



## **Early Fall Festival: The Lost Bird Project**

**Thursday, September 19, 6:30 pm, Brighton Town Lodge**

Join us for an evening of fun, learning, and inspiration. Before the film, enjoy a light dinner of pizza, snacks, and drinks. And kids of all ages will have fun making a passenger pigeon out of paper! The goal of the Fold the Flock project (an initiative of the Lost Bird Project) is to symbolically recreate a Passenger Pigeon flock, to increase sensitivity to the plight of endangered species through a hands-on art experience. See [foldtheflock.org](http://foldtheflock.org).

About the film: Gone and nearly forgotten in extinction, the Labrador Duck, the Great Auk, the Heath Hen, the Carolina Parakeet, and the Passenger Pigeon leave holes not just in the North American landscape but in our collective memories. Moved by their stories, sculptor Todd McGrain set out to create memorials to the lost birds—to bring their vanished forms back into the world. *The Lost Bird Project* follows the road-trip that McGrain and his brother-in-law, Andy Stern, take as they search for the locations where the birds were last seen in the wild and negotiate for permission to install McGrain's large bronze sculptures there. For more info, see [www.lostbirdproject.org](http://www.lostbirdproject.org).



Executive Producer Andy Stern, a long-time Sierra Club member, will join us to share his passion for the lost birds and his experiences. Andy Stern is an Associate Professor of Neurology at The University of Rochester but now devotes himself fully to raising awareness about the environment through activities of The Lost Bird Project. Andy is a Zen Buddhist practitioner and author of numerous essays on a range of topics including the environment, memory and the nature of knowing, mostly from a Zen perspective. An art lover and amateur sculptor, he is married to Todd McGrain's sister Melissa.

**Schedule:**

**6:30 PM and on:** Dinner – Pizza, snacks and refreshments available

**6:30 PM:** Passenger pigeon project

**7:00 - 8:30 PM:** Film and discussion

**Suggested donation:** \$5 donation requested for those over age 12.

Your donation helps us carry on the vital work our volunteers do to

protect our planet.

**Location:** Brighton Town Lodge, 777 Westfall Road, Rochester, 14620

**RSVP Greatly Appreciated:** 585-234-1056



## From the Chair: Our Precious Fresh Water

Last week, a friend of mine who does not generally pay attention to environmental news talked about his brother's family who would soon be moving to the Rochester area from western Colorado. He said his brother is concerned about the drought out west, and "the Northeast is where all the fresh water is."

The drought in the western United States is serious. The U.S. Drought Monitor (a service of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)) shows the entire western half of the country as being in "moderate" to "exceptional" drought. The National Weather Service Climate predicts that the drought in this area will mostly persist and intensify through November 30th, with about a quarter of the area likely to remain in drought but with some improvement.

From Peter Gleick's article "Peak Water in the American West" online on *ScienceBlogs*, here are some concrete examples of what's

happening because of drought in our country:

- In January 2012, the Texas town of Spicewood Beach ran out of water. Then Magdalena, New Mexico ran out. More recently, Barnhart, Texas. Now Texas publishes a list of towns either out or running out of freshwater. In some parts of Texas, demands for water for fracking are now competing directly with municipal demands
- Praying for rain has become an official water strategy for some politicians in Texas, Georgia, Florida, Oklahoma, and elsewhere.
- A popular water strategy seems to be for states to sue each other for rights to water. So far, cases include Texas v. Oklahoma, Kansas v. Nebraska and Colorado, and Florida v. Georgia.

So, why should we care what's happening "over there?" Well,

firstly, because it's just an accident of birth that makes this "not our problem." But it will affect us. My friend's brother's family won't be the only "drought refugees" to move here. The demands on our fresh water will increase. After all, our Great Lakes contain 20 percent of the entire world's water supply! But factors such as changes in the world's hydrology cycle caused by climate change have resulted in the lowest water levels in Lakes Michigan and Huron since levels were recorded in 1890, and Lake Superior remains below its normal levels.

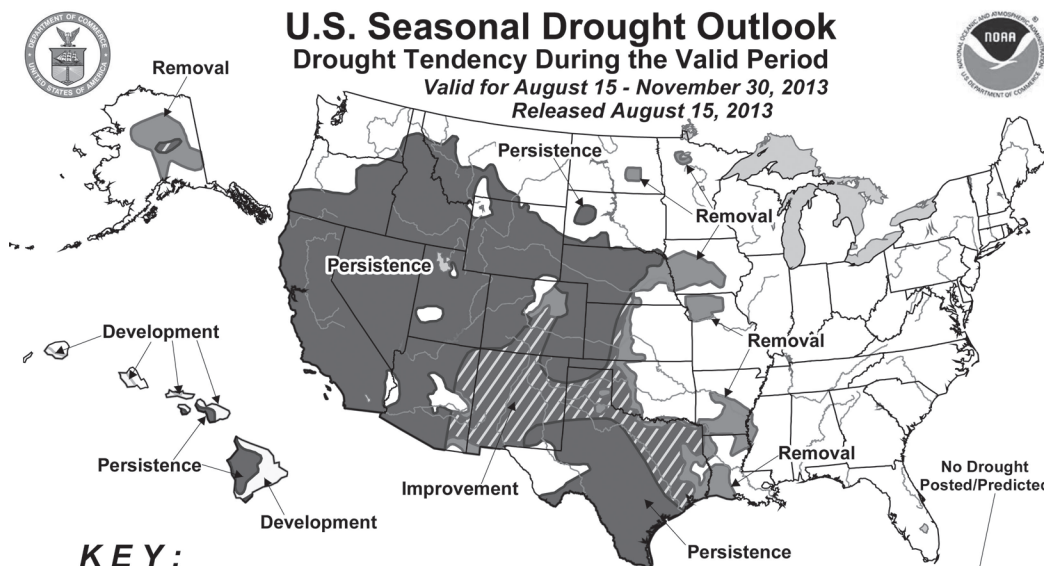
All eyes are on the Great Lakes. As Maude Barlow discusses in the film of the same name, our Great Lakes are "Blue Gold." Private companies are already bottling the water in the Great Lakes and selling it for profit.

We all have a stake in protecting our Great Lakes and all fresh water. It is the substance on which all of life depends. What will we do if water falls into hands that do not care if everyone has access? What will we do when there is not enough to sustain all of humanity, much less other forms of life?

These are issues that the Sierra Club and especially our Great Lakes Committee are addressing. Do you drink water? Won't you join us? See the back page for contact info and meeting times.

*Linda*

Linda Isaacson Fedele  
Chairperson, Sierra Club  
Rochester Regional Group



### KEY:

- Drought persists or intensifies
- Drought remains but improves
- Drought removal likely
- Drought development likely

Author: Brad Pugh, Climate Prediction Center, NOAA  
[http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/expert\\_assessment/season\\_drought.html](http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/expert_assessment/season_drought.html)



# Sierra Club Supports Lawsuit on Cuomo Rollback of Clean Water Protection

by Hugh Mitchell,  
Global Warming & Energy Committee

The NYS Atlantic Chapter of Sierra Club has joined seven other environmental groups in filing a lawsuit challenging the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) for violating the Federal Clean Water Act.

That is, the DEC is asserting a non-regulatory approach to control of Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs). These industrial dairy farm operations had been limited to 199 or fewer cows with DEC giving oversight on the manure ponds and waste processes. But Governor Cuomo announced that NYS would weaken environmental protections put in place to protect public health, safety and the environment by exempting medium size industrial dairy operations from the required DEC

permit program. Industrial farm CAFO's with 200 - 299 cows may now operate without a permit.

Robert Kennedy, Jr. of the Waterkeeper Alliance, stated "Factory farms are one of the greatest sources of water pollution in the country. Deregulating an already dirty business in other states has

of experts in agricultural waste management reviewed the proposed changes and concluded the proposed rule changes "...would likely result in increased environmental degradation of water, soil and air quality." Unfortunately the aim of Cuomo's actions are being marketed as helping the economy,

in part, by helping the industrial producers of Greek yogurt which are mostly located in Upstate New York. If you think this may not represent a threat to Rochester - think again. There is a large CAFO operation in the hills directly above Hemlock reservoir, Rochester's chief source of drinking water.

If you would like to get involved with efforts to fight CAFOs and support

sustainable agriculture in New York State, contact Erin Riddle: 607-372-5503 or [erin.riddle@sierraclub.org](mailto:erin.riddle@sierraclub.org)



Manure runoff from a dairy farm in Maryland  
Photo courtesy of USDA NRCS

done nothing more than put money in the hands of a few corporations at the expense of the public." Further, an independent team

## CAFO Regulations in New York State and How they Impact Communities:

**Presented by Erin Riddle**

**Co-sponsored By:** Sierra Club and Progressives In Action

**When:** Tuesday, Nov. 12, 7-9 PM

**Where:** Grapevine Restaurant & Corner Sports Bar, 122 Main Street, East Rochester, 14445

**Note:** No food served at the venue this evening, drinks are available for purchase

Recent media attention highlighted Cuomo's attempt to change the regulations for

CAFOs, raising the threshold requirement for a permit from 199 animal units to 299. As a result, the Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter filed a lawsuit challenging NYS's decision as a violation of the Clean Water Act. But what are CAFOs, how adequately are they regulated, and what impact do they have on public health, local democracy, our food systems, rural economies, and animals? Erin Riddle will offer some observations in response to these questions and offer some potential solutions.

*Erin Riddle was born on a small dairy farm in Salamanca, Cattaraugus County, and has since lived in several cities across the state. She chairs the Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter (SCAC) Farm & Food Committee, serves on the SCAC Energy Committee as well as the SCAC Executive Committee. In addition, she is coordinator of the SCAC grassroots campaign for 100% renewable energy in NYS by 2030. Currently she is finishing up a Ph.D. program at Binghamton University and teaches at Elmira College.*

## Toward a Zero Waste Wedding

by Jim Wood and Patty McKinny

Unless you marry your neighbor, a green wedding is impossible. People travel. Waste will be generated. So we capitalized on a theme of meaningful interaction to marshal the forces of guest power and borrowing to reduce, reuse and recycle our way toward a greener experience. Guest involvement from gathering and arranging flowers to pruning our tree branches to be placed in borrowed tall vases for center pieces emphasized the theme and was complimented by a caterer who embraced sustainability.

Other practices we used to green the wedding:

**Borrow, borrow, borrow:** Table cloths to enhance table surfaces, swaths of material to festoon the trees, lawn games, found objects, etc. all enhanced the theme of meaningful interaction.

**Glassware:** Was limited to cut down on wash water. Each guest was given one glass for water, one glass for alcohol/soft drinks. To limit the need for multiple glasses, markers and tags were used for identification labels. Water was provided at each table in recycled, decorated wine bottles. Reusable 5-gallon water jugs were used to fill borrowed, sanitized ice chests at the bar for more.

**Hors d'oeuvres and portable plates:** Two concessions to the waste stream were compostable appetizer plates and optional plastic cups, for those uncomfortable carrying glasses across our uneven lawn. Unmonitored trash and recycle barrels in strategic spots led to cross contamination so I spent an hour the next morning gleaning cups and compostable plates from trash bags for our compost and blue bins. One hundred seventy guests had spent seven hours eating a full meal, drinking at an open bar, dancing the night away and I was proud to announce to the trash hauler; “just



The trend has been catching on, as is evidenced by this station at the 2011 X Games. Photo courtesy of Robyn Beck, AFP

one conventional garbage tote filled!”

**Obstacle lighting and mosquito control:** Our wet spring was perfect for mosquito incubation. Solutions: eliminating standing water before the event and replacing carbon emitting tiki-torches with three large fans to circulate air in the tent. Hazard and sanitation illumination: solar spikes around all obstacles and borrowed battery lanterns in the Porta-Potties.

**Transportation:** To limit car travel

from the ceremony to the reception, we used two bus shuttles (and a few car pool drives) to move all the guests. This eased our worry about intoxicated drivers and high carbon emissions and was well received even after the driver backed over our mail box!

Each wedding has its own environmental challenges. Feel free to share your ideas. For more information on our daughter's wedding, contact us at: mcwood4@msn.com.

### Shouldn't All Events Aim for “Zero Waste”?

The Rochester Sierra Club's goal is to increase our region's recycling rate and help all area events include recycling. We have hosted a demonstration project this year with the Rochester Tour de Cure to make it nearly a zero waste event—including collecting food waste. Our committee has hosted a park each year for Monroe County's PickUpTheParks yearly program, and offered our Recycling Ranger's services to the Ganondagan Festival, the Greentopia Festival, and this year we'll be helping to reduce waste at the Clothesline Festival, too. We'd like to see the City and County make it

standard practice to minimize landfill waste at their events. To be totally successful, we'd like to see all private events, like the wedding described here, become environmentally friendly events. Kudos to the happy couple for caring as much about our world as about each other!

To learn more, please join us at the next meeting of our Zero Waste Committee. For dates, times, and location, see the Calendar on the back page of this newsletter. For more info on our efforts towards “zero wasting” events, contact Dave at dhgdeals@aol.com.



## Quiet Water Wars

### *Follow-up on the Sierra Club Green Papers: On the Future of Our Drinking Water, Watering Sprawl, Sprawl Follows the Pipes*

by Hugh Mitchell,  
Global Warming & Energy Committee

There's a quiet water war going on between the City Water Department and the Monroe County Water Authority (MCWA) over securing new accounts. This was recently illustrated by a small article in the Democrat & Chronicle which said the tiny village of Canadice wants the City to provide water and maintenance for a new water district rather than the MCWA. The odd part of this is that the Canadice new district will be located uphill from the City's Hemlock Reservoir which means the City water must be pumped uphill. Up to now all the City's water has been delivered by the force of gravity alone down to the City at a very low cost. And there's a further odd fact. It turns out that the new district will be on the west side of Honeoye Lake in the Township of Richmond, which gets their water from Monroe County Water Authority. That water is pumped all the way uphill from Lake Ontario at a high environmental cost based on the fact

MCWA is the second largest user of electricity in the region. Their use of electricity to drive their pumps is a significant contribution to global warming related to the production of MCWA electricity. Why didn't Canadice buy into MCWA water and why does Richmond Township buy MCWA water when low cost City water is right over the hill? How does politics play into the picture?

The answers are complex and point to much larger issues. Sources from both City and MCWA suggest several facts and directions on the future of drinking water for this region. First, Canadice has good environmental and economic reasons to buy the high quality Hemlock water rather than the more expensive MCWA water from Lake Ontario. But why did Richmond buy MCWA water in the first place? The fact was Richmond's good artesian well water was ruined by ruptured gas storage tanks from a local Mobil station which spilled the cancer threatening chemical MTBE into their ground water. They could

have easily replaced the loss by using the near-by City water because by then a pumping station had been installed to move City water over the Canadice hill, but they chose MCWA on the advice of a member of their Planning Board who was an MCWA employee. This illustrates in a small way the politics of water expansion and the sinecure reward system which is endemic to the current County administration and the MCWA who act as their client paymaster.

The Richmond vs. Canadice case points to the larger issue of MCWA's expected drive for new water accounts to pay for the recently completed, unneeded \$150 million dollar Eastside water treatment plant. Watch for MCWA's efforts to secure new accounts in Eastern Monroe County, Wayne County and toward the SE by taking over some Canandaigua accounts. Finally, watch the Ecologue for a future article on why the new Webster plant means MCWA's expansion drive still means, "Sprawl follows the Pipes".

## Justice, Injustice and the Ecology of Transportation

**A Talk by Jack Bradigan Spula**

**Sponsor:** Progressives In Action

**When:** Tuesday, Sept. 10, 7-9pm

**Where:** Grapevine Restaurant & Corner Sports Bar, 122 Main St. East Rochester

**Note:** No food served at the venue this evening, drinks are available for purchase

Here in the Erie Canal/Thruway corridor, we have an embarrassing, multifaceted problem: we get high marks for "short commutes" and lack of serious traffic jams, but we also get well-deserved criticism for outsized suburban sprawl and lack of "connectivity" between residential enclaves and public areas - plus, caught in a kind of "jam" of

cause and effect, we suffer from a painfully obvious lack of modern, efficient transportation options.

So what should we do? In this era of climate change, we can't keep side-stepping our basic dual responsibility: to create and sustain ecologically-sound transportation modes that will serve our society and economy well into the future; and ensure Mobility as a basic human right, so that no one is denied full participation in our economy and cultural life.

This implies hard, no-nonsense communication, education and political work. It's clear that today, with the personal automobile still ascendant, we're on the wrong road. As environmentalists committed to social justice, we must

press for change literally from the ground up: giving priority to pedestrians, bicyclists, and other alternative modes, getting serious about rail and other mass-transit alternatives, and gearing our development planning to end the hegemony of motor vehicles. This is a change that must start with us.

*Jack Bradigan Spula, a Rochester-based journalist, pianist and poet, is a lifelong environmental activist committed to Eastern Great Lakes and Northern Appalachian bioregional environmentalism and the global defense of nature. He's a daily, year-round bicyclist, avid rail and bus passenger and lover of urban and wilderness environments alike.*

## TAX DEDUCTIBLE GIFTS: THE LESSER KNOWN FACTS

Your Rochester Regional Group is financially supported by the National Club with a portion of membership fees and by the donations that you send directly to us. Gifts to the “Sierra Club Foundation, Rochester Regional Group” are tax deductible and can be used to help us fund newsletter publications and educational programs. You will receive Foundation acknowledgement for the IRS.

Gifts made out simply to “Sierra Club, Rochester Regional Group” are not tax-deductible, but we can use them without restriction— that is, also for legislative advocacy. Please know that your donations, regardless of which type, enable us to make a difference for the environment right here at home. We have very low overhead compared to many organizations - 88.4% of your donation goes directly to the support of Sierra Club conservation programs. Your support is much appreciated.

Our address is: Sierra Club - Rochester Regional Group, P.O. Box 10518, Rochester, NY 14610-0518

## 3rd Annual Greentopia Fest - Something For Everyone - Join Us!

**WHEN:** Sept. 10-15, 2013

**WHERE:** All over Rochester, but mostly in the High Falls area

**WHAT:** So much you won't believe it!

Greentopia is a project of Friends of the GardenAerial (FOG), the non-profit that is seeking to make the downtown High Falls area a showcase of environmentally sensitive urban design and economic development. Greentopia is an opportunity for FOG to share their vision, and also for every single one of us to come together over all things “green” in Rochester and beyond.

Greentopia 2013 includes a five-day film festival, a wide variety of live musical acts throughout Monroe County, a design festival (think fashion, media, art), and yes—the

EcoFest that your Rochester Sierra Club has participated in since the Festival's inception. And this year for the first time, Greentopia also includes a “Futures Summit,” a conference with over 30 speakers who will share exciting, creative visions of the future.

11-5. We'll be focusing on fracking and protecting our fresh water. No experience necessary—it's fun and easy, and we'll pair you with an experienced volunteer if you've never done this before. To help: 585-234-1056 or lci\_msw@hotmail.com.



Volunteers at Ganondagan Native American Festival, July 2013  
Photo by Kevin Vickers

**Join us at our booth:** Help staff our booth for an hour or two, Saturday, 9/14, 10-6 or Sunday, 9/16,

help to make the festival a near zero waste event. To help, contact Dave at dhgdeals@aol.com.

**Join our recycling efforts:** Experience has shown that Festivals can keep over 95% (yes!) of their waste out of the landfill through recycling and composting if and only if people receive some quick and gentle direction at the waste stations about what item should be thrown into which bin. Be a Recycling Ranger and staff a waste station for an hour or two! This is an important, concrete way that you can

## Join Our Email List!

Did you know that you can get updates on what we're up to sent right to your inbox? Join our email list and you will receive an email once a week that will inform you of upcoming Sierra Club activities, keep you up to date on local environmental issues, and give you tips on actions you can take for our local environment. To sign up, visit:

<http://newyork.sierraclub.org/rochester/>

and scroll to the bottom of the page. Enter your email address under “Subscribe to Rochester Regional Group” and click the “Subscribe” button.



Enjoy, explore and protect the planet

## 2014 Sierra Club Calendars

### Our biggest annual fundraiser!

**Purchases from bookstores do not benefit the Rochester Regional Group.**

### Great for holiday gifts!

**Please mail all orders to:  
Sierra Club, Calendar Sales  
PO Box 10518  
Rochester, NY 14610-0518**

**For questions or large orders, call  
Dina Stein at 585-271-0544**

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## Fracking - New York State Update & How You Can Help

by Linda Isaacson Fedele, Chair

The "de facto" moratorium on hydraulic fracturing ("fracking") for natural gas in New York state celebrated its five year anniversary in July. "De facto moratorium" means that while there isn't an official moratorium here in New York, fracking is still on hold while the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the Department of Health (DOH) complete required reviews of the fracking process and its likely effects. It's been five years since then Governor Paterson required the initial generic Environmental Impact Statement to be conducted by the DEC.

This past Fall, citizens and experts drew attention to the fact that fracking is causing illness in humans and is killing some farm animals in other states where the process is being used, and convinced New York state officials to conduct a health impact

review. The DOH did produce a document which purports to address health impacts. As of this typing, it is being reviewed by a small team of medical experts chosen by state officials; they may finish any time now, and drilling permits can possibly be issued at that point.

Many think that the health impact review cannot be comprehensive because of the short time in which it was produced, and also note that entire process was conducted behind closed doors. Many are urging Governor Cuomo to scrap the existing health impact review and start over with a full, comprehensive health impact study conducted in a transparent manner.

While we don't know when a decision will be made on whether to allow fracking in New York state, we know that we cannot sit idly by and wait. Throughout the Summer, at festivals we circulated a petition to Governor Cuomo asking for him to ban fracking in New

York state. Did you sign it? If not, give us a call and we'll send you a copy via e-mail or regular mail —your decision.

**How You Can Help:** Would you like to keep up-to-date on what's happening in New York relative to fracking? Want to learn how to take meaningful action? We are seeking individuals to get involved in one or more of the following ways:

- Join a Sierra Club fracking e-mail list and keep up-to-date on the discussion
- Participate in every-other-week conference calls to find out what's happening statewide
- Share information from the above activities with our active members
- Involve more people in effective action against fracking

Interested? Call us at 585-234-1056 or e-mail: [lci\\_msw@hotmail.com](mailto:lci_msw@hotmail.com).





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**Fall 2013 Calendar**

*All Committees are local volunteer groups of the Rochester Regional Group of the Sierra Club*

Date	Day	Time	Calendar/Event	Place
Sept. 3	Tuesday	6:30-8:30pm	Executive Committee Meeting	Harro East Bldg., 400 Andrews St., Ste 600
Sept. 9	Monday	6:30-8:30pm	Global Warming & Energy Committee Meeting	Lemoncello Italian Restaurant and Bar 137 W. Commercial St., East Rochester 14445
Sept. 10	Tuesday	7:00-9:00pm	Justice, Injustice & the Ecology of Transportation (see p. 7 for details)	Grapevine Restaurant & Corner Sports Bar 122 Main St., East Rochester 14445
Sept. 14	Saturday	10am-6pm	Greentopia Ecofest (see p. 6 for details)	High Falls District, Rochester
Sept. 15	Sunday	11am-5pm	Greentopia Ecofest (see p. 6 for details)	High Falls District, Rochester
Sept. 19	Thursday	6:30-9:00pm	Early Fall Festival: The Lost Bird Project	Brighton Town Lodge, 777 Westfall Road, Rochester, 14620
Sept. 24	Tuesday	4:30-6:00pm	Zero Waste Committee Meeting	Rochester Greenovation, 1199 E. Main St., Contact Frank for ?s: <a href="mailto:fjregan@gmail.com">fjregan@gmail.com</a>
Sept. 24	Tuesday	7:00-9:00pm	Great Lakes Committee Meeting	Asbury First UMC 1010 East Ave. (smaller bldg. just west of main bldg.)
Oct. 1	Tuesday	6:30-8:30pm	Executive Committee Meeting	Harro East Bldg., 400 Andrews St., Ste 600
Oct. 14	Monday	6:30-8:30pm	Global Warming & Energy Committee Meeting	Lemoncello Italian Restaurant and Bar 137 W. Commercial St., East Rochester 14445
Oct. 22	Tuesday	4:30-6:00pm	Zero Waste Committee Meeting	Rochester Greenovation, 1199 E. Main St., Contact Frank for ?s: <a href="mailto:fjregan@gmail.com">fjregan@gmail.com</a>
Oct. 22	Tuesday	7:00-9:00pm	Great Lakes Committee Meeting	Asbury First UMC 1010 East Ave. (smaller bldg. just west of main bldg.)
Nov. 5	Tuesday	6:30-8:30pm	Executive Committee Meeting	Harro East Bldg., 400 Andrews St., Ste 600
Nov. 11	Monday	6:30-8:30pm	Global Warming & Energy Committee Meeting	Lemoncello Italian Restaurant and Bar 137 W. Commercial St., East Rochester 14445
Nov. 12	Tuesday	7:00-9:00pm	CAFO Regulations in New York State & How They Impact Communities (see p. 3 for details)	Grapevine Restaurant & Corner Sports Bar 122 Main St., East Rochester 14445
Nov. 26	Tuesday	4:30-6:00pm	Zero Waste Committee Meeting	Rochester Greenovation, 1199 E. Main St., Contact Frank for ?s: <a href="mailto:fjregan@gmail.com">fjregan@gmail.com</a>
Nov. 26	Tuesday	7:00-9:00pm	Great Lakes Committee Meeting	Asbury First UMC 1010 East Ave. (smaller bldg. just west of main bldg.)

Executive Committee meetings are open to Sierra Club members. All other meetings are open to everyone.

**The Eco-Logue is printed on 100% recycled paper with green plant-based toner.**