



JOURNAL

CAUCUS ON FEBRUARY 6

JOHN HOTTINGER

Political party caucuses will have a large impact on 2018 elections, during which voters will choose all top statewide officials including the Governor, the entire Minnesota House of Representatives, our Congressional House members (including a number of races considered toss-ups) and a Senator who will impact the political makeup of the U.S. Senate.

If you want to directly impact the selection of party-endorsed candidates who share your views, you should attend a political party

caucus on Tuesday, February 6. The caucuses elect delegates to larger, selection-level conventions where the candidates are endorsed by a political party and policy positions are solidified. At the caucus, you can also suggest issues or ideas—in the form of resolutions—which may eventually become part of the official party platform.

To participate, you must be eligible to vote in the November 2018 general election and live in the precinct. The Secretary of State's website has detailed information on the process at www.sos.state.

mn.us, search How Elections Work. Political parties will be posting information on their websites also as it relates to locations and other information.

For more information on caucuses including sample issue resolutions, contact us at north.star.chapter@sierraclub.org

John Hottinger is a volunteer leader with the Communications Team and former Chapter Chair.

CLEAN ENERGY PROGRESS IN ROCHESTER

DR. KELLI LYTLE



Rochesterites gather in the Peace Plaza for the city's largest ever People's Climate March. Photo Credit: Nick Jaworski

2017 has been a year of firsts for energy policy in Rochester, and the Sierra Club has been in the thick of it each step of the way. The year began in the most exciting way possible – with city budget discussions. After months of building mounting pressure on the Destination Medical Center's (DMC) economic development agency, its board created a new sustainability director position. The city government was so convinced by the case for sustainability staff for the DMC that they gave additional funding so the position would also work on making

our municipal infrastructure more energy efficient. They filled the position in late spring, making the hire Rochester's very first city staff dedicated to sustainability.

A number of our members were appointed to the city's energy commission, a citizen's advisory board to the local government. Over the past two years, the board has been working on an Energy Action Plan to guide Rochester to decreased greenhouse gas emissions, more energy efficient infrastructure, and expanded renewable energy generation.

After more than a year of starts and stops, a strong showing of Rochester Sierra club members advocating at the City Council in favor of the Energy Plan helped pave the way for its adoption into the city's comprehensive plan – making it the first official city document that explicitly names climate change mitigation as a policy goal.

As the summer wore on our group of committed activists successfully lobbied our utility company to establish Rochester's first community solar program. Our new Student

"Clean Energy Progress in Rochester" continues on page 6

FROM OUR LEADERSHIP



Thank you for supporting the Sierra Club North Star Chapter through one of the toughest years we can remember. It's true that on some days, our vision of a cleaner, healthier future can seem far out of reach.

But with the help of dedicated folks like you—our members—we're not going anywhere.

Since last November's election, hundreds of new volunteers have joined our efforts, and thousands have turned out at public hearings and rallies across the state. We continued to be inspired by the determination of concerned citizens who spend their free time focused on protecting communities and the planet, and honored to work on your behalf.

Looking ahead to 2018, we're going to need this new energy. Our future is at stake with decisions that will impact our environment and economy for lifetimes to come. Fossil fuel industries are attacking proven policies for clean energy and efficiency, threatening to undo the climate progress we've made. Consequential decisions on sulfide mining and tar sands pipeline hang in the balance.

And right now, great responsibility falls on states like ours to hold the line against powers in Washington who would side with corporate profits over people every time. We must build a grassroots movement for positive change, and our best opportunities are at the state and local levels.

With your help, we will continue to:

- Lead the transition beyond dirty fuels to clean, renewable energy—creating local, family-supporting jobs and access to quality careers for low-income and communities of color
- Halt new tar sands pipelines that would jeopardize our water, climate, and indigenous rights
- Expand transit, bicycling and safe walking options, for a more equitable and sustainable transportation system
- Uphold clean water standards and block sulfide ore mines that would pollute Lake Superior, the Boundary Waters and people that depend on them, and
- Build a stronger movement for justice, standing with allies against hate and discrimination

Our challenges can be daunting. But your support and involvement make a critical difference. As always, thanks for all you do.

Katie Eukel,
Chair, Executive Committee
Sierra Club North Star Chapter

Margaret Levin,
State Director
Sierra Club North Star Chapter



The North Star Journal

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The Sierra Club North Star Chapter, a 501(c)4 non-profit organization, is the leading grassroots voice working to preserve and protect Minnesota's environment. Since 1968 we have involved volunteer leaders to act through environmental advocacy, community organizing and outdoor exploration. We are committed to becoming an intercultural, anti-racist organization and partnering with communities and organizations to eradicate all forms of oppression.

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The North Star Journal welcomes submissions and photographs on environmental and related issues. Articles of less than a thousand words will be given preference. E-mail submissions only. We reserve the right to edit all copy for clarity and concision. Photos can be color and should be a jpeg format of 5x7 size at 300 dpi. Please send all submission materials and requests to the editor.

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POLYMET PERMITTING: COUNTDOWN TO DISASTER

ELANNE PALCICH AND LORI ANDRESEN

PolyMet would be Minnesota's first ever sulfide mine and is on a fast track countdown to being permitted. Draft Water Appropriations and Dam Safety Permits were released for public comment in August and September, respectively. The major Permit to Mine is expected to be pushed out before the end of 2017, when holiday activities will compete with a public hearing and comment writing.

When Tom Landwehr, Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), deemed the PolyMet final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) as adequate in March 2016, he claimed that the details would be in the permits. Unfortunately, the permits that have been released are incomplete, complex and difficult to analyze in a 30 day time frame and have been presented back to back. Public concerns over major impacts to the waters, forests and wetlands of northeast Minnesota are being ignored while mining is taking precedence over all else—including water quality, public health, the value of public lands and the integrity of ecosystems as wildlife habitat. Once mined, the denuded landscape of contaminated open pits, mountains of waste rock and toxic tailings basins that must be maintained and treated into perpetuity, will remain unusable for any other purposes. Instead of Superior National Forest, the public will be left with a polluted wasteland.

The draft permits show that PolyMet would be able to use 6.2 billion gallons of our water a year. Also, the former LTV taconite tailings basin that PolyMet plans to reuse for storage of its sulfide waste would continue to leach into the watershed for centuries, and carries the potential to catastrophically fail and collapse. During the environmental review process, the LTV tailings dam was already identified

as unstable and in need of repair. On a global scale, serious tailings basin failures are increasing due to the increased volume of waste material produced when mining very low-grade ores (less than 1% metals, in the case of PolyMet).

None of these deficiencies and risks will stop the political push to have PolyMet's controversial mine permits rushed to completion. In a stunning turnaround, on October 23, ahead of any permitting approval, Governor Dayton gave his support to PolyMet. "Nothing of that magnitude is risk free but I think it's a risk worth taking and I support the project," Dayton told the St. Paul Pioneer Press. While saying that he's moved from being "genuinely undecided" on the proposed PolyMet copper-nickel mine to being a genuine supporter of the project, Governor Dayton never explained how he came to this conclusion. Nor did he mention who would be facing the risks: surrounding and downstream communities, wildlife species, all life depending on clean water sources, the public who is losing National Forest lands and ultimately the taxpayers.

In the meantime, 8th District Congressman Rick Nolan has introduced HR 3115, a bill to compel the U.S. Forest Service land exchange of 6,500 acres of protected Superior National Forest for PolyMet's open pit sulfide mine. This bill would override four pending lawsuits filed in federal court by environmental groups, including the Sierra Club. Since the lawsuits have merit, PolyMet and some pro-mining politicians are working to dismiss citizen legal challenges in order to promote toxic sulfide mining, while ignoring the severe and long lasting impacts to land, air, water and health. The bill has been referred to the Senate committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

Furthermore, if the sulfide mine gets permitted in Minnesota, it will be almost impossible to stop its continued expansion across the Arrowhead. PolyMet is being permitted for one third of its processing capacity at the former LTV steel mining plant, leaving excess capacity potential to process the nearby sulfide deposits. The plant and tailings basin could be used by Teck Resources, Encampment or Twin Metals—all with adjoining deposits. This would create one gigantic toxic polluting sulfide mining district in the headwaters of Lake Superior and the Rainy River Watershed (Boundary Waters).

Sierra Club members should be very concerned. The North Star Chapter Mining Committee has followed the PolyMet process for the past 12 years, including the entire environmental review process. We have submitted substantive comments oftentimes in conjunction with other environmental groups.

While our comments have been circumvented, marginalized or ignored, the DNR has based PolyMet's final EIS on a strategy called "adaptive management," whereby it acknowledges that critical problems exist but the solutions will be determined once the pollution occurs.

Our environment is being systematically degraded and polluted. We are at a crossroads that could push ecosystems past a point of recovery. We all must contact Governor Dayton, as well as our local, state and federal officials, stating our opposition to PolyMet and our deep concerns about sulfide mining in our state. The best legacy is to protect the waters of our state for the benefit of all citizens, present and future.

Elanne Palcich and Lori Andresen are Co-Chairs of the Mining Committee.

NEW INITIATIVES FOR ST. CLOUD SIERRANS

MARLENE HAIDER

The Sierra Club in St. Cloud has long focused on shutting down Xcel Energy's coal burning power plants, Sherco 1 and 2, in Becker, Minnesota. Now that we have secured retirement dates for both of them, we are trying to broaden our base of support by tackling other issues within the community and collaborating with other environmental and political groups in the area. Here is a summary of our recent activity.

- Northern Metals Recycling: The facility is relocating to Becker, Minnesota. While the City of Becker is very happy about getting the approximately 85 jobs, Northern Metals will bring to Becker, some residents have concerns. Northern Metals has been fined by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) for air pollution at its current site in north Minneapolis and the nearby residents have complained of health problems they believe are associated with the facility. Becker residents are concerned the air and health problems will just move to their town.
- Enbridge Line 3: We planned a rally to coincide with the public hearings on the Line 3 pipeline only to see the City of St. Cloud

cancel the hearings citing safety concerns. If the hearings get rescheduled we'll resurrect our plans for the rally as we had an outpouring of support from multiple organizations concerned with the pipeline and environmental justice.

- Movie & Conversation: We are sponsoring a screening of the documentary "From the Ashes" on Saturday, January 20, 2018, 1:00-3:30 P.M. at the Great River Regional Library, St. Cloud, Minnesota. The documentary looks at how communities across the country wrestle with the legacy of the coal industry and what the future holds. After the movie we will have a discussion on the documentary plus expectations for the coming legislative session.
- Potluck and Party: As a way to help form coalitions with other environmental groups and as a celebration for what we have accomplished, we held a potluck party on Saturday, October 7. The weather was great, the food delicious and the company stimulating.
- DC Federal Lobbying: Julie Hiemenz and Rose Thelen went to Washington, DC in September to lobby environmental issues

on behalf of Sierra Club. They met with U.S. Representative Tom Emmer, and U.S. Senators Al Franken, Amy Klobuchar, and Elizabeth Warren.

The Central Minnesota Sierra Club meets at the Good Earth Co-Op in St. Cloud on the second Thursday of the month from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. For more information contact Marlene at mhaider1231@hotmail.com.

Marlene Haider is Co-Chair of the St. Cloud Sierra Club.

ON THE HOME STRETCH TO STOP LINE 3

SCOTT RUSSELL



Those seeking to stop Line 3 greatly outnumbered supporters at a Sept. 28 public hearing in downtown St. Paul. Photo Credit: Scott Russell

Things are coming to a head around the Enbridge Line 3 tar sands pipeline.

The Sierra Club and other environmental and indigenous groups organized a rally against Line 3 in September, drawing close to 1,000 people at the Capitol steps. We marched from there to a public hearing in downtown St. Paul, giving testimony against this unneeded project. We also held recent Line 3 education events in Fergus Falls and Duluth to promote turnout to Line 3 public hearings in northern Minnesota.

Meanwhile, indigenous-led culture camps are forming in northern Minnesota to stop the pipeline. In Minneapolis, indigenous youth interrupted Gov. Dayton's Water Quality "25 by 25" meeting to demand a face-to-face meeting to talk about Line 3's impact on water quality. (He agreed to meet.)

The industry has deep pockets and continues its public relations campaign. A pipeline front group with the dubious name "Consumer Energy Alliance" was running ads saying we need to "Modernize Minnesota," failing to say that oil pipelines are century-old technology and the antithesis of "Modern."

Although we are nearing the end of the process, we need to keep telling our story:

- The project's environmental and human damage far outweigh its benefits.
- We already import more crude oil than we need for domestic use.
- Enbridge's plan to abandon the old and failing Line 3 in the ground breaks the kindergarten rule "clean up your own mess."
- The project places a disproportionate burden on the Anishinaabe (Ojibwe) community and violates treaty rights.

The Public Utilities Commission (PUC) is expected to make its final decision in April. Here's an update on the process: There are two important decisions pending: 1) whether the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) written by the Department of Commerce

for Line 3 is "adequate," and 2) whether to approve Line 3's "Certificate of Need" and "Route Permit."

Those decisions are on separate tracks, each before different Administrative Law Judges (ALJs). Those judges will make a recommendation to the PUC, which has the final say.

EIS update: The ALJ determined the EIS was "adequate." The PUC will vote on that recommendation Dec. 7, as this newsletter goes to press. In short, it was a bad decision. The Sierra Club believes the EIS is flawed and needs to be redone. Even if the PUC finds the environmental analysis "adequate" the Sierra Club and others could mount a court challenge.

The public comment period for the Certificate of Need ended Nov. 22. The Sierra Club mounted a national petition drive and submitted more than 20,000 signatures from around the country. Given that climate change affects everyone, their voices need to be heard, too.

One of the last stages of the Certificate of Need process was a contested case hearings, a quasi-judicial process with witnesses and cross examination. That also ended in November. We organized public turnout for each hearing. Even though the public couldn't testify, we wanted the PUC to know people were watching. One of the bright spots of the process was the Minnesota Department of Commerce's testimony that Enbridge has not made its case that Line 3 is needed.

The ALJ in this case has yet to make a recommendation on the Certificate of Need.

We will continue to raise public awareness through tabling and education events. If you want to participate, join our monthly "Beyond Oil and Tar Sands" Committee meeting, the third Wednesday of the month, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at the Sierra Club offices, 2327 E. Franklin Ave.

Scott Russell is Co-Chair of the Beyond Oil and Tar Sands Committee.

Support the Minnesota Chapter

While your membership dollars are crucial to support the Sierra Club's local, regional and national campaigns, you also have the option to donate directly to the North Star Chapter. 100% of your additional contribution to our Chapter stays here in Minnesota – to work locally on issues that you care about! Sustaining and tax-deductible options available.

Visit northstar.sierraclub.org/donate to give online, or contact us: 612-659-9124 or margaret.levin@sierraclub.org. Thank you for your generous support!



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The Sierra Club Foundation benefits from workplace contributions to the Minnesota Environmental Fund, which provides a payroll giving option to support 19 member organizations that protect, conserve and restore Minnesota's environment.

To learn more about adding this giving option at your workplace, please contact Margaret Levin at 612-659-9124 or margaret.levin@sierraclub.org.

RIDING THE FUTURE RAILS: 22nd ANNUAL BIKE TOUR FEATURES BOTTINEAU LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT



Photo Credit: Jill Boogren

One of the most exciting new light rail transit (LRT) projects in the works right now is the METRO Blue Line Extension (or Bottineau LRT). The project is a proposed 13-mile expansion of the existing Blue Line that will extend from downtown Minneapolis through north Minneapolis, Golden Valley, Robbinsdale, Crystal, and Brooklyn Park. We know that transportation now accounts for over one fourth of greenhouse gas emissions in Minnesota, so providing

clean transportation options for the northwest Twin Cities metro makes good sense environmentally, economically, and equitably. We at the Sierra Club thought, what better way to explore this future LRT route than via another green transportation option—bicycling. The chapter's 22nd Annual Bike Tour included over 120 participants, including Metropolitan Council and Metro Transit planners, elected officials, Venture North community bike shop,

Harrison Neighborhood Association and many others. The annual ride rolls out every September. We hope you'll join us next year!

The annual Sierra Club Bike Tour is organized by the Land Use and Transportation Committee. To learn more contact joshua.houdek@sierraclub.org or 612-259-2447.



Ford Site proponents celebrate over a decade of advocacy. Photo Credit: Andrea Kiepe

In 2011 Ford Motor Company closed their Twin Cities Assembly Plant that had operated in the Highland Park neighborhood of Saint Paul since 1925. The 135 acres left vacant by the plant presented Saint Paul with one of the largest undeveloped sites in the metro region—and a huge opportunity. The land borders the Mississippi River and a thriving neighborhood, is well connected to the Twin Cities through an improving transit system and a strong network of bicycle facilities, and offers immense potential for housing, jobs and recreation.

Since 2007, advocates from the Sierra Club, The Alliance, Sustain Ward 3, Transit for Livable Communities/Smart Trips, Fresh Energy, Jewish Community Action and a host of affordable housing organizations have been working to set a sustainable course for the future of the site. After over 400 public comments, 140 public meetings, and hours of public testimony, the Saint Paul City Council formally approved the Ford Site master plan in September, 2017.

While numerous design details will depend on what the developer proposes, there are a lot of things we can celebrate right now. Medium and higher density mixed-use zoning support a truly livable community. The plan creates a new neighborhood that

allows residents to reduce reliance on driving as their only option for commuting to work, school or running errands. New and existing residents will be able to live more sustainable lifestyles, in part by utilizing green transportation options such as the new Metro Transit A Line rapid bus, and having easy access to local businesses and the Mississippi River trail system. With abundant bike lanes, wide sidewalks and a commitment to transit connections, Saint Paul is setting a great standard for new development.

Another important benefit of density in the plan is the efficient design of the site. It creates badly needed new housing while minimizing the need for costly new infrastructure. That boosts the local tax base, reduces the pressure on the city budget, and provides breathing space for other priorities like schools, parks and maintenance needs citywide. And most importantly, the city has made new commitments to provide hundreds of affordable housing units to individuals earning minimum wage, seniors on fixed incomes, persons with disabilities and low-wealth families. This is the right direction for the future of Saint Paul.

Riverview Corridor

Much of the success of the Ford Site development will depend on how well the new infrastructure is integrated into existing city networks, and how those networks expand to better serve the area. A key piece of that is how we adapt our transit system along the Riverview Corridor. An advisory committee recently recommended a modern streetcar along West 7th Street, connecting downtown with the MSP airport and Mall of America. This is an incredible opportunity to link thriving neighborhoods, businesses and historic districts with an environmentally sustainable form of transit.

To learn more check out riverviewcorridor.com, email joshua.houdek@sierraclub.org or call 612-259-2447. Also, please join us at a Land Use and Transportation Committee meeting on the first Monday of the month, 6:00pm at the Sierra Club office.

Erin Daly is Chair of the Land Use and Transportation Committee.

“Clean Energy Progress in Rochester” continuation from page 1...

Sierra Coalition at the University of Minnesota Rochester kicked off a series of public lectures as well as a pilot air quality monitoring project in conjunction with Mayo Clinic physicians.

As winter approaches, we are working together with affordable housing advocates for lower and more equitable energy rates for low income households, including rolling back a new and unfair deposit policy that requires financially insecure families to pay the utility a large lump sum each time they move.

Rochester is growing in size and influence in Minnesota, and we are committed to fighting to make sure the policies and infrastructure of today serve to make our city healthier, more equitable, and climate neutral for tomorrow. Each action this

year – from advocating for electric buses and new utility policies that encourage conservation, to working with faith communities to install solar and businesses to pledge their support for a 100% renewable commitment – will be focused on growing our power to assure a just transition to climate neutrality.

Dr. Kelli Lytle is Co-Chair of the Rochester Sierra Club.



Sierra Club activists (ltoR) Flo Sandok, Claire Campion, Mike Schlasner, and Zoey Jantsan delivered 500 petitions calling for an energy efficiency standard for new buildings in Rochester. On the far left is Terry Spaeth, Rochester Redevelopment Director, and on the far right is Gary Neumann, Assistant City Administrator. Photo Credit: Rick Morris

SHARED WATERS, IMPAIRED WATERS

HILARY FRUIN AND STEVE RING

Do unto those downstream as you would have those upstream do unto you.

- Wendell Berry

Minnesota is well known for its lakes. They are a way of life, connecting generations of residents and visitors to nature, adventure and beauty. Our state is also home to the headwaters of the Mississippi River, which provides drinking water to millions, and the St. Louis River, the largest U.S. tributary to Lake Superior.

The Sierra Club North Star Chapter and our community partners believe that Minnesotans have a responsibility to protect our interconnected water systems. Interested Sierra Club members can join the Waters and Wetlands Committee to learn about, act on and coordinate with other groups that are responding to the multiple threats to our waters, including:

- Proposed detrimental changes to state water quality standards,
- Proposed administrative rules that agencies use to implement state water quality statutes,
- Pollution from sulfide mining,
- Chloride from road salt use,
- Excess nutrient and sediment polluting streams and lakes,
- Bad water bills in the legislature, and
- Threats to wetlands, which imperil downstream rivers and lakes

Today, the stakes couldn't be higher in this divided political environment. Citizen and legislative action have a direct impact on the health and vitality of the people, wildlife, communities and businesses that depend on clean water. Clearly, that is all of us.

Let's look at one of those threats: the Nitrogen Fertilizer Rule proposed by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. According to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), about 40 percent of Minnesota's lakes and streams are impaired, failing to meet one or more water quality standards. While many factors contribute to the decline of our waters, one of the most critical threats is nitrate pollution from farm fertilizer. Poor soil health, flooding and

bare fields in the winter result in runoff and groundwater contamination.

The Star Tribune recently reported on the impact, stating “Above 10 parts per million—the maximum allowed by state and federal health standards—nitrates present a risk to pregnant women and infants. According to the state Health Department, there are several dozen community public water systems with source nitrate consistently above the maximum safe level, although they either treat the water or take the source off-line to prevent or resolve a violation. Multiple cities, from Hastings to Perham, Minn., have had to install costly water-treatment technology, at a cost of about \$3,500 per household. An Agriculture Department survey of 20,000 private wells found that one in ten is at or above the legal limit for nitrates, primarily in southeastern and central Minnesota.”

To comply with the 1989 Ground Water Protection Act, and in response to the growing threat, Minnesota's Department of Agriculture has proposed a new Nitrogen Fertilizer Rule.

The Sierra Club and other environmental groups have urged substantial strengthening of that rule, which falls far short of what we need to address this urgent issue. As proposed, it does not meet the requirements of the 1989 statute, which established the state goal that “groundwater be maintained in its natural condition, free from any degradation caused by human activities.” The new fertilizer rule relies primarily on voluntary actions and even its most restrictive mandatory requirements will not protect groundwater.

Yet there is some progress to report. Innovative voices in agriculture are growing stronger—from University of Minnesota's Forever Green Initiative (forevergreen.umn.edu) to sustainable farmers to farm-to-table chefs who are putting high-efficiency—and tasty—grains on the menu.

More citizen resistance will be needed moving forward as agricultural non-point source pollution has become the “leading source of water quality impacts on surveyed rivers and streams, the second largest source of impairments to wetlands, the third largest source for lakes, and a major contributor to contamination of surveyed estuaries and

ground water” according to the EPA's National Water Quality Assessment. Nonpoint source pollution, unlike pollution from industrial and sewage treatment plants, comes from many diffuse sources.

Hilary Fruin is a volunteer leader with the Water and Wetlands Committee. Steve Ring is Chair of the Water and Wetlands Committee.

Home Tips to Protect Water Quality

Everyone has a role to play to protect water quality here in Minnesota and downstream. It starts at home. Read these tips from the MPCA:

- Grow a healthy, water-friendly lawn and garden — minimize water use, keep leaves and grass clippings out of streets and storm drains, and avoid pesticides.
- Properly dispose of medicines — medicines flushed down the drain can pollute our water and unintentionally expose us to harmful chemicals.
- Use sidewalk salt sparingly in the winter — chloride from road and sidewalk salt is a growing problem in state waters
- Maintain your septic system properly — a poorly functioning septic system can allow pathogens, nutrients, and other chemicals to enter groundwater or lakes and streams.
- Reduce your use of toxic products — find alternatives for laundry soaps, cleaning sprays, insecticides, and other products that may be harmful to human health or the environment.
- Pick up trash when you see it — debris gets washed into storm drains and flows directly into local bodies of water. That includes pet waste, which can contribute harmful ammonia.

DULUTH UPDATE

LINDA HERRON AND TOM THOMPSON



Duluth Energy Team met with Mayor Emily Larson to discuss the city's clean energy future. Photo Credit: Bronwyn Lipinski

Northern Minnesota Sierra Club Clean Energy Team members have been busy throughout the summer and fall working to promote clean energy, air and water. Several members of the Duluth Sierra Club team joined with other environmental groups including Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light, Ecolibrium 3, Citizens Climate Lobby, Izaak Walton League, McCabe Chapter, and Honor the Earth to work with on the City of Duluth's Comprehensive Planning 2035 process. The plan supports a city adoption of the greenhouse gas emission reductions proposed by Mayor Emily Larson in 2017 and also included in the Paris Climate Accord: 15% GHG reduction by 2020 and 80% reduction by 2050. Several members met with Mayor Larson in June to present Sierra Club's 100% renewable energy cities campaign (see photo).

In October, Northern Minnesota Sierrans were busy participating in two public hearings in this area. At the Duluth Entertainment and Convention Center, the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission held one of several scheduled hearings on the Certificate of Need and Route Permit Applications for Enbridge Line 3 Pipeline Replacement at two sessions during the afternoon and evening of October 18. Several Sierra Club Clean Energy Team members testified to the lack of need, increased dependence on fossil fuels and potential pollution of indigenous wild rice waters along the path of the pipeline as reasons to refuse Enbridge permission for the pipeline.

In between the two sessions, a rally and march were organized by Honor the Earth and Minnesota for Pipeline Cleanup. The rally involved participants from local tribes playing drums and unfurling a giant parachute with the words *Climate, Planet, Community, Protect our Planet*. During the rally, John Doberstein, a Sierra Club North Star Executive Committee member and leader of Duluth for Clean Water, gave a motivating talk that can be viewed on the Sierra Club Duluth for Clean Energy Facebook page.

On October 26, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency held a public hearing, again, one of several, on the sulfate standard for wild rice waters in Minnesota. Preceding

the hearing at the Fond du Lac Community College, a gathering was held where wild rice dishes were served while those attending listened to drumming and inspiring discussion. The hearings were held to invite public testimony on proposed changes to the sulfate standard of 10mg/l in waters where wild rice grows. The majority of the testimony recommended that the current standard be maintained. People expressed concerns including: the methylation of mercury—which allows it to be accumulated in fish—and its effects on children; the new standard excluding hundreds of waters where wild rice is growing; the classification of wild rice waters according to state water quality standards; Treaty Rights violations; and poor enforcement of the current standard.

Going forward, the Duluth Team plans to coordinate with several other local environmental and social activist groups in an upcoming second meeting with Duluth Mayor Larson to press for GHG emission reductions and reporting to figure importantly in the Duluth 2035 Comprehensive Plan. We are also closely watching the developments in the Minnesota Power electricity rate increase request to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission. The Citizens Utility Board (CUB) website www.cubminnesota.org has information on the costs to consumers, including the newest MN Power proposed gas power plant and its impact on consumer prices. There is also an action alert for individuals to take action by emailing their representatives in the Minnesota legislature, which can be found at: <http://cubminnesota.org/minnesota-power-rate-increases>.

For information about monthly meeting time and location, contact Ann Miller at agmiller51@msn.com.

Linda Herron and Tom Thompson are volunteer leaders with the Duluth Clean Energy Team of the North Star Chapter. Tom is a member of the Executive Committee.



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Join us for our annual spring and fall Outdoor Adventure Expos - as well as events throughout the year, including:

Darn Tough Pint Night and Sale
Thursday March 8th, 2018
5:00-7:30 pm

❖
Black Diamond Pint Night and Sale
Thursday March 29th, 2018
5:00-7:30 pm

❖
Oboz Pint Night and Sale
Thursday April 5th, 2018
5:00-7:30 pm

❖
Spring Outdoor Adventure Expo
Fri, Sat, Sun April 27th-29th, 2018
OutdoorAdventureExpo.com

❖
Outdoor Diva Night
Thursday May 3rd, 2018
5:00-7:30 pm

For a complete listing, visit:
www.midwestmtn.com/current-events



Gather with the outdoor community and get geared-up to enjoy your next outdoor adventure!



Example of a Teck Resources copper mine in British Columbia. This could be coming to Superior National Forest, based on Teck's known deposits.

Toxic copper-nickel sulfide mining continues to threaten Superior National Forest (SNF). The United States Forest Service (USFS), already planning a land exchange with PolyMet for its proposed toxic open pit sulfide mine, now plans to trade additional acreage that would facilitate more such mining. Only now it's being done in the name of our school children.

The School Trust Land Exchange draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) comment period ended on October 10, 2017. According to the DEIS, a portion of state trust lands located within the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) would be exchanged for USFS land outside of the BWCAW. Parcels for the land exchange, hand-picked by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) as having the greatest potential to generate money for the school trust, include the Teck Resources Mesaba Copper-Nickel Project area. Teck's Mesaba deposits are the largest of the known sulfide mineral deposits in the state.

Teck's mineral deposits lie between those of PolyMet and Twin Metals (Antofagasta)—in what could become a massive industrial sulfide mining zone. While PolyMet's proposed mine pits are poised to pollute the Lake Superior watershed, Teck and Twin Metals' pollution would flow north to the Rainy River. But because their mineral deposits are located close to the Divide, both Teck and Twin Metals indicate they could place some of their toxic mine waste in the sacrificial Lake Superior watershed.

The USFS, in conjunction with the DNR, is willing to condone and facilitate the pollution of two international waterways and a drinking water aquifer for the "benefit of our school children."

History

When Minnesota was granted statehood in 1858, two sections out of each township were given to the state for the benefit of schools. The state determined that it could use, lease, or sell the land to raise money for the trust.

By the end of the 1800's, the majority of school trust lands were sold for development and agriculture.

The ones that remain today are primarily located in the northern part of the state in an area that has been largely spared from industrial pollution. But now, even while Governor Mark Dayton speaks against "highly toxic sulfide waste" and for

protecting our water, the DNR agency under him is choosing to promote sulfide mining.

Interest money from the school trust fund currently generates about \$30 per pupil per year, less than .003% of the state budget of approximately \$9,000 per pupil. Trust fund money is no pillar of our public school system. Instead, it's being used as an excuse for converting our remaining high quality wetlands, forests, and watersheds into an unpopular and perpetually polluting sulfide mining district.

Other Options for the Trust

When the BWCAW was established in 1978, the retention of state trust lands allowed for the sharing of state and federal management. Since 10% of BWCAW campsites are on trust lands, it would be appropriate for the USFS to share a portion of camper fees with the state.

In 1997 the entire Minnesota Federal legislative delegation supported a Federal buy-out of the trust lands with funds that were available at the time. But the Iron Range delegation torpedoed the plan, demanding a complete land exchange instead. The result was a loss of funds for our school children over the past 20 years.

Hidden in the DEIS

The proposed exchange of approximately 23,000 - 39,000 acres, as included in the DEIS, would give the state its most coveted parcels of Superior National Forest land—those needed by Teck and other companies for future mines or mine infrastructure.

Meanwhile, 2/3 of the trust lands, along with all of the state's mineral rights, would remain in the BWCAW, leaving the door open for future exchanges and controversies—resulting in a continued loss of Superior National Forest lands in the headwaters of the Rainy and St. Louis Rivers. The USFS, under the Weeks Act, has the responsibility of protecting such headwaters. Turning the land over to the state removes such protections.

Health impacts

The DEIS ignores the health impacts that result from mining activity. Sulfide mining is known to leach toxic heavy metals, including copper, nickel, cobalt, manganese, arsenic, and mercury. Childhood exposure to toxic metals leaching from

mine waste into our environment can result in learning difficulties, memory impairment, damage to the nervous system, and behavioral problems such as aggressiveness and hyperactivity.

Those espousing the idea of exchanging land in order to maximize dollars for the school trust fund are doing so at the risk of damaging the health and well being of not only our children, but all people living in northeast Minnesota, including Fond du Lac, Cloquet, and Duluth.

Other Deficiencies of the DEIS

In seeking to facilitate the land exchange, the DEIS contains critical omissions. There is no environmental analysis of the effects of mining, even though federal lands were chosen by the state for their high mineral potential. No specific deposits are named on the DEIS maps. The DEIS arbitrarily claims that no mining is foreseeable, ignoring extensive leasing, exploration, mapping, and delineation of mineral deposits.

Nowhere does the DEIS consider the cumulative impacts of more intense mining, logging or development on the water, wetlands, and wildlife resources in what is now Superior National Forest.

While acknowledging that protected wildlife such as Canada lynx, wolves, and the northern long-eared bat may be adversely impacted by the exchange, the effects are deemed negligible. The same goes for impacts of climate change. No mention is made of the elimination of recreational opportunities due to changes in land ownership, including portions that the state could sell for private development. Ecological and watershed concerns are left to fall by the wayside.

It appears that the USFS simply wants to wash its hands of any controversial developments appearing on the horizon, and would rather skirt the issues by agreeing to a toxic land exchange—in the name of our school children.

Citizen Action

The final EIS is expected out this spring. Check the North Star website for hearing dates and an action alert. In the meantime, call Governor Dayton's office in opposition to this exchange.

Elanne Palcich and Lori Andresen are Co-Chairs of the Mining Committee.

EMBRACING EQUITY AND RACIAL JUSTICE AS CORE TO OUR WORK

SCOTT RUSSELL

The Sierra Club and other environmental groups have come to understand that racial justice is not just something that we add to our work, but something that is essential to our work.

We know that climate change will have a disproportionate impact on communities of color (think Puerto Rico). We know that tar sands pipelines are having a disproportionate impact on indigenous communities (think Enbridge Line 3). We know that industrial plants and waste sites, and their toxins, often are located near low-income communities of color (think Prairie Island and nuclear waste casks).

We need to build relationships with a broad array of community partners, and be more inclusive, to be an effective and just organization.

This has been a slow evolution and this is urgent work. In 1990 a group called the SouthWest Organizing Project wrote a scathing letter to the Sierra Club and other large environmental organizations, challenging us to be more inclusive and have a better understanding of how our policies affect communities of color.

Here at the North Star Chapter, we have made some steps forward. We have sought to recruit leaders who would bring different backgrounds and perspectives from outside as well as within our organization. In 2015 we adopted a policy to apply a racial equity lens to all major Chapter decisions. We are committed to ongoing staff and volunteer trainings in diversity, equity and environmental justice.

For those of you who might not be familiar with them, we also are committed to following the “Jemez Principles”, which grew out of work of the SouthWest Organizing Project. First articulated in 1996, they are:

1. Be inclusive
2. Emphasize bottom-up organizing
3. Let people speak for themselves
4. Work together in solidarity and mutuality
5. Build just relationships among ourselves
6. Commitment to self transformation

The Beyond Oil and Tar Sands Committee decided this fall to discuss some aspect of the Jemez Principles as part of each of our monthly meetings, including how they apply to our work. The North Star Chapter also is in early discussion about creating a movie night that would be part of our commitment to self transformation. We would hold screenings two to four times a year, focusing on environmental justice films and a post-film discussion. Stay tuned.

Scott Russell is Co-Chair of the Beyond Oil and Tar Sands Committee.



LEGISLATION THREATENS PROTECTIONS FOR BOUNDARY WATERS CANOE AREA WILDERNESS

DEVON CUPERY

In 2016, many partners and advocates including the Sierra Club helped to secure a major victory to protect the Boundary Waters Wilderness from sulfide mining. As President Obama’s term came to a close, the U.S. Forest Service announced it would not renew two mineral leases for Twin Metals and began a two-year study to determine whether these lands should be considered for extended 20-year protection from mining.

However, these protections are under attack in Congress. In September, U.S. Rep. Rick Nolan (DFL) and Rep. Tom Emmer (R) introduced an amendment to a spending bill that would defund the two-year study, effectively stopping the process. The following month, Rep. Emmer introduced H.R. 3905 (the MINER bill), which would grant the two mineral leases to Twin Metals. Rep. Emmer’s bill would also require congressional approval on mineral withdrawals and national monument designations in the Superior National Forest.

“This bill is a radical attack against established practices that evaluate the need for environmental protections of public lands,” says Luther Dale, longtime volunteer leader for the Sierra Club North Star Chapter. “It bypasses citizen input, scientific research and evaluations by public agencies, favoring foreign mining interests with terrible environmental records. Conservation and wilderness values are run over.”

These legislative actions would cut out the public’s voice, even after unprecedented public involvement in the review process. More than 3,000 people attended public listening sessions in Ely, St. Paul, and Duluth earlier this year, and more than 125,000 submitted public comments in favor of protecting the Boundary Waters from sulfide mining.

Each year, 150,000 people canoe, fish, and travel in the BWCA, providing the foundation for the region’s recreation economy valued at \$45 million annually. The two sites that Twin Metals seeks to mine are within three miles of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area, posing an unacceptable risk to this treasured land and water. A well-known byproduct of sulfide mining is acid mine drainage, which leeches acid runoff into waterways. Sulfide mining would pollute rivers and groundwater for hundreds of years, and is unacceptably risky in the water-rich environment of Northeastern Minnesota.

This is an important time to make our voices heard. Contact your representative and senators and urge them to oppose both H.R. 3115 (see page 3) and H.R. 3905. For information on the current status of the legislation and how to get involved contact luther.dale@northstar.sierraclub.org.

Devon Cupery is the Public Engagement Fellow with the Sierra Club North Star Chapter.



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COMMUNITY SOLAR GARDENS

SARAH PETERSEN



Solar panels above the Sierra Club office. Photo Credit: Joshua Houdek

Solar energy: clean, abundant, free. On an individual level, property owners could—in theory—liberate themselves from dependence on fossil fuels by devoting sun-drenched square footage to a solar array.

In practice, though, that path to energy independence is not realistic for many Minnesotans. Apartments, shared buildings, and tree-shaded lots do not lend themselves to efficient collection of solar power.

In 2013, changes in state law gave conservation-minded Minnesotans a new option: community solar gardens, or CSGs.

Minnesota's regulatory requirements for CSGs are relatively minimal. To qualify as a community solar project in Minnesota, a CSG must have at least five subscribers. No subscriber may own more than 40 percent of the facility. Projects may not exceed one megawatt in capacity, but there is no legal restriction on linking shared systems. Subscribers see benefits in the form of credits on their utility bills, similar to homeowners with rooftop solar arrays.

Most CSGs fall into one of three categories:

1. Under the utility-sponsored model, a utility company builds or purchases a CSG and then offers its customers CSG power as an option.
2. In the special-purpose entity (SPE) model, individuals or groups join together to create a business entity that owns or operates a CSG.
3. A community of donors provides the foundation for the nonprofit (or “buy a brick”) model, the most purely philanthropic of the three.

Regardless of model, any CSG project will have to find ways to secure a location, cover construction costs, recruit subscribers, and fund ongoing site maintenance.

Minnesota has proven to be an enthusiastic host for CSGs. Xcel Energy's initial studies predicted construction of community solar arrays producing 20 megawatts of energy between 2013 and 2015; by the end of 2015, actual construction had surpassed those estimates by 2,150 percent.

Minnesota residents can invest in community solar in several different ways. Under some plans, subscribers pay a one-time up-front fee to cover the life of the subscription agreement (usually 20–25 years). This structure locks in benefits and protects against future rate changes. Another common option is the “pay as you go” format, allowing subscribers to make monthly payments rather than initial lump-sum investments; most of these monthly models build in year-over-year price escalations.

Ever-increasing numbers of CSG projects are working their way through the regulatory approval process, and potential subscribers will see more and more offers from project developers. Because the State of Minnesota does not certify solar developers, consumers are ultimately responsible for researching a project's viability. Even well-funded, reputable CSGs can present difficulties: some potential subscribers will face challenges in the form of minimum credit score requirements; customers may run into complications if they want to sell or transfer their subscriptions; advertised savings may never materialize.

Grassroots organizations across Minnesota are working to dismantle these and other barriers to access. The Just Solar Coalition, a partnership between Minnesota Interfaith Power & Light, Cooperative Energy Futures, Community Power, Renewable NRG Partners, and the Sierra Club, seeks to promote construction of CSGs, build awareness through educational programs, and create economic opportunities for low-income local residents by incorporating job training programs into CSG projects. When Minnesota Power unveiled a proposal to build a CSG in northeastern Minnesota, regional climate activists collected hundreds of signatures for a letter addressed to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission; the letter urged consideration for key social and economic justice concerns, such as ensuring that CSGs benefit local residents, building in provisions for low-income residents, and granting subscribers a measure of cost stability.

Despite the potential pitfalls, CSGs offer an affordable alternative to privately owned solar arrays. Minnesota's innovative laws are establishing operational models that can be easily replicated in other states. As it does in so many other progressive movements, Minnesota is lighting the way.

Sarah Petersen is a volunteer leader with the Beyond Oil and Tar Sands Committee and the Communications Team.

WHAT ARE CARBON OFFSETS?

NANCY ARIKIAN

Because of modern human society's current dependence on fossil fuels, many of the ways we feed, transport, and warm ourselves contribute to our carbon footprint. If you are concerned about climate change, you may already have started thinking about or practicing ways to reduce your carbon footprint such as riding your bike or using public transportation instead of driving, eating locally-produced food, and turning down the heat in your home. But what about when options for avoiding or reducing energy use are limited? Carbon offsetting may be the answer.

Carbon offsetting refers to the practice of contributing money to organizations or projects that reduce carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions (e.g., reforestation initiatives and building sources of renewable energy, such as wind or solar energy). Carbon offsets are most often mentioned in regard to air travel, since it is very fossil-fuel intensive and difficult to replace with alternatives. To elaborate, carbon offsetting allows you to make up for your contribution of greenhouse gases (GG) to the atmosphere by buying/ paying for an equivalent reduction of them elsewhere.

Although this may seem like a simple solution, carbon offsetting has been a source of controversy. In the short term, this method may seem effective, but carbon emissions are cumulative. That is,

once they're emitted, they stay in the atmosphere and continue to contribute to warming, whether or not they've been offset.

In addition, calculations for determining the size of your carbon footprint are complicated and require estimates about energy use. There are no accepted standards for these calculations and it is difficult to determine how each offset vendor does so. Under-accounting for your footprint leaves your impact on the environment greater, while over-accounting could leave you with the impression that offsetting your emissions is too expensive.

Finally, organizations offering carbon offsets vary widely in terms of how much of the money they collect actually goes to projects that reduce energy use.

If you're wondering how to determine the most reliable organizations to purchase carbon offsets from, the Sierra Club has done the research for you. After a thorough review, the Sierra Club has partnered with NativeEnergy, a company that is transparent about its calculations, types of projects, and percent of revenue that actually funds projects (see <http://content.sierraclub.org/outings/carbon-offsets> for more information).

While carbon offsets are contributing to noble projects, the best way to avoid the worst effects of climate change is through significant

reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. As the holiday season approaches, here are some questions to consider:

- Can you purchase products that are made or grown locally to reduce their need for shipping?
- Can you plan your errands with other people to avoid SOV (single occupancy vehicle) trips?
- Can you travel less?
- If you must travel, can you purchase carbon offsets and/or use less carbon-intensive means of travel?
- If someone is traveling to see you, can you talk with them about carbon offsets or offer to purchase offsets for them?

Saying "Yes!" to any of these questions will help ensure a better future for yourself, your loved ones, and all of the residents of our beautiful planet.

Nancy Arikian is a volunteer leader with the Communications Team.



Matthew Spiten, Megan Zimmerman, Olivia Stiller, Brady Zell, Tom Ekstrom, Cassie Weis, and Ritthi Punyamurthula. Photo Credit: Kayla Piper

Sierra Student Coalition Organizing on University of Minnesota - Rochester Campus

ROCHESTER SIERRA STUDENT COALITION

In 2016, Matt Spiten was in his junior year at the University of Minnesota Rochester (UMR) studying Respiratory Care and looking for a way to combine his love of the outdoors with his passion for health care. He began volunteering as the special events coordinator with the local Sierra Club in Rochester.

Matt quickly found several other students and a professor who were excited to bring environmental activism to the school. They established a new Student Sierra Coalition at UMR and set to work on their first event: bringing the National Geographic Adventurer of the Year, Dave Freeman, to campus to talk about his work advocating for the Boundary Waters. The event packed the room with more than 100 students and community members, and caught the eye of environmentally minded physicians at the local hospital.

Soon the fledgling Student Sierra Coalition was in talks with physicians, environmental health researchers, county administrators, and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to set up an air quality

monitoring feasibility project in Rochester. The students developed the outlines of the project with a professor at the University of Iowa. His insight helped them pick the proper monitors, plotting software, and parameters for their study. Physicians with the Zumbro Valley Medical Society looked at local epidemiological data in the surrounding area to determine asthma and high traffic density hot spots in the city and control sites. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency provided the air quality monitors to measure fine particulates. With all the pieces in place, the students helped organize teams of citizen scientists to collect air quality data over the summer and presented their findings to a panel of city government staff and university faculty.

This year, the Student Sierra Coalition has grown from five students to nearly 70. They are working to partner with UMR to host environmentally focused lectures on campus ranging from the Frac Sand fight in Winona County to climate change effects facing Minnesota. They have also met with community members to provide

students with a woodland restoration volunteer opportunity this fall. Finally, the group is looking to proceed to the next phase of implementing the citizen science air quality project.

Over the next few years, the students are working to build power on their campus to advocate for all net-zero and carbon neutral buildings for the University's planned expansion. And Matt is closing out his senior year at UMR and looks forward to practicing as a Respiratory Therapist in Rochester and continuing to advocate for healthy air for his patients. He will leave behind a thriving core of students committed to climate justice in the heart of Rochester.



Photo description: Metro Transit ad for SavetheFood.com, Minneapolis Photo credit: Danette Knickmeier

LET'S SAVE THE FOOD

JENNY KEDWARD

A report by the National Resources Defense Council (NRDC) blew the lid off the food waste issue in 2012 when they found that 40 percent of all food in America is thrown away. That's a lot of spoiled meat, limp lettuce and other wasted food going into our trash. Wasting food is a problem that costs the average family of four roughly \$125 per month or \$1,500 per year—saving this much money every year would be like getting a raise.

When we throw food in the trash or even compost pile, we're wasting much more than food—we waste the water, energy, labor, pesticides and land used to grow and transport it. A fifth of our nation's fresh water is used to grow food that is uneaten. In addition, once food waste reaches landfills, it produces methane, a powerful greenhouse gas. At the same time, 42 million Americans face food insecurity—and less than one-third of the food we throw away would be enough to feed this population completely.

But there is hope. The Ad Council and NRDC are behind a national campaign to help turn the shame, frustration and guilt that comes with food waste into kitchen joy. The 'Save the Food' campaign raises awareness of these issues and aims to combat food waste from its largest source—consumers, who collectively waste more food than grocery stores, restaurants and farms.

Saving food starts with a mindset. Here are some ideas to start making a mental shift in the right direction:

- Control your portions. Use the Guest-imator on SavetheFood.com to feed everyone—even with leftovers—without filling your trash can.
- Plan meals but be realistic. Write down your activities for the week and figure out what days you actually need to cook—it might only be three meals. Rotate your go-to meals and toss in something new every once in awhile.
- Revive limp vegetables. A quick soak in ice water for 5 to 10 minutes is often enough to reinvigorate wilted veggies like carrots, celery and lettuce.
- Shop your kitchen first. Check your pantry, fridge and freezer to see if you already have items on your shopping list to avoid buying double.
- Buy loose to save a ton. If fruits or vegetables are sold by weight at your grocery store—asparagus, bananas and grapes—you can break up the bunch and only buy what you need.
- Reinvent leftovers. Get inspired with apps and websites like BigOven.com or Allrecipes.com that let you search recipes by ingredients.
- Don't lose food in the fridge. Move food that should be eaten soon to a designated area in the fridge and mark it with an "Eat First" sign.
- Schedule a lazy night. We often don't have the time or energy to cook every night. Plan a few lazy nights like an "eat it up" night or an informal potluck with friends.

- Store right. Check if you're storing food properly with a storage guide on SavetheFood.com. For instance, treat asparagus, green onions and parsley like cut flowers—place their stems in a glass of water.
- Use freezer power. You can freeze almost anything, like soups, pasta, sauces and bread. It's like pushing a pause button for a no-hassle meal later. Keep freezer burn out by keeping air out.

Visit SavetheFood.com to learn more and use the food storage guides and tips on meal planning.

The Sierra Club North Star Chapter has a new Zero Waste Task Force! For more info contact north.star.chapter@sierraclub.org

Jenny Kedward is Chair of the Communications Team.



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LOCAL OUTINGS



Photo credit: Tom Thompson

JOIN US

The Sierra Club Club's mission to explore, enjoy and protect the planet reminds us that conservation comes from a personal relationship with nature. Our volunteer-led Outings Program gets people of all ages outdoors on local educational outings. For updates and additions, check our schedule at www.meetup.com/MN-Sierra-Club-Outings or search for the MN Sierra Club Outings page.

Winter Hike at William O'Brien State Park Sunday, January 7

Start the new year right with a hike in the section of William O'Brien state park set aside for winter hiking and snowshoeing. We will hike 4+ miles briskly enough to stay warm.

2018 National Forest Lodge Ski Weekend Friday, February 16 through Monday, February 19 (President's Day weekend)

Join us for a weekend of skiing, family-style dining and great music at the National Forest Lodge near Isabella, MN. The lodge has 30 km of remote, quiet cross-country ski trails winding through 2,000 acres in the Superior National Forest.

Enjoy a wood-fired sauna on Lake Gegok, followed by a post-sauna jump into the lake if you're so inclined. A shared outdoor hot tub for cold weather star-gazing is also an option. We'll stay in rustic cabins, which means you may be sleeping in a bunk bed and your middle-of-the-night bathroom trip will require a quick, adventurous outdoor walk. It's all part of the magic of the National Forest Lodge. Learn more at nationalforestlodge.com

The cost of \$295 per person includes lodging and 9 meals for three nights and three days, from Friday dinner to Monday lunch.

To reserve your spot, you may pay in full or make a 50% deposit by December 21st and pay the balance by Friday, January 26th. Please also email your name and the names of any others in your group to greg.allison@northstar.sierraclub.org.

Your spot will be reserved once your payment is received. Please send to:

Sierra Club North Star Chapter
Attn: NFL trip 2018
2327 East Franklin Ave, Suite 1
Minneapolis, MN 55406-1024

Please include "NFL trip 2018" in the memo line of the check.

For more information on these and other events, or to find out how you can become an Outings Leader, contact Chair Greg Allison at greg.allison@northstar.sierraclub.org

For the schedule of committee meetings and other volunteer opportunities, please check the North Star Chapter calendar at sierraclub.org/minnesota or call the office at 612-659-9124

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I work to improve the environment to help people. Mostly I do this through academic research – I lead the Global Water Initiative at the University of Minnesota’s Institute on the Environment. Throughout my career, I have focused on how we impact the world around us and on how we can thrive as part of the environment. My particular area of study is water resources, and I’m excited about joining the Executive Committee of the North Star Sierra Club because water matters so much to us here in Minnesota and because there’s so much we can do to make it better. I’m a native Californian, and I fell for Minnesota immediately when I moved here for work seven years ago. I’ve embraced the winter, including broomball, at least until I broke my collarbone. Getting to cross the Mississippi river on my way to work remains a highlight of my day!



C. Scott Cooper
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I’ve been an active volunteer with the North Star Chapter for the past decade, serving in a variety of different capacities and on a variety of different committees including the ExCom. I also served for two years as Chapter Chair, and currently serve as Vice Chair. I bring to the Chapter not only my time and energy but also nearly thirty years of experience serving on nonprofit boards, managing progressive political organizations and running successful issue campaigns.

I’m excited about where the Chapter is headed as we grow to meet the challenges and threats posed by today’s dangerous political climate. I’m particularly excited about helping increase our financial resources and our political power, about growing and diversifying our membership and about increasing the Chapter’s commitment to include equity considerations in all our work. The Sierra Club is needed now more than ever, and I’m committed to building the kind of Chapter that will be able to achieve our important and ambitious goals in the years to come.



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I became an active volunteer with the Sierra Club in 2006 because the environment and the outdoors are deeply rooted in my spirituality, and I felt that if I don’t do something, then who will? As a volunteer, I’ve had the opportunity to represent the North Star Chapter in the NE Minnesota region, and in that time, I’ve organized many educational outings and forums, attended both local and national conferences, worked with Labor to build partnerships around green jobs, recruited new members, and I’ve lobbied for environmental issues in St. Paul and D.C. Because of the Club, I’ve been given a voice and a sense of satisfaction that I AM MAKING A DIFFERENCE!

I currently work on energy and climate solutions, and I’ve been involved in stopping sulfide mining in MN for 11 years. I’m a Realtor and Certified EcoBroker® in my day job, and I also do energy efficiency consulting on the side. My wife and I are proud to raise our two beautiful girls along the shores of Lake Superior, and we’re both extremely active in our community. Thank you for the opportunity to serve, and I would be honored to have your vote.



Bruce Goff
Eagan, MN
651-315-0000
09bgoff@gmail.com

I have been a member of the Sierra Club for over 20 years and have participated off-and-on with the CARE Committee (Clean Air and Renewable Energy). I have also authored some short articles in the NorthStar Journal. While helping to raise our children in the suburbs and Rochester, I have found time to serve on multiple city advisory commissions and a homeowner association board. I have also served as secretary to the board of a small for-profit company. I enjoy trail running, gardening, and cooking. I recycle or compost about everything and “struggle” to embrace simplicity and get rid of stuff. I am a veteran having served over 20 years in the Army & National Guard. I am a licensed attorney currently focused on IT-related issues as well as healthcare compliance. The Sierra Club North Star Chapter and most advocacy organizations find themselves beset with a growing list of interdependent issues. Although each group can find some successes focusing on an issue, a more combined effort is required. I strongly support the alliances the Club is building but I also support the Club working outside our normal environmentally-focused issues. Some advocacy effort directed to legal and tax reforms (along with our partner organizations) so that our government and business institutions are more transparent will strengthen all the great campaigns the North Star chapter works on.



Katie Hatt
Minneapolis, MN
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I am a long time fan of the Sierra Club and have enjoyed working closely with North Star Chapter staff and volunteers on state-level transportation advocacy issues for the past three Minnesota legislative sessions as a public policy consultant. I’ve also been an intermittent member of the Land Use and Transportation Committee and this year joined the Minneapolis & St. Paul Political Committee.

My professional background includes public policy-focused roles at Hennepin County, the Metropolitan Council and the Minnesota House of Representatives DFL Caucus. I recently joined the North Star Policy Institute, a start-up progressive think tank, as Executive Director. My past volunteer work includes serving on the boards of the Minneapolis Bicycle Coalition (now Our Streets) and Citizens for a Loring Park Community.

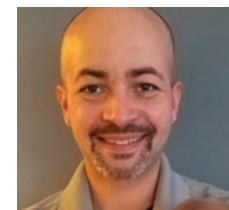
We are living in a time where the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency released a four-year strategic plan that entirely omits the phrase “climate change” and where it’s okay to raise transit fares at the same time businesses receive tax cuts. I believe the North Star Chapter is the best investment in my volunteer time to support policy outcomes that center our environment and equity. I would be honored to serve on the Executive Committee and support the Chapter’s growth.



Claudia Sanchez-Santoyo
Minneapolis, MN
612-910-5491
santoyo2506@gmail.com

Because of my internship with the Sierra Club’s state lobby team at the Capitol, I am able to better understand the complexity of passing policy that benefits both people and the environment. I am committed to empower the voices of those who are left out of the conversation. As a result of my involvement in community organizing, I value deeply working alongside with ally organizations. I am proud of my work as the field director of a recent city council campaign. We successfully brought a handful of issues to the forefront that have blended in the background before.

The vision we put forward broadened the conversation, inspired a new level of interest in local politics and brought our community together to continue fighting for what is right and working towards a better vision for all. My values align with the Chapter’s mission to eradicate all forms of oppression and partnering with communities to preserve and protect Minnesota’s environment. I seek to utilize my voice to create positive change and build a more inclusive community. I am excited to run for the Executive Committee as I hope to continue contributing to these vast needed changes through my involvement in policy work.



Kamau Wilkins
Rochester, MN
507-202-4027
kamauwilkins@gmail.com

I am a lifelong social activist. I attended my first protest for women’s rights when I was 11. I attended college at Winona State University and became President of the Black Cultural Awareness Association while studying fine art.

I have been a professional youth coach for 15 years. Currently am the SE District Manager for the Youth Enrichment League which teaches fencing, chess, basketball, and numerous other activities to youth.

I am the co-founder and President of an impactful social justice group in Rochester, MN called “Rochester For Justice”. We have hosted numerous town hall meetings, facilitated panel discussions during the elections, and were instrumental creating the Community Focus Team through RPS to combat Racism in the school district. Along with the Local Sierra Club we held a donation drive for Standing Rock in which we raised thousands of dollars, supplies, and 500 pounds of meat that we delivered in a U-Haul.

I worked alongside the Sierra Club during the Earth Day march where I delivered a speech speaking on intersectionality between Social and Environmental Justice. I am interested in sitting on North Star executive Committee to do just that, meld Social and Environmental Justice to create greater change.



SIERRA CLUB
NORTH STAR CHAPTER

PLEASE VOTE FOR YOUR CHAPTER LEADERS DEADLINE FOR VOTING IS JANUARY 5, 2018

The Executive Committee (ExCom) is the governing body of the North Star Chapter of the Sierra Club, with responsibility for overall activities, budgeting, and strategic planning of the Chapter.

There are fifteen members of the ExCom, elected by members of the Sierra Club in Minnesota for rotating three-year terms.

Members reflect a diversity of backgrounds and talents, brought together by their common interest in environmental protection, and a commitment to help the Sierra Club's North Star Chapter thrive and grow in its work as the leading grassroots voice for Minnesota's environment.

Current members of the North Star Chapter ExCom:

TERM EXPIRES 2017	TERM EXPIRES 2018	TERM EXPIRES 2019
C. SCOTT COOPER	LOUIS ALEMAYEHU	SAMMIE ARDITO RIVERA
JOHN DOBERSTEIN	MARTY COBENAIS	JAVIER MORILLO-ALICEA
KIRSTEN JOHNSON	KATIE EUKEL	LOIS NORRGARD
	SARAH WOVCHA	SIRI SIMONS
	PREETI YONJON	TOM THOMPSON

Please take the time to read the statements and mark and return a ballot. Your vote is important regardless of your level of involvement in Chapter activities. The five candidates receiving the greatest number of votes will be elected to serve three-year terms on the North Star Chapter Executive Committee.

VOTING INSTRUCTIONS:

To vote by mail:

- Your member number is included with your mailing address on the back of the ballot. This will be used to verify membership; however, your vote will be kept confidential.
- Please read the candidate statements provided.
- Vote for up to five candidates of your choice by clearly marking "X" in the box next to their names on the ballot, or by writing in a non-listed candidate's name on the line provided. Multiple votes for one candidate will disqualify the ballot (except, of course, for a joint membership in which each member votes for the same candidate).

- Place your ballot in an envelope and mail it to arrive by January 5, 2018 to:

**Elections Committee
Sierra Club North Star Chapter
2327 E Franklin Avenue #1
Minneapolis, MN 55406**

To vote by email:

- Locate your 8-digit membership number included with your mailing address on the back of the ballot. Your vote will be kept confidential, but this number is required to verify membership.
- Please read the candidate statements provided.
- Vote for up to five candidates of your choice by listing them on an email message to ballot@northstar.sierraclub.org. You may write in non-listed candidates' names. Multiple votes for one candidate will disqualify the ballot (except, of course, for a joint membership in which each member votes for the same candidate).
- Send your email message to ballot@northstar.sierraclub.org before January 5, 2018 at 5 p.m.

ELECTION BALLOT FOR NORTH STAR CHAPTER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2018

Please vote for up to five candidates:

MEMBERS VOTE HERE JOINT MEMBERS VOTE HERE

Kate Brauman	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
C. Scott Cooper	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
John Doberstein	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bruce Goff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Katie Hatt	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Claudia Sanchez-Santoyo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Kamau Wilkins	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Write-ins:			
_____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
_____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
_____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



JOURNAL

Join Us! Monthly Volunteer Meetings

Beyond Oil and Tar Sands
Central Minnesota Sierra Club
Clean Air and Energy
Communications
Duluth Clean Energy Team
Executive Committee
Forests and Wildlands
Land Use and Transportation
Mining
New Volunteer Orientation
Rochester Sierra Club
Water and Wetlands
Zero Waste Task Force

3rd Wednesday, 6:30 p.m.
2nd Thursday, 5:30 p.m. – Good Earth Co-Op, St. Cloud
4th Tuesday, 6:30 p.m.
3rd Thursday, 6:30 p.m.
TBD – contact office
3rd Tuesday, 7:00 p.m.
2nd Monday, 7:15 p.m.
1st Monday, 6:00 p.m.
3rd Monday, 7:00 p.m. – by phone, contact Chair
2nd Tuesday, 7:00 p.m.
2nd Monday, 6:30 p.m. – contact office for location
3rd Tuesday, 7:00 p.m.
2nd Tuesday, 7:00 p.m.

Most meetings are held at the Chapter office in Minneapolis. RSVP is encouraged. Participation by phone or video can be arranged with advance notice. Schedules are subject to change. Visit sierraclub.org/minnesota or contact leaders to confirm meeting times, dates and location (see page 13 for contact info).



SIERRA CLUB
 NORTH STAR CHAPTER
 2327 E Franklin Ave, Suite 1
 Minneapolis, MN 55406

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North Star Blog

Or current resident