader in Monroe, MI.

HVG Spring Report

Programs

The Program Committee, with technical wizardry from Oona Woodbury, has held three hybrid program meetings this year: Julie Roth from the Ann Arbor's Office of Sustainability and Innovation, [Giorgia Auteri, a U of M scientist](#) who studies bats, and [TC Collins, a black farmer from Ypsilanti](#) who teaches others about growing and eating healthy food. We will continue the hybrid format for some time to come, offering the option of in-person or online attendance.

Book Club

The Book club read Drew Lanham's *The Home Place* (January), Ben Goldfarb's *Eager: the Surprising Secret Life of Beavers* (February), and Dave Dempsey's *Great Lakes For Sale: Updated* (March). See our Meetup page for upcoming meetings

Political Committee

The Political committee held its first Get Out The Vote letter writing event (see the related article this issue).

Outings

HVG hosted 13 outings so far this year, including a popular daytime Wednesday Walk series Chris Kosal has created and a couple of outings led by Washtenaw County Natural Areas Preservation Program stewardship manager Katie Carlise. We hope to offer an evening, or Workers' Edition, of our Wednesday Walks as well. See our Meetup page for upcoming outings.

Conservation Committee

The Conservation committee is looking for volunteers to staff a table for Monroe's [Earth Day Event](#). We are also looking for volunteers to help us create a team to help ensure continued local regulation of gravel mining operations (please see our ad in [Help Wanted](#)). We continue working with Environmentally Concerned Citizens of South Central Michigan and the Michigan Environmental Council to address potential surface and groundwater pollution caused by concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs). See articles from [The Daily Telegram](#) and [Pam Taylor: Widespread water problems come from humans and livestock](#) for more information on these topics.

When do we meet?

HVG Programs are held on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 7:30pm.

Book club meetings are held on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 7:30pm.

HVG Executive Committee meetings are held on the 1st Thursday of the month at 7:00pm.

Outing times and dates vary. Check the [MeetUp](#) page for more information. All events, including meetings, are posted there.

*Questions?
Email hvgsierraclub@gmail.com
for more info*

U of M Sierra Club Update

Geoffrey Batterbee

Throughout the winter, the Sierra Club at the University of Michigan has been finding ways to remain active during these cold months. From winter Arb walks and hikes, to removing invasive species in the Matthaei Botanical Gardens on Eco-workdays, to community building social events like open skate days at Yost Ice Arena, holiday cookie decorating, and movie nights, the UM Sierra Club has been staying busy!

Recently, there have been very exciting developments in the university's environmental organizations with which the Club has had the opportunity to engage and take an active role. Despite the incredible work that has been done by many students and faculty to produce the President's Commission on Carbon Neutrality recommendations, there has been far too little progress or hard commitments from the university to actually follow

This has become clear to many environmental organizations on campus, as has the fact that any individual organization has relatively little power when dealing with the behemoth that is the university administration.

It is in this context that over twenty environmental organizations came together on February 15th to discuss what we, collectively, should do. This was a very good beginning to what will hopefully grow into a collectivized environmental movement that may be able to achieve what previous movements on campus have been unable to.

them. This is especially evident in the search for the next president, where there are zero representatives from SEAS or environmentalists on the search committee.

The coalition created a statement of unity in the form of an open letter to the Regents, which was made public at a Friday's for Future action on March 25th. There, we made clear what we expect from the university regarding mitigation of the climate crisis, as well as the grievances that these organizations have with how the university has hindered progression toward a just transition to a sustainable future.



Above: Students on a hike at Lily Park. (Photo courtesy of U of M Sierra Club)



Student demonstration at U of M. (Photo courtesy of U of M Sierra Club)



Hepatica (*Hepatica americana*)

HVG Election Timeline

Call for HVG Executive Committee Candidates

The Sierra Club is the largest democratically run environmental organization in the world, with direct election of leaders at the national, state and local level each year. The Executive Committee (ExCom) of the Sierra Club Huron Valley Group (HVG) is responsible for the administration and operation of the group (our leadership team comprises numerous non-elected individuals also). HVG members will be electing four ExCom members this fall, for two-year terms beginning in January 2023.

About the Executive Committee

The HVG ExCom consists of 7 people from the HVG membership who are elected to two-year terms by the local membership. They help define rules for the group, administer the group activities, and craft position statements. There are monthly committee meetings, generally on the first Thursday of the month. ExCom members are also required to participate in at least one sub-committees (e.g. Membership, Communications, Conservation, etc.). The time commitment for ExCom participation is roughly 10-12 hours a month.

Becoming a Candidate

Members interested in serving on ExCom are encouraged to attend one or more ExCom meetings to get a feel for what we do. Likewise, it's helpful to reach out to current ExCom members for guidance. If you decide to make the commitment, please email Nominations Committee Chair Richard Barron (rmorleybarron@gmail.com) with your full name, phone

number, member number, and a 500-word statement on why you wish to run for ExCom.

If a member would like to nominate by petition, for any reason, they may do so by submitting the support of at least 15 Michigan Sierra Club members, including their name, member number, address and signature, sub-

mitted to the Nominating Committee, prior to the September General Membership meeting on September 20, 2022

HVG Leadership will distribute ballots to all members after November 1. Historically this was done via the paper Lookout newsletter. This is now done electronically via email, along with the elec-

tronic version of the Lookout. Ballots must be submitted prior to the December General Membership meeting on December 13, 2022.

To see all details on the nomination and election process, please see the HVG by-laws and standing rules at: www.sierraclub.org/michigan/huron-valley/about-us.

Important Dates

July 7, 2022: Nominees must inform the Nominating Committee of their interest by the July ExCom meeting

Aug 04, 2022: Nominating Committee notifies candidates and ExCom of nomination status.

Sep 20, 2022: Any candidate petitions and/or ballot issue petitions must be delivered to the Nominating Committee by the September General Meeting.

Oct 01, 2022: Candidate statements and photographs are due to the Elections Committee.

Oct 06, 2022: Final candidate list given to the Executive Committee at the October ExCom meeting.

Nov 1, 2022: Eligible voter list is pulled from the member database. Election materials are finalized to be posted on the website and distributed through the newsletter.

Dec 13, 2022: t count process begins after December BalloGeneral Membership meeting, completing no later than December 31. After completion, candidates are notified.

ACT NOW: Get Out The Vote!

Dan Ezekiel

In 2020, voters elected an environmentalist president by a large margin. Here in Michigan, we elected an environmentalist Governor and Attorney General. HVG helped by sending over 1500 hand-written letters to encourage infrequent voters in Michigan, and other battleground states, to vote. Now that it is 2022 with a vital midterm election in November, it is time to write letters again!

Polls show that a large majority of voters support environmental policies we favor, like increasing the use of renewables (solar and wind) and decreasing fossil-fuel reliance. Yet, anti-environmentalists, backed by special-interest money, often prevail in national and state elections. Increasing the turnout among “low-inclination voters” helps to elect and re-elect environmentalists. Low-inclination voters are those who are registered to vote, but don’t vote often.

Personal letters are a proven way to increase turnout among low-inclination voters. HVG will be writing letters monthly; [you can find the next date on Meetup](#). In the letters, we tell the voters why we vote and encourage them to vote also. We don’t back any specific candidate or party in the letters. The letters are mailed in October, so the voter gets the letter at the optimal time.

Getting together to write the letters has been a fun, empowering experience. You can also write letters from



HVG member addressing a GOTV letter.

home. Sign up at voteforward.org. If you write letters on your own, please keep track so that we can add your letters to the HVG total. Thanks to HVG member Janet Kahan for telling us about this campaign, and thanks to HVG supporters Kathy Sample and Bill Brinkerhoff, owners of Argus Farm Stop, for hosting our letter writing!

Find us on Social Media!



Icons will take you to the respective pages.

Help Wanted: Join Our Team (...please)

Sierra Club Huron Valley Group is currently seeking volunteers for the following positions. Each job comes with zero income tax impact, a great group of coworkers, and a feeling of accomplishment and reward!

Please e-mail hvgsierraclub@gmail.com

Earth Day Tabling Opportunity

The Huron Valley Group will have a table at the Earth Day celebration in Monroe County, "Earth Day Expo 2022 – Healthy Planet, Healthy You." Saturday, April 23, 2022, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Contact Steve Brown

(browns6887@att.net) if you would like to help staff this booth, mingle with HVG members in Monroe County, promote the Sierra Club, and hear residents' concerns. [<https://www.meetup.com/Sierra-Club-Huron-Valley/events/284802119/>]

Legal Assistance, Political Researchers

We are looking for people experienced with writing and passing local ordinances. HVG is working to create a team to develop model local ordinances to help local governments - city, township, county - regulate gravel mining. We need people to help design the model ordinances and researchers to help identify members of the various local government bodies who we might engage to get protective ordinances passed.

Newsletter Production

The Lookout is looking for people interested in writing copy, layout, or editing to help produce our newsletter. Passion for the environment and social justice are requirements, skillful use of language and a sense for interesting content are big pluses. Past experience is not necessary.

Digital media opportunities

Are you a social media master? The Huron Valley Group is interested in enthusiastic environmentalists and social justice advocates with digital media skills and savvy. We would like to recruit several people to liven-up our Facebook and Instagram presence.

Shopping for the Earth

You can help the earth (and HVG!) at no cost to you — through your regular shopping!



Over the past 15 years, the Sierra Club Huron Valley Group's Shopping for the Earth has been a very successful program for supporting our efforts to protect parks, natural areas, and local farmland, and to address local and regional environmental problems. When you purchase gift

cards from participating locations like Kroger and Busch's, you can earn up to 23% of your purchase for the Huron Valley Group Sierra Club (with no additional cost).

Purchased gift cards are great to be used for:

- Regular purchases like grocery shopping
- Giving as gifts
- Planned purchases like appliances

...and more! Visit our website for more information: <https://www.sierraclub.org/michigan/huronvalley/shopping-for-earth>

HVG Executive Committee

Jason Frenzel
Chair

Anne Brown
Vice Chair

Tajalli Hodge
Secretary

Dan Ezekiel
Programs Committee Chair

Erica Ackerman
Political Committee Chair

Jessica Anckley
Fundraising Committee

Alyshia Dyer
Equity, Inclusion and Justice

Communications and Newsletter Team

John Metzler
Content editor and photos

Tajalli Hodge
Design and layout

Erica Ackerman
Distribution specialist

HVG and Community Members
Content

Cover Photo: Mayapple blossom (*Podophyllum peltatum*)