

Northeast Ohio Sierra Club September & October 2013 Newsletter

Blue Moon Musings

Summer always sneaks away too soon for us here on the North Coast. This time we have an extra full moon to enjoy it. This morning I was pondering the extra moon and fleeting joy of summer while zigging my bicycle through the park on my daily commute. It is a shame that so many of us are trapped in those 4-wheeled cages, engrossed in our gadgets and separated from the wonder of the park on a cool summer morning. I encourage you to join me on 2 wheels while there is still warm weather and sunshine in abundance!

This is a busy time for many of our committees and I hope you will join our efforts, come to an event, and help protect this wonderful place we call home. Read on and check out our web site to keep up on the latest.

Be sure to explore and enjoy our parks and wild lands. They always help us to revive our enthusiasm and energy so we can succeed at the last part of our Sierra Club mantra, “explore, enjoy, and protect the planet.”

Steve McPhee
NEO Sierra Club Chair

First Energy's Destructive Vegetation Policy

By Cynthia Tripp

This summer, while **First Energy** implemented its vegetation policy in Northeastern Ohio, local residents experienced firsthand the destruction of habitats of birds and wildlife, including those in wetlands and neighboring residential properties along the corridors of First Energy's transmission lines. All vegetation was stubble cut and sprayed with **Arsenal**, a long-acting herbicide which contains the active ingredient imazapyr. These applications were blanket applied and in some cases, applied multiple times during the high nesting season.

First Energy's vegetation policy is both a local and national issue. First Energy's high voltage transmission lines stretch over **20,000 miles** in six states. The lack of regard for the environment under the wires has gathered little notice since there has been little advance warning, and no legal recourse.

Under the National American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) FAC-003-2, national utility companies are required to have a "**vegetation policy**" for ensuring that vegetation does not interrupt the flow of power under wires carrying 200kV to prevent cascading failures.

Unfortunately, the utility companies can use any means to achieve their ends unless local laws limit or restrict their use of herbicides. In Ohio, there are no laws to restrict individual utility vegetation policy practices. As stated in the rule, "Transmission owners have the option of adopting the procedures and practices contained in an industry-recognized ANSI Standard known as A300 for use as a central component of its vegetation management program." Hence, **blanket applications of imazapyr are not regulated**, nor is stubble cutting of vegetation. First Energy's approach is a cheaper method than selective cutting or selective application of pesticides to woody shrubs that pose the greatest danger to transmission wires.

How do we deal with this destruction? This past summer in South Russell, Ohio, the First Energy forest representative met with the mayor and interested parties and agreed to leave the wetlands vegetation intact and not to spray herbicide until after May 31, 2014.

This issue is a backyard, grassroots (no pun intended) issue. Here in Northeastern Ohio, I suggest interested individuals **contact their local utility forestry person** by calling First Energy's main number and finding out where their locale stands in the implementation plan. Then raise community awareness and support by getting on the local town council agenda and speaking at a council meeting; alert local press; and present the information about what First Energy is intending to do. Perhaps it will be possible to get a stay to prevent cutting in wetlands as we have here in South Russell, Ohio, and to delay the spraying until a more suitable time than spring and summer. It's a beginning.

To strategize, please email me at ctrip11@aol.com

Bluestone Heights: the weave of local nature and culture

By Roy Larick, PhD

Cleveland's *Heights* are a segment of the Portage Escarpment. The area has a special bedrock foundation element: the Euclid bluestone. This bed of resistant sandstone adds unique character to the local landscape. The land atop the bluestone is the Bluestone Heights.

The Heights has had four place revolutions. Bedrock arrival: 360 million years ago. Ice Age climax: 18,000 years ago. Industrialization: 200 years ago. De-industrialization: now.

The Ice Age transformed the bluestone landscape. Glacial retreat dug terraces and gorges, and deposited beaches and moraines. Ice retreat generated the diverse ecologies considered legacy to

Euro-American arrival.

With industrialization, Clevelanders buried glacial landforms and disrupted legacy ecosystems. We are now a mature city; urban shrinkage reveals old features and functions. Clevelanders can begin to glimpse lost legacy.

Bluestone Heights, the program, is born of a new urban spirit. At any place, the weave of nature and culture creates a [deep history of place](#). *Bluestone Heights* studies deep history to learn weave dynamics. The goal: help achieve more sustainable weaves for our places.

Using online mapping and onsite exploration, *Bluestone Heights* takes on the nature-culture weave in the varied places where Lake Erie meets the Portage Escarpment.

Bluestone Heights has two education programs. Each offers exciting on-the-ground events for October:

Euclidian Place takes on deep history at more than a dozen City of Euclid natural features. Walking tours cover the Portage Escarpment, the St. Clair Terrace, and the Lake Erie shoreline. The program explores the legacy of development upon local nature and asks participants to consider the future.

Sun, Oct 20, 4-5:30 pm: *Euclid Falls* walking tour. At the falls, Euclid Creek cuts a sandstone gulch and a bluestone gorge. Explore the southern gorge. Consider Metroparks plans for the expanded reservation. Depart: Welsh Woods, Euclid Creek Reservation.

Portage Periplus explores the nature-culture weave along the urban escarpment. The program is based on the literary device of *periplus*, a narration of voyage along a shoreline.

For *Octavofest 2013*, the *Portage Periplus Journal* relates conceptual voyages of cartographers H.M. Blackmore (1852) and G.M. Hopkins (1912) at six stops along Euclid Ave, from Doans Corners to Wickliffe. Presented in collaboration with the Morgan Conservatory.

Wed, Oct 23, 7-9 pm: *Portage Periplus Journal* unveiling. Morgan Conservatory, 1754 E 47th St, Cleveland, OH 44103. Project summaries by Roy Larick, William C. Barrow, and Tom Balbo.

Sat, Oct 26, 4-5:30 pm: *Little Italy, Set in Stone* walking tour. Little Italy lies in the journal's Doan Brook 'stop.' Explore local stone features on Murray Hill side streets. Depart: HEART of Little Italy, 2094 Murray Hill Rd, Cleveland, OH 44106.

Wed, Oct 30, 7:30-8:30 pm: Dr. Larick presents the *Bluestone Heights* program to the Sierra Club Water Sentinels. Location: Metroparks West Park Reservation Watershed Stewardship Center, Parma. Any of the three events provides a concrete introduction to the Sierra Club event.

NEO Sierra Club & West Shore FACT Fracking Series

NEO Sierra Club presents a series on fracking awareness in collaboration with West Shore FACT (Faith Communities Together for Frack Awareness). The series of speakers and films is to be held at the West Shore Unitarian Universalist Church, 20401 Hilliard Blvd, Rock River, Ohio 44116. Please join us for one or more of the following events, all of which are open to the public and free (though donations are greatly appreciated).

Nine-Part Series on Hydraulic Horizontal Fracking and the Viable Alternatives Available Now

Thurs. 9/12 7pm **Alison Auciello, Ohio Organizer for Food and Water Watch**, will give an overview of fracking and the problems it presents.

Thurs. 9/19 7pm **Dr. Deborah Crowden, MD**, will speak about the health impacts of fracking.

Sat. 9/21 7pm **Film screening: *Triple Divide***, a film by investigative journalists Joshua Pribanic and Melissa Troutman seeking truth about the impacts of fracking.

Thurs. 9/26 7pm **Doug Shields, Pittsburgh councilman**, talks about his successful campaign to ban fracking within city limits in 2010.

Thurs. 10/3 7pm **Dr. Lorry Wagner of LeedCo**, a regional non-profit and economic development organization, talks about the plans for an offshore wind energy industry in Ohio.

Thurs. 10/10 7pm **Alan Frasz, President and principal owner of Cleveland based Dove Tail Solar and Wind**, talks about the opportunities for solar energy in Ohio.

Sat. 10/12 7pm **Film Screening: *Bidder 70***, a documentary of Tim DeChristopher who protested the leasing of thousands of acres of pristine Utah land to oil and gas companies as bidder #70.

Thurs. 10/17 7pm **Film Screening: *Gasland II***, filmmaker Josh Fox's new sequel to his documentary, *Gasland*.

Thurs. 10/24 7pm **Teresa Mills, Fracking Representative with the Buckeye Forest Council**, will talk about Ohio's practice of disposing fracking waste in Class II injection wells and the problems with and alternatives to this practice.

Events:

→ Nine-Part Series on Fracking Awareness

NEO Sierra Club and West Shore FACT present a nine-part series on fracking awareness. The series runs from **9/12 through 10/24** at the **West Shore Unitarian Universalist Church** in Rocky River. Attend as many or as few sessions as you'd like. All are free and open to the public.

→ Tinker's Creek Watershed Festival

Join Tinker's Creek Watershed Partners as we celebrate the watershed and protecting water quality in the region. The festival is a free family event featuring local and national environmental organizations. **September 21, 10:30 AM to 3:30 PM** at **Bedford Commons**, 730 Broadway Avenue, Bedford

→ Canoe or Kayak the Cuyahoga River, Ohio

On **September 21 starting at 10 AM**, paddle 10 miles or 5 hours on the Cuyahoga River from Eldon Russell Park to Hiram, and see a woodland stream, wetlands, beaver, birds, and nature. For more information call Dennis Plank at 216-939-8229 or email dennislakeerie@aol.com

→ Water Sentinel Training

The Ohio Water Sentinel Program seeks to educate, engage, and empower volunteers to restore, improve and protect Ohio's waterways. If you or your organization would like to participate in the Water Sentinel Program or want to learn more about what we do, contact the **Clean Water Campaign** today. The next Water Sentinel Training will be held on **October 19** in Parma.

→ Bluestone Heights

On **Wednesday, Oct 30 from 7:30-8:30 PM** Dr. Larick presents the Bluestone Heights program to the Sierra Club Water Sentinels. Location: Metroparks West Park Reservation Watershed Stewardship Center, Parma.

Meetings:

Executive Committee Meetings to be held at 7 PM at the Fairview Park Public Library on:

Wednesday, September 4

Thursday, October 3

Wednesday, November 6

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.