

Northeast Ohio Sierra Club **January & February 2014 Newsletter**

A look back at a busy year...

It seems like only a short time ago when I heard of my election to be chair of NEO Sierra Club. Thanks to a really dedicated group of volunteer activists and excellent staff members of the Ohio Chapter it has been an honor to serve. We began with calls to action to oppose Keystone XL and a proposed waste to energy plant. Thanks to a nationwide effort, the Keystone XL project is still not approved. Thanks to a local effort, the idea for a waste to energy plant at the Ridge Road transfer site has been abandoned by the City of Cleveland. A big thank you goes to Randy Cunningham and our Coal and Energy committee for these efforts.

Another big issue for us has been a proposed filling and development on a creek adjacent to the mentor marsh. We are still working to get a public meeting with the Army Corps of Engineers on the permit for the project, and have engaged with politicians and stakeholders in the area to insist on on-site mitigation to address increased stormwater runoff and pollution. Kudos to Amanda Keith, the Ohio Chapter's program coordinator for Northern Ohio and NEO Sierra volunteer Jessica Ferrato and the water committee for mustering over 200 public comments to US ACE to raise this issue to the critical importance it deserves.

We sponsored a film at the Cleveland International Film Festival, *Rebels With a Cause* and we tabled at Earth Fest at the Cuyahoga Fairgrounds, the mountain film festival at the Palace Theater, and at Parade The Circle. We also participated in a cleanup in Lorain with the Lorain County Kayakers, put on the "Trash and Pancakes" cleanup at Edgewater, and put on a cleanup at Mentor Headlands Nature Preserve. Thanks to all who helped out at these and other events.

Our political committee has been revived and endorsed several candidates for local offices. Our last newsletter had a list. We are going to be continuing this effort and hope for more endorsements and friends in office this coming November. We also met with elected officials to voice our concerns and ask for their help. Issues included the Mentor Marsh, Senate Bill 58 (the modification of Ohio's alternative energy and conservation mandates), an injection well ban, and the Opportunity Corridor. Thanks go out to Jessica Ferrato for chairing and a lot of the work, and to Neil Waggoner of our Ohio Chapter office in Columbus.

The Fracking committee has been keeping our elected officials on their toes about issues with pollution, health hazards, safety concerns, and excessive water withdrawals from streams and lakes. In October and November we cosponsored a series of presentations at the West Shore Unitarian Universalist Church with West Shore FACT (Faith Communities Together for Frack Awareness) which were a great way to educate area residents about the dangers posed and alternatives to fracking. Thanks go to Anne Caruso and the fracking committee for organizing 9 evenings of speakers and films over a month long period.

Urban Agriculture is still preparing the beds for future growth. Events included a tour of a greenhouse and tilapia farming project at Rid-All Farm, and helping with a hugelkultur project at Community Greenhouse Partners. In the spring we will be planting some fruit trees for the edible forest there. Thanks go to Randall Moyer for his efforts.

NEO Sierra Club also held general membership meetings at Mr. Peabody's Pub, Cedar Green Wine and Beer, and Jackalope Lakeside in Lorain. These are a great way to spend an evening talking about

environmental issues that concern our members and about what NEO Sierra Club is doing.

To all of you I offer my gratitude and praise. This club is strong because of the combined voices and efforts of all of us. I am sure it will be a great 2014 because of our continuing efforts.

Steve McPhee
Executive Committee Chair

A New Year's NEOSC Annual Retreat

As we wrap up 2013 it is time to start planning for a new year. 2014 will bring new opportunities, national and state elections, and many of the same ongoing challenges for Northeast Ohio Sierra Club. On January 25th we will gather at the Watershed Stewardship Center at West Creek Metropark in Parma to count the ballots for our executive committee, elect a chair, and appoint committee chairs. This is a very important event for our membership to set the course of our group for 2014.

We will have a catered lunch and a speaker. Matt Berges of Environmental Health Watch will talk about green building and energy efficiency improvements. Matt is a Certified Healthy House Practitioner and a BPI Certified Building Analyst. Matt began working for EHW in 2007 and in 2008 he helped establish EHW's Affordable Green Housing Center.

To join us, please RSVP to [Erin Jacubec](#) via email or at (216) 789-1403. There will be more information available as we complete plans and we will send out email announcements as well as update our [web site](#).

Ecuador's Government Attacks Environmentalists

By Michael Melampy, Rainforest Committee Chair

On December 3, 2013 plain-clothes police officers entered the offices of the Pachamama Foundation in Quito, Ecuador and proceeded to shut them down. This was done at the behest of the Ecuadorian government which apparently is upset at Pachamama for its role in helping Amazonian indigenous communities oppose further oil development in the Ecuadorian Amazon. Resistance from indigenous communities is credited with greatly reducing interest on the part of multi-national oil companies in new oil concessions that the government was trying to sell in the south-central part of Ecuador's Amazon basin. Many companies are acutely aware of the longstanding problems of Chevron-Texaco in fending off a multi-billion dollar lawsuit brought against the company by indigenous communities for serious environmental contamination in northern Ecuador. Pachamama has helped indigenous communities in south-central Ecuador mount protests against further oil development; apparently, its work has paid off. But now, the government, led by President Rafael Correa, is trying to punish Pachamama and prevent the foundation from further obstructing plans for oil extraction in the Amazon.

Unless the Pachamama action receives international condemnation, the government will be encouraged to go after other environmental groups who are opposed to the government's extractivist agenda. Carlos Zorrilla, director of DECOIN, a grassroots environmental organization in the Intag region of northwestern Ecuador, has already been denounced by President Correa for his opposition to mining and has been blamed for fomenting community resistance to the government's plans for opening large mines in Intag. While Correa has gained the support of many Ecuadorians for his efforts to improve roads, schools, clinics and other infrastructure, he has become increasingly heavy-handed when it comes

to resource extraction policies. The reason is obvious: social programs require money and Ecuador is running out of oil. Mining might replace lost oil revenue for a while but at a huge environmental cost. The environmental costs are very worrisome to rural communities that depend on clean water and soil to support agriculture, the traditional economic underpinning for most of Ecuador.

These recent events in Ecuador should alarm everyone concerned about the global environment. Ecuador is one of the true megadiversity countries in the world with perhaps the highest density of species of any country in the world. It still harbors many pristine natural areas, particularly in its Amazon basin. International environmental organizations, including Sierra Club, should be willing to show Correa that conservation and economic development are not incompatible. For the moment, we need to mount a campaign to dissuade him from further attacks on Ecuador's environmentalists. For details about the current crisis and information about what you can do, go to the following websites: www.decoin.org or www.pachamama.org. Also, consider attending a meeting of the NEO Sierra Rainforest Committee. Contact Michael Melampy at mmelampy@bw.edu or at 440-826-2263 for information about the time and place for the next meeting.

Invest in Good Companies with Good Company

By Christine McPhee

Interested in learning about investing? You may want to consider joining the Ethical Investors of Northeast Ohio, an affiliate of the National Association of Investors Corp (NAIC). We meet on the second Thursday of each month (Jan. 9 and Feb. 13, 2014) at 7:00 PM in the Parma Heights & Berea area. A monthly investment of \$30 - \$200 is required and an initial investment of \$300 - \$500 for new members. In addition to the growth and/or returns potential of a publicly traded company we consider the business ethics, environmental compliance, human resources practices and community outreach programs of a company.

Investment clubs grow wealth slowly by following the four NAIC investment principles: 1) Invest regularly; 2) Reinvest all earnings, dividends and capital gains; 3) Buy growth stocks; and 4) Diversify your portfolio. Most public libraries have the NAIC monthly magazine, Better Investing Magazine, which have articles on investment and personal finance topics and online resources for members. Club members have the added benefit of learning while you earn, sharing experiences and knowledge, and reducing individual risk. For meeting location or general information, contact David Worsencroft at (440) 886 -5039 or planeroom@yahoo.com or Christine McPhee at (440) 891-0714 or Christine.McPhee@gmail.com.

How can cheap meat affect your health?

By Laurel Hopwood, NEOSC Human Health & Environment Committee Chair

Children read story books about cows munching on grass in green pastures, chickens pecking on the grounds of barns, and pigs chomping on food at the trough. Unfortunately, there is now a different reality. Most chicken, pigs and cows are raised in crowded confinement factories and fed food that's unnatural to their bodily systems.

According to the [Union of Concerned Scientists](#), many factory-raised animals are fed diseased animals, euthanized cats and dogs, road kill, dead horses, manure, plastics, and drugs. Factory-raised animals are also fed antibiotics daily in their feed, primarily for rapid growth. It's a well known fact that antibiotics are losing their effectiveness due to the rise of antibiotic resistant bacteria.

This doesn't even touch on algae overgrowth from the huge amounts of manure run off into sources of water. Some algae produces liver and nerve toxins. People and pets have become ill after swimming in lakes with toxic algae. Algae blooms have also caused severe gastroenteritis.

Physical illness is just one of many concerns. I have heard people say, "choosing what I put at the end of my fork is a spiritual issue for me. If I buy meat that comes from a factory raised source, then I am contributing to the pain that animal endured during its lifetime."

How can you effect change? If you eat animals, support producers who feed animals what they are meant to eat and how they are meant to be raised. Farmers markets and community supported agriculture are examples. Choosing a plant based diet is healthy, cheap and beneficial to the environment.

Meetings:

Executive Committee meets at the Fairview Park Public Library, dates TBA- please check website

Coal & Energy Committee meets at 4105 Stilmore Rd, South Euclid, Ohio 44121. Please contact Randy Cunningham at (216) 631-3337 for the time and date of the next meeting.

Green Transportation Committee meets on the first Monday of each month at 1 PM in the Linking Employment Abilities and Potential (LEAP) offices at 2545 Lorain Ave. Please contact Akshai Singh for more information: akshai.singh@sierraclub.org. State Transportation calls are on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 6 PM. Contact Akshai to get on a call, or to connect with any cycling advocacy going on in NEO or statewide.

Rainforest Committee typically meets every month on the third Sunday of the month. Call Michael Melampy at 440-826-2263 for time and place.

Water Committee Please contact Jessica Ferrato at sierrawater@zoho.com for info.