



The TRAILBLAZER

October 2006

Niagara Group of the Sierra Club

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SPECIAL ELECTION ISSUE

All members are urged to vote for members of our Niagara Group Executive Committee. Biographical sketches of the candidates and a ballot are to be found in this issue. Be sure to vote, tear the ballot from the paper as indicated, and mail it to Steve Burns.

The Parks Department Mised Us on Logging

By LARRY BEAHAN (This letter appeared in the Buffalo News 8/22/2006)

The unplanned and poorly managed logging of the Erie County Forest this year is robbing us blind. It is squandering our money and depriving us and our kids of the opportunity to wander in a truly old woods. We citizens of Erie County have owned 3,000 acres of forest in the Southern Tier since 1923. The trees have matured into a magnificent stand used for skiing, hiking, snowmobiling and nature education. Suddenly, the Parks Department has decided to cash them in for timber. In this reckless grab for cash, it has trashed principals of sustainable logging, the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), economics and public opinion.

Take a look at what County Comptroller Mark Poloncarz has to say about this pillaging of public wealth at www.erie.gov/comptroller/pdfs/audit_parks_forestry_2006.pdf

My favorite two points of his review are: 1.) The logging Request for Proposal appeared only once and in only one paper. 2.) Instead of hiring an independent consultant forester to ensure sustainable forestry and fair prices, the Parks Department employed the forester who works with that logger. What an opportunity for collusion!

The Parks Department led the county to expect 2006 lumber revenue of almost \$500,000 and delivered only \$170,000, from which it neglected to deduct \$5,000 of misappropriated Federal Emergency Management Agency money and \$37,000 of Housing and Urban Development money. It used that money to subsidize its favorite logger by building lumber roads.

The Parks Department described these lumber roads as "fire" roads. But the Department of Environmental Conservation calls the forests around here "asbestos woods," since our climate is too wet for significant forest fires. When the DEC sells timber from the State Forests, the logger pays to build lumber roads. There are no fire roads in Western New York's state forests. The HUD and FEMA money spent on the roads cutting up our forest was stolen from the urban poor and from victims of disasters.

The salaries of the Parks Department employees were not taken into account. Nor was the cost to the county of a major portion of our forest's reserve of old-growth - 150- to 180-year-old maple and cherry trees. This debacle left behind ruined trails, steep denuded slopes and barren creek banks; a forest open to erosion and stream pollution. This is a bonanza?

The Parks Department scuttled SEQRA with a lie. Instead of describing the logging of thousands of mature trees, it told

the DEC that it was going to tend to "the health of the forest - it has become necessary to thin this lot of excess wind-blown trees which have become hazardous to the health of the remaining forest. Minimal hardwoods will be extracted."

Call your county legislator. Make your views on the future of our forest known.

Larry Beahan is forestry chairman for the Niagara Group of the Sierra Club.

Meeting Place Changed *The Niagara Group of the Sierra Club is now meeting at Daemen College, 4300 Main St. in Amherst. We meet at 7p.m. on fourth Tuesdays in Room 219 of Duns Scotus Hall, the large building which faces Main St.*

Governor Says "No" to Protecting the Great Lakes from Toxic Pollutions

Despite the fact that a bill to protect the Great Lakes was passed by the State Senate unanimously, and almost unanimously by the Assembly, the Governor has vetoed it.

This bill said that no new permits could be issued for commercial landfills that imported toxic wastes if they had the potential to leak into the Great Lakes. The wording, drafted by an environmental attorney, was in accord with agreements to protect the Lakes made with other states bordering the Great Lakes.

The bill was endorsed by the Sierra Club, League of Women Voters, Audubon, the Town of Lewiston and Village of Lewiston, the Buffalo News, the Niagara Gazette, and newspapers across the state including Albany. It was promoted by Republican State Senator George Maziarz and State Assemblywoman Francine DelMonte. Residents for Responsible Government collected over 1,700 signatures on a petition urging the Governor to sign the bill.

However, Chemical Waste Management, which operates the only licensed commercial landfill receiving toxic wastes in the Northeast and which is applying for a major expansion, urged the governor to veto it. They reportedly have spent well over a million dollars in lobbying.

Why would our Governor veto this well written, clearly helpful bill? Decide for yourself!

See the accompanying article on our website - "Niagara Health Science Report," which gives a commentary on the veto.

OUTINGS CALENDAR

Saturday November 4th - Survey of Natureview Park

Natureview Park is a wilderness ten minutes from greater downtown Williamsville, 1200 acres of wild land just this year placed securely under the wing of the Western NY Land Conservancy. We will assess the state of the trail system and make recommendations for repair to damage done by ATV incursions and nature's zealous attempts to repair itself.

We will meet at 9 am at Tim Hortons in Williamsville's Walker Center. Wear suitable hiking footwear and carry water, a whistle and a compass. It's easy to get lost. For more information contact Larry Beahan 839-3112 or larry_beahan@adelphia.net.

Saturday, October 21st - Ball's Falls Day Hike, Bruce Trail - Ontario, Canada

Hike will take us from Jordan, Ont. to Ball's Falls Conservation Area. The falls are two thirds the height of Niagara Falls and are featured on the Bruce Trail Association website. We will meet at Jane's, at 9:30 AM and car pool to the trail head. The hike is 3.8 km (2.36 mi) to the falls where we will eat lunch and enjoy the views. Then its 3.8 km back the way we came with a visit to Jordan Village (shops, winery, etc.)

Ball's Falls is part of the Niagara Escarpment, home to more than 300 bird species, 53 species of mammals, 35 species of reptiles and amphibians, 90 species of fish, and 100 varieties of special interest flora, including 37 types of wild orchids. This hike will give us a wonderful opportunity to appreciate nature and cultivate a desire to understand and protect our environment.

Please bring a day pack, two quarts of water, Gorp snack on trail, lunch, camera and personal photo identification for boarder crossing. For more information contact Jane Jontz at 623-6934 or Rich Peebles at 679-7458

Please log on to our website for outing updates and opportunities

A Night of Star Gazing and Jazz

On January 5 the Niagara Group of the Sierra Club will be hosting a star gazing and jazz listening event at Beaver Meadows and the Roycroft Inn. It will be a wonderful night for learning about the night sky. Neptune, Mars, Jupiter and the Great Hercules Cluster will all be in the sky for us to see. The Buffalo Astronomic Association is bringing their eleven and twenty inch telescopes for placement outside and the twelve inch telescope will be open to us in their heated building for a warm viewing location. We will meet at Beaver Meadows from 6pm to 8pm and then go to the Roycroft Inn for a wonderful dinner and live jazz. The Inn has a unique architectural design and a roaring fire. You will want to bring \$2 per person and a thermos of your favorite warm beverage for the star gazing and dinner monies for the Roycroft. There is not a fee for the live jazz. Please pass this information along other to environmental organizations so we can enjoy each other's company while we learn about the wonder's of the night sky. Also, please RSVP to Jane Jontz at jontzja@hotmail.com or 716-628-6934. See you with a winter coat on!

Time for Sierrans to vote for 2006

Please read the following

Larry Beahan

I have just come from a week in the walkable community of Chautauqua where I had the privilege of hearing Al Gore and several other experts speak on Global Warming and what to do about it. I am convinced that energy efficiency and conservation are the most important solutions among several that Sierra must push to avoid earth's hitting that tipping point into tropical melt down. As a member of your ex-com and as your delegate to the NY State Chapter I will work to decrease CO2 production by challenging the demand side of the energy equation.

Niagara chapter has worked hard this year to preserve forests and wetlands places vital to the sequestration of CO2. In that campaign we have succeeded in electing a staunch environmentalist, Debbie Bucki to the Amherst Town Board. We have produced wetland maps that show the more recent federal estimates of wetlands to State and local officials and the citizenry. I have helped to get these maps before the officials who make the decisions in Amherst. The protection of Natureview Park has been finally insured and I am working on a committee to write a management plan for it. We are fighting to protect the Erie County Forest and the Forest at Perrysburg. Those fights are tough ones and their out comes remain unclear. The forest in the gorge at Zoar Valley is likely to be protected through New York State designation as a "Unique" area. We are working to have the entire Multiple Use area at Zoar so designated.

Robert M. Ciesielski

Bob Ciesielski is an attorney in private practice who resides in Amherst. Elected to the Executive Committee in 2004, he has served as Niagara Group secretary for the past two years. Bob has also been involved with the Group's political committee as well as participating in Service work with the National Sierra Club and educational tabling at various local events. Your vote for an additional two year term would be very much appreciated.

Art Klein

From 1949 I worked on the waters of the Great Lakes and witnessed their degradation. I was an investigator in the Corps of Engineers from 1973 to 1990 and learned the possibilities and limitations of Government in regulating the waterways and wetlands.

I am a lifetime bicycle and pedestrian advocate and active in outdoor recreation and advocacy. I focus on education and knowledge to involve stakeholders, government, and society to act in an appropriate way to address environmental problems. My Sierra activities include but are not restricted to urban sprawl, open space conservation measures, especially forest and park policies, and transportation issues.

Paul Maine

My education includes a MSW from the University of
Con't on pg. 3

Executive Committee Members

biographies of the candidates.

"Paul Main" con't from pg. 2

Buffalo. Earlier years were spent in heavily wooded northern Wisconsin and in rural New York State, together with quite a few years of life in Europe. Since 1997 I have had the good fortune to be able to attend the monthly meetings of the Niagara Group, which I joined in 1985. I am interested in finding ways for many more of our members to join actively in our efforts to enjoy and conserve our environmental resources.

Ginger Ursitti

I chose the Sierra Club as my primary mission several years ago. I represent the general Sierra Club membership on the Atlantic Chapter of the Sierra Club Executive Committee. My background as an environmental professional allows me a real-world perspective on environmental issues and keeps me intimately involved in planning and transportation. I have a particular interest in wetland issues, and I serve on the Board of the New York State Wetlands Forum. I will continue to work in the Sierra Club and campaign for the issues closest to my heart, mostly related to wilderness protection and preservation, but also for control of population growth, urban sprawl, pollution, and environmental justice.

Tim Tielman

Tim Tielman has been the Executive Director, The Campaign for Greater Buffalo History, Architecture & Culture, a nonprofit preservation and civic planning organization. He was also executive director of the Preservation Coalition of Erie County and has been in private business, owning a publishing and marketing company for 10 years.

He is an advocate of public transportation and land use planning to strengthen cities and protect the environment. He, his wife, and children are avid cyclists.

He attended secondary school in The Netherlands and has a BA in Geography (concentration in Urban Geography) and a BA in Political Science from Binghamton University.

He is author of Buffalo's Waterfront: A Guidebook and served as editor for many publications, including The Sharp Review, The American Harpoon, The Buffalo Preservation Report, and Greater Buffalo. He has published articles in the Buffalo News, Buffalo: The Magazine of the Buffalo News, the Buffalo Arts Review, Artvoice, and Second Story. He has coordinated many issue-oriented campaigns and acted as spokesperson for many issues.

His civic activities include coordinating communications for Common Council, County Legislature, and State Senate campaigns; guest lecturer at the University of Buffalo, Buffalo State College, Fredonia State College, Medaille College, Erie Community College; Leadership Buffalo, Class of 2000 and former board member, Buffalo Friends of Olmsted Parks and Hosteling International's Buffalo Hostel.

His has won the Lou Billitier Civic Empowerment Award, Business First 40 Under 40 Award and New York State Architectural Heritage Year Award.

NIAGARA GROUP OFFICIAL BALLOTS

IMPORTANT: Single memberships, use one ballot.

Joint memberships, use both ballots.

Ballots must be received by December 1, 2006.

BALLOT 1
BOARD OF GOVERNANCE
AT-LARGE DELEGATE
CHOOSE UP TO 6

- Larry Beahan
- Robert M. Ciesielski
- Art Klein
- Paul Maine
- Tim Tielman
- Ginger Ursitti

BALLOT 2
BOARD OF GOVERNANCE
AT-LARGE DELEGATE
CHOOSE UP TO 6

- Larry Beahan
- Robert M. Ciesielski
- Art Klein
- Paul Maine
- Tim Tielman
- Ginger Ursitti

ELECTION INSTRUCTIONS

To be eligible to vote in this election, you must have been a member in good standing of the Niagara Group as verified by a members mailing label.

Please read all the candidate statements on pages 2 and 3. Indicate your choices by checking the boxes next to the candidates names on the ballot. Each member may fill out only one ballot. Joint members use both ballots.

Please detach this page and mail your ballot(s) in an ordinary letter size envelope, provided with the proper postage.

****Please note that this year, the Elections Committee requires the use of an envelope for returning your ballot.**** This will greatly decrease the chances of your ballot being damaged in the mail and will help ensure its secrecy. Send your ballot(s) to:

2004 Niagara Group Elections Committee
c/o Steve Burns
25 S. Lincoln
Orchard Park, New York 14127

***BALLOTS MUST BE RECEIVED ON OR BEFORE
12/01/06***

Cayuga Creek Report

Robbyn Drake, who is the Cayuga Creek Project Coordinator for Buffalo Niagara Riverkeepers, helps monitor the health of the creek. The creek runs through Niagara County.

By means of funds from the New York Power Authority, consultants were found to study the creek. There are problems with lack of public access and increased levels of contaminated sediments. But now a Restoration Road Map will be prepared with help by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers. There is a 15 year period projected for ultimate cleanup.

Please see www.bnriverkeeper.org and click on "Cayuga Creek" for a full report.

United Church of Christ Promotes Environmental Stewardship

The New York Conference of the United Church of Christ brought about 400 people from approximately 300 churches together for its annual meeting at Silver Bay, New York, on June 9-11. The theme was "The Wonder of God's Creation...A Call to Spiritual Renewal."

During the conference they honored two churches for their struggles for environmental justice.

Volney Congregational UCC in Volney, NY, has been fighting to stop a landfill since 1981. A housing development was planned on top of the landfill, and toxic wastes from New York City were to be brought there. These plans have been cancelled.

Henrietta UCC in Henrietta, NY has started an ecumenical group called "Living in God's World." It promotes information about the environment. The congregation also stopped using Styrofoam and uses only fair trade coffee and recycled office paper. They are replacing their light bulbs with energy efficient models.

A DVD of "An Inconvenient Truth," the Al Gore film about the environment, is also being offered free to all UCC churches that promise to show it publicly.

It is encouraging to see a major protestant denomination making environmental concerns a priority.

Visit our website for more articles and issues of importance . . .
newyork.sierraclub.org/niagara/

Daemen College Environmental Summit Scheduled

Daemen College's Second Annual Environmental Summit takes place on Saturday, Sept. 30 from 9am-Noon. This year's event, "Energy: Time for Changes", will feature Assemblymember Sam Hoyt. Local environmental organizations are invited to set up display tables to share information.

Please use our online registration form to register for attendance and/or table display:
<http://www.daemen.edu/sites/CSCCE/eventform2006.htm>

If you have information you wish to share or copy for use in the Trailblazer, please send it to Charles Lamb at 335 Walnut Lane, Youngstown, NY 14174 or clamb0@prodigy.net or at 716-745-7037. Deadlines for the year are as follows: March 1, June 1, September 1, and December 1.

The Niagara Group of the Sierra Club meets on the 4th Tuesday of every month at 7p.m. at Daemen College in Duns Scotus Hall, Room 219. All Sierrans are invited!

1	◆	The Parks Department Misted Us on Logging
◆	◆	Governor Says "No" to Protecting the Great Lakes from Toxic Pollutions
2	◆	Outings Calendar
◆	◆	A Night of Star Gazing and Jazz
◆	◆	Executive Committee Member Election Bios and Voting Ballots
3	◆	Cayuga Creek Report

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