

N O R T H S T A R JOURNAL

NEWS ON OUR EFFORTS TO KEEP THE ENVIRONMENT HEALTHY FOR MINNESOTA COMMUNITIES

Winter 2022/Spring 2023
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PLASTIC POLLUTION: THERE IS A SOLUTION

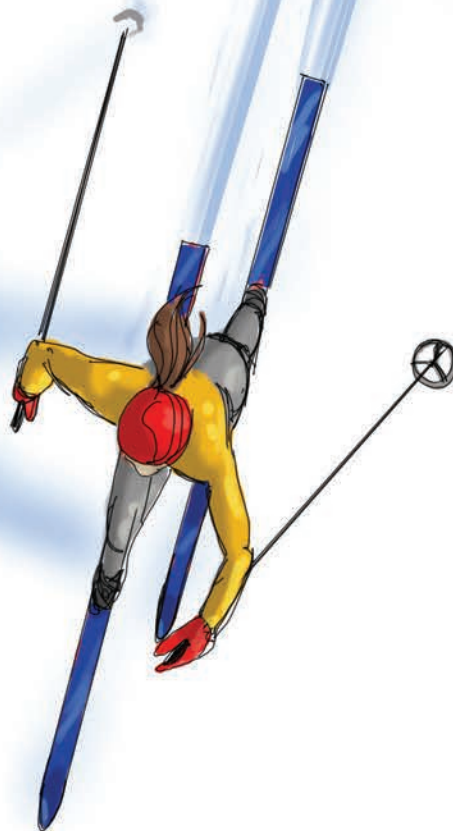
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SIERRA CLUB
NORTH STAR CHAPTER



CO-CHAIRS' COLUMN



Tom Thompson, Co-Chair

Kamau Wilkins, Co-Chair

We've been Minnesotans for 30+ years, and we know we live in a special place, even or especially in winter. Our lakes, rivers, woods, prairies, and communities are amazing. And Minnesotans from Duluth to Rochester agree.

Just look back at this past year. Thanks to you, not only did our chapter continue to march forward, we also celebrated groundbreaking achievements.

We helped to fight toxic sulfide mining across Minnesota. Together, we submitted 3,500 Sierra Club comments supporting a 20-year moratorium on sulfide ore mining in the greater Boundary Waters watershed.

Despite the challenges of COVID, we expanded our local outings program to connect more Minnesotans to nature, each other, and environmental advocacy. We also hired our first program staff to support BIPOC-focused and Military Outdoors programming.

Hundreds of volunteers invested thousands of hours of service and activism in our local environment. Together, we made a massive impact.

Sierra Club is the largest grassroots environmental organization in the country. Here in Minnesota, we number more than 50,000 supporters. And there's no reason that 2023 can't be the year we make historic progress. The opportunities are clear:

- At the Capitol and across the state, we're pushing to ensure 100% of Minnesota's electricity will be generated from carbon-free sources by 2030 and fully renewable sources by 2040 or sooner.
- Transportation is the #1 contributor to climate change pollution in Minnesota. Now is the time to pass dedicated funding for public transit, biking, walking, and other options.
- We can pass "Prove it First" legislation which will prohibit sulfide ore mines here until they're proven safe through long-term operation and closure of similar mines elsewhere. The Boundary Waters, Lake Superior, and the entire Arrowhead Region deserve protection from reckless sulfide mining which threatens these waters.
- Together with frontline partners, we can shut down polluting industries and protect communities' health. In low-income communities of color across the state, kids and adults suffer from higher rates of asthma because pollution is concentrated in their neighborhoods. We can fix this.

Your financial support and involvement through local action make a real difference. Thank you for entrusting us with your dreams for a healthy, thriving Minnesota.

Sincerely,

Kamau Wilkins and Tom Thompson

North Star Chapter Co-Chairs



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CHAPTER STAFF & LEADERSHIP

Find a list of chapter staff and volunteer leaders at sierraclub.org/minnesota/staff and sierraclub.org/minnesota/chapter-leadership. With any questions contact us at 612-659-9124, north.star.chapter@sierraclub.org.

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CLIMATE ACTION MARCHES ON IN ROCHESTER



Rick Morris, left, and volunteer leaders at a Climate March.

“WE WENT FROM A COAL-FIRED PLANT IN THE MIDDLE OF TOWN TO A PLAN FOR 100% NET RENEWABLE ENERGY.”

- Rick Morris in a *Rochester Post Bulletin* article on his departure

Rick Morris

Seven years ago, a coal plant was operating in Rochester. Five years ago, Rochester adopted carbon emissions goals of 30% reduction by 2025 and 80% by 2050. In September, the city accepted the Energy Commission's recommendation to set new citywide emissions reduction targets at 50% by 2030 and 100% by 2050.

This notable progress is thanks in part to years of organizing by the Sierra Club, including a history of Sierra Club appointees to the Energy Commission. As this advisory board works toward a plan on how to achieve the new goals, the Sierra Club is encouraging them to center racial equity and economic justice by committing to 100% fossil-free electricity, doubling down on a vastly expanded 100% electric public transit system, and decarbonizing heating for homes and businesses.

Rick Morris was the Sierra Club organizer in Rochester for eight years and led much of the work described here.

As the *Rochester Post Bulletin* reported in an article about his time in Rochester, “Morris said helping water protectors (at Standing Rock) was one of his proudest moments with the Sierra Club, but also one of the saddest now that the pipeline is completed and has leaked multiple times, including contaminating the Standing Rock Tribe’s source of freshwater.”

Rick Morris left the Sierra Club after eight years of organizing in Rochester and is joining the ski patrol in Vermont this winter. The hiring committee of staff and local volunteer leaders has been interviewing candidates and we hope to introduce the new Rochester organizer soon.

SIERRA CLUB HELPS ELECT CLIMATE CHAMPIONS

CLIMATE CHAMPIONS WIN!

Aric Putnam
Senate District 14

Heather Gustafson
Senate District 36

Judy Seeberger
Senate District 41

Kelly Morrison
Senate District 45

Sierra Club congratulates all our **24 winning endorsed candidates for Senate**, particularly our priority candidates who won the closest races. Thank you to all who made these wins possible. **We invested in them, so now we can all invest in clean water, clean air and real action on climate.**

State House & Senate DFL Majorities Make Environmental Victories Possible

The Sierra Club achieved our goal to maintain a pro-climate, pro-environment majority in the State House and “flip” the Senate. We targeted districts with strong environmental candidates, and where elections could be decided by just a few votes.

In the Senate, DFL candidates won a majority with the 34 seats needed to control the chamber. Four of our top targets were essential to this victory: Judy Seeberger, Heather Gustafson, Kelly Morrison, and Aric Putnam. As part of these wins, we helped defeat anti-environmental legislators Roger Chamberlain and Tama Theis.

We protected the pro-environment majority in the House. Five of our top targets prevailed: Lucy Rehm, Jeff Brand, Matt Norris, Zack Stephenson, and Dan Wolgamott. As part of these wins, we helped oust four anti-environmental legislators: Susan Akland, Donald Raleigh, Greg Boe, and John Heinrich.

For the first time ever, the Sierra Club endorsed a candidate for Attorney General, Keith Ellison, who has been a strong champion for corporate accountability, including working to ensure that environmental protections are enforced and suing fossil fuel companies for lying about climate science.

Expanded Tactics Focused On Target Districts

Our process starts with the chapter’s hard-working and savvy Political Committee, who conducted a thorough candidate vetting process, navigating an enormous workload in a year when redistricting meant many open seats and brand-new candidates. With the support and review of our Executive Committee, we awarded over 100 endorsements for state and local offices in 2022.

Margaret Levin

We did it!

Minnesotans need leaders who will fight for our environment and climate, and stand up to polluters and special interests. By close margins, that’s what we won in the 2022 midterm elections. With your support, the Sierra Club played a key role in making this happen.

The Sierra Club plays a pivotal role in politics. That’s why the North Star Chapter’s Political Program ramped up our work this election, thanks to a first-of-its-kind collaboration with the national Sierra Club, leadership from our Political and Sierra Votes volunteer teams, staff expertise, generous donors, and nonprofit partners. We showed up powerfully this year, and the results prove that our work made a difference.

Building on this work, the chapter's voter contact program focused on turning out environmental supporters in this midterm election to vote all the way down the ballot. We focused our tactics in targeted districts.

- We made a total of 150,000 calls to voters in key districts, including calls to get out the vote for Attorney General Keith Ellison. In a first-ever collaboration, the national Sierra Club joined with the chapter's Sierra Votes team to organize virtual phone banks with volunteers from across the U.S.
- We co-hosted door knocks with climate justice partners including MN350 Action and the 100% Campaign.
- We mailed almost 20,000 Minnesota voters the facts on our candidates, along with the anti-environment records of their opponents.
- We ran a sophisticated digital campaign to highlight candidates' support for our shared values of freedom, health, and democracy.
- We emailed chapter members and supporters in 14 priority districts to turn out the vote.
- We ran an expanded digital ads program which featured 30 different videos ads in 14 legislative districts.
- Sierra Club volunteer leaders were inspired to work directly for candidates in their own districts, contributing to the election of environmental champions across the state.

In each of our tactics, we had a clear message for voters – only our candidates would protect our freedoms to:

- make our own reproductive choices
- drink clean water and breathe clean air
- have a livable climate.

Building for the future

The Sierra Club also targeted strong candidates in tough districts who lost in tough races (and we hope they will run again). This includes Kari Rehauer, Clarice Grabau, and Tami Calhoun.

In the August primary, nearly all of our endorsed candidates prevailed – both in Minnesota's federal elections and at the state level. Through the chapter's Sierra Votes campaign, we influenced critical races, including a notable

win in Duluth's House 8B with environmental champion Alicia Kozlowski defeating an incumbent with deep ties to polluters.

And for the first time ever, the chapter endorsed candidates for Ramsey County and Hennepin County boards of commissioners, including Mai Chong Xiong, who prevailed over her opponent with 50.19% of the vote.

Looking ahead

Overcoming the powerful forces of anti-climate interests is

CLIMATE CHAMPIONS WIN!

Dan Wolgamott
House District 14B

Jeff Brand
House District 18A

Zack Stephenson
House District 36A

Matt Norris
House District 37B

Lucy Rehm
House District 48B

Sierra Club congratulates all our **53 winning endorsed candidates for House**, particularly our priority candidates who won the closest races. Thank you to all who made these wins possible. **We invested in them, so now we can all invest in clean water, clean air and real action on climate.**

challenging. Yet, the results show we can defeat extreme Republicans and corporate polluters who deny climate change, pollute our water, and threaten our freedoms.

Now it is our responsibility to ensure that climate and environmental justice remain central as lawmaking begins. Together we have created a historic opportunity for Minnesota to lead on climate. The time for real action is now.

Margaret Levin is the State Director for the North Star Chapter.

PLASTIC POLLUTION: THERE IS A SOLUTION



Photo Credit: iStock

Lori Olinger

Have you ever bought something and then noticed that the pile of packaging that came with it is bigger than the product itself? A lot of that excessive packaging is plastic because it is so cheap to produce.

Since 99% of plastic is made from fossil fuels, petrochemical companies profit from plastic production and consumption. Yet, the environmental and health costs of plastic use and disuse are borne by frontline communities, consumers, and taxpayers. But that might be changing.

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for packaging legislation, which shifts the cost of recycling from taxpayers to producers, has passed recently in four states. Many others, including Minnesota, are working on similar bills. If done right, this legislation has the potential to reduce waste and make packaging safer.

Rep. Sydney Jordan has a strong, effective EPR for Packaging bill (HF 4132) and will be reintroducing it again next session. Key points in her bill, which address both residential and commercial waste, include:

- Goals to reduce waste and increase reuse and refill systems
- Standards to make packaging more recyclable
- Bans on toxic chemicals in packaging
- Requirements that companies pay for their packaging waste disposal
- Strong oversight and accountability
- Bans on burning (a.k.a. “chemical recycling” or “advanced recycling”)

The reduction of packaging, especially plastic, is the main goal of EPR. By requiring producers to pay for the disposal of their packaging products, companies are incentivized to reduce packaging waste and to use packaging that is more recyclable.

Currently, less than 6% of plastic is recycled; the rest is buried, burned, or exported to developing countries. Our landfills are full; incineration pollutes our neighborhoods, especially low-income and communities of color; and too much packaging is dumped into the environment.

In addition to endangering the environment, plastic also threatens human health. Plastic is made with toxic chemicals that leach into our food and drinks and into our bodies. Microplastics have been found in human blood, in lung tissue, in breast milk, and even in placentas. Our babies are born pre-polluted with plastic. In other words, the single-use plastic we dispose of today will negatively impact generations to come.

This is why Extended Producer Responsibility is such a critical path forward. To support this important legislation, contact your state senator and representative and ask them to co-sponsor the bill.

**Support Extended
Producer Legislation:**



Lori Olinger is the chair of the Zero Waste Team. She is an outdoor lover and enjoys hiking and biking in the Twin Cities and around Minnesota.

BIKE TOUR RETURNS



“A CAR PUTS YOU THROUGH THE COMMUNITY. A BIKE PUTS YOU IN THE COMMUNITY.”

~Anthony Taylor of Slow Roll MSP

Anthony Taylor of Slow Roll MSP.
Photo Credit: Devon Young Cupery

Joshua Houdek

After a two-year pandemic hiatus, the Land Use and Transportation (LUT) Team brought back the popular annual Sierra Club Bike Tour this fall. On a brisk and beautiful September morning, this event (now in its 25th year) highlighted the diverse neighborhoods of North Minneapolis and its backyard: the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area.

What made this event such a genuine and powerful experience was not the biking, or even the post-ride tacos (although both were fantastic), but rather the partnerships gained and the stories told by the people who live in and know the Northside. This year's Bike Tour was led by Anthony Taylor and Slow Roll MSP, who guided us on roads less traveled to explore hidden gems of the neighborhood. As Taylor told StreetsMN in their recap of the event (streets.mn/2022/10/05/sierra-club-north-stars-bike-tour): “People who bike know the texture of the street in the community. That is why a bike tour connects perfectly with what we were learning about.”

The Bike Tour, like the LUT Team, focuses on the challenges and opportunities of equitable transportation planning. Our 15-mile ride included stops to highlight such efforts as Bring Back 6th, the METRO Blue Line Extension, the new Great Northern Greenway, and the new Metro Transit micro service. The LUT Team supports individuals and organizations working on these initiatives, while also leading other clean transportation initiatives such as transit advocacy and the equitable advancement of electric vehicles.

The LUT Team generally meets the first Monday of the month. Our current projects include:

- Fighting traffic-inducing highway expansions and advocating for fast, efficient Bus Rapid Transit on I-94 and Highway 252
- Extending the Midtown Greenway over the Mississippi River to connect Minneapolis and Saint Paul
- Defending the nation-leading Minneapolis 2040 comprehensive plan
- Increasing transit funding at the State Legislature

To learn more, go to sierraclub.org/minnesota/land-use-transportation and reach out to joshua.houdek@sierraclub.org

Joshua Houdek is senior program manager for Land Use and Transportation. He loves exploring the Twin Cities on two wheels.

25th Annual Sierra Club Bike Tour participants before rolling out of La Doña Cervecería. Photo Credit: Devon Young Cupery





Waadookawaad Amikwag member measuring water at a groundwater upwelling site that was not reported by Enbridge or state agencies in the recent enforcement action. Photo Credit: Waadookawaad Amikwag

REGULATORS FAIL TO PROTECT OUR WATER

Scott Russell

We Minnesotans value clean water, air, forests, and prairies. We want to leave our children an environment that's better than what we inherited.

In Minnesota, it's up to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) to protect our natural resources. But according to citizen scientists on the ground, these agencies aren't doing their jobs, and they need to be called out.

Enbridge, a Canadian pipeline company, broke the law and harmed natural resources during Line 3 construction across northern Minnesota by breaching at least three aquifers and releasing hundreds of millions of gallons of groundwater.

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) negotiated an agreement with Enbridge to pay \$11 million in fines and costs to repair and monitor these aquifer breaches.

But this is an insignificant fine for a company of this size: \$11 million is only .03 percent of Enbridge's 2021 annual revenue. If you made \$80,000 a year, an equivalent fine would be \$24, less than a parking ticket in Minneapolis.

In October, Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison's office filed criminal charges against Enbridge over its aquifer breach in Clearwater County. Enbridge has admitted to causing the breach and failing to report it promptly. Ellison charged Enbridge with one misdemeanor, carrying a maximum fine of \$1,000: the only charge available under state law for "appropriating waters without permit."

“For far too long, Enbridge has operated with impunity in Minnesota and across the Midwest, running their toxic tar sands oil through our waterways and communities without regard for the devastating impacts of their numerous leaks, spills, and safety violations,” said Margaret Levin, Sierra Club’s Minnesota State Director. “We applaud Attorney General Ellison for doing what he could within existing law to finally hold Enbridge accountable for their egregious safety record. The law needs to be changed so that polluters are fully held accountable for their crimes, with penalties proportionate to the damage.”

Volunteers step in where state regulators have stood aside.

Because it appears that the DNR and the MPCA are not adequately monitoring Line 3, Waadookawaad Amikwag (Those Who Help Beavers), a volunteer group of water protectors and citizen scientists, has stepped into the void.

Using drones and citizen legwork, Waadookawaad Amikwag is monitoring and documenting unreported construction damage. The Sierra Club has supported independent thermal drone imaging and helped advance Waadookawaad Amikwag’s case with Ellison, state regulators, and US Representative Betty McCollum.

Waadookawaad Amikwag and the Sierra Club pressed Ellison and state regulators to prevent more harm to Northern Minnesota wetlands and bogs.

“We are seeking an independent

panel of scientists to study the frac-outs, aquifer breaches, hydraulic disturbances and ecological damages,”

Waadookawaad Amikwag wrote in a recent alert. “This work should no longer be entrusted to

Enbridge—nor to state regulators who have continued to downplay the damages.”

Sierra Club will continue standing with Waadookawaad Amikwag by calling for further investigation into Enbridge’s illegal

activities which damage our environment.

Enbridge should not be trusted to operate in the Great Lakes.

The damage Enbridge caused in Minnesota underscores the risks in the company’s plan to rebuild its Line 5 pipeline through Wisconsin and Michigan.

Enbridge proposes building Line 5 through very sensitive environments. This includes tunneling in the Straits of Mackinac, the connecting waterway between Lakes Michigan and Huron.

We are committed to continuing to expose and publicize Enbridge’s illegal activities in Minnesota as part of an ongoing pressure campaign to shut down Line 5.

Scott Russell is a volunteer with the Beyond Oil Team.

IF YOU MADE \$80,000 A YEAR, AN EQUIVALENT FINE WOULD BE \$24: LESS THAN A PARKING TICKET IN MINNEAPOLIS.



The low temperature measured here (the small number, 45.1 degrees F) as compared to the water temperature of the nearby stream (72 degrees F) demonstrates that this is groundwater upwelling to the land surface. Photo Credit: Waadookawaad Amikwag

OUTINGS BRING MORE PEOPLE OUTDOORS

As Sierra Club members, we know that everyone deserves access to the outdoors. That's why we are dedicated to expanding and diversifying our outings program to welcome even more people from across the state into public lands to play, learn, heal, work, and serve.

Since relaunching our outings program one year ago, we've led 46 outings with over 400 participants and we've launched BIPOC-focused and Military Outdoors programming.

You can join in these outings as a participant or volunteer. Find all the details and sign up at sc.org/mn-outings.



Looking for freshwater mussels in the Mississippi River on a local outing. Photo Credit: Pvtkach

MILITARY OUTDOORS - HEALING IN THE OUTDOORS



Participants at the confluence of Minnehaha Creek and the Mississippi River. Photo Credit: Pvtkach

INSPIRING CONNECTIONS OUTDOORS - YOUTH-FOCUSED PROGRAMMING



Tents are fun! Youth set up tents in their local park. Photo Credit: Sanneh Foundation

LOCAL OUTINGS - CONNECTING PEOPLE AND NATURE



Enjoying new friends and a break at the Anoka Nature Preserve. Photo Credit: Rubin Latz

BIPOC OUTINGS - CREATING SAFE SPACES



BIPOC outing participants at Pike Island. Photo Credit: JR Hunte



WATER IS LIFE. EXTRACTION ISN'T THE ANSWER TO A JUST AND SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Mary Blitzer

Clean water is becoming ever more precious in a hotter, drier world. Because Lake Superior holds 10% of all the freshwater on the planet, Minnesotans have a great responsibility to preserve this life-giving resource, today and for future generations.

We must not be rushed into new toxic sulfide mining projects by multinational corporations with track records of environmental devastation.

Multinational companies are proposing sulfide ore mines in the Lake Superior, Boundary Waters, and Mississippi River headwaters watersheds. But sulfide ore mining cannot be done safely in Minnesota. Tailings eventually leach into the ground, polluting lakes, rivers, and drinking water in perpetuity. For example, the environmental impact statement for PolyMet's proposed mine in northern Minnesota found that after 20 years of operation, water from the site would require 500 years of active treatment. Do you know any multinational companies you would trust with such a responsibility?

To protect our precious resources, regulators must live up to their missions. Their recent failures to regulate Enbridge and keep our water safe during and after the Line 3 construction are a major cause for concern (see story on page 8).

But the Sierra Club will keep fighting to hold them accountable, through the legal system and via federal and state action.

- Governor Walz, the Department of Natural Resources, and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency must change course and begin full enforcement of existing laws, which already provide the tools to reject all sulfide mining proposals.

- The state of Minnesota must fully investigate PolyMet's dangerous proposal for storing mining waste.
- Federal agencies should ban sulfide mining in the Boundary Waters Watershed, cancel the Twin Metals' mineral leases, and reject PolyMet's water permit application.
- At the state level, we need Prove It First legislation. This would require mining companies to provide examples of a sulfide mine that has operated safely in a water rich environment for at least ten years and closed for ten years without releasing toxic pollution, before we build one in Minnesota.

Together we have the power to pressure our agencies and elected officials from the Governor on down to stand up for us and for our water. Join us in calls to action throughout the coming year.

Mary Blitzer is the Senior Engagement Manager of the North Star Chapter. If not with her family, then her favorite place to be is in one of our wonderful, precious, COLD, freshwater lakes.

WINTER ADAPTATIONS

I WONDER IF THE SNOW LOVES THE TREES AND FIELDS, THAT IT KISSES THEM SO GENTLY? AND THEN IT COVERS THEM UP SNUG, YOU KNOW, WITH A WHITE QUILT; AND PERHAPS IT SAYS, "GO TO SLEEP DARLINGS, TILL THE SUMMER COMES AGAIN."

– Lewis Carroll



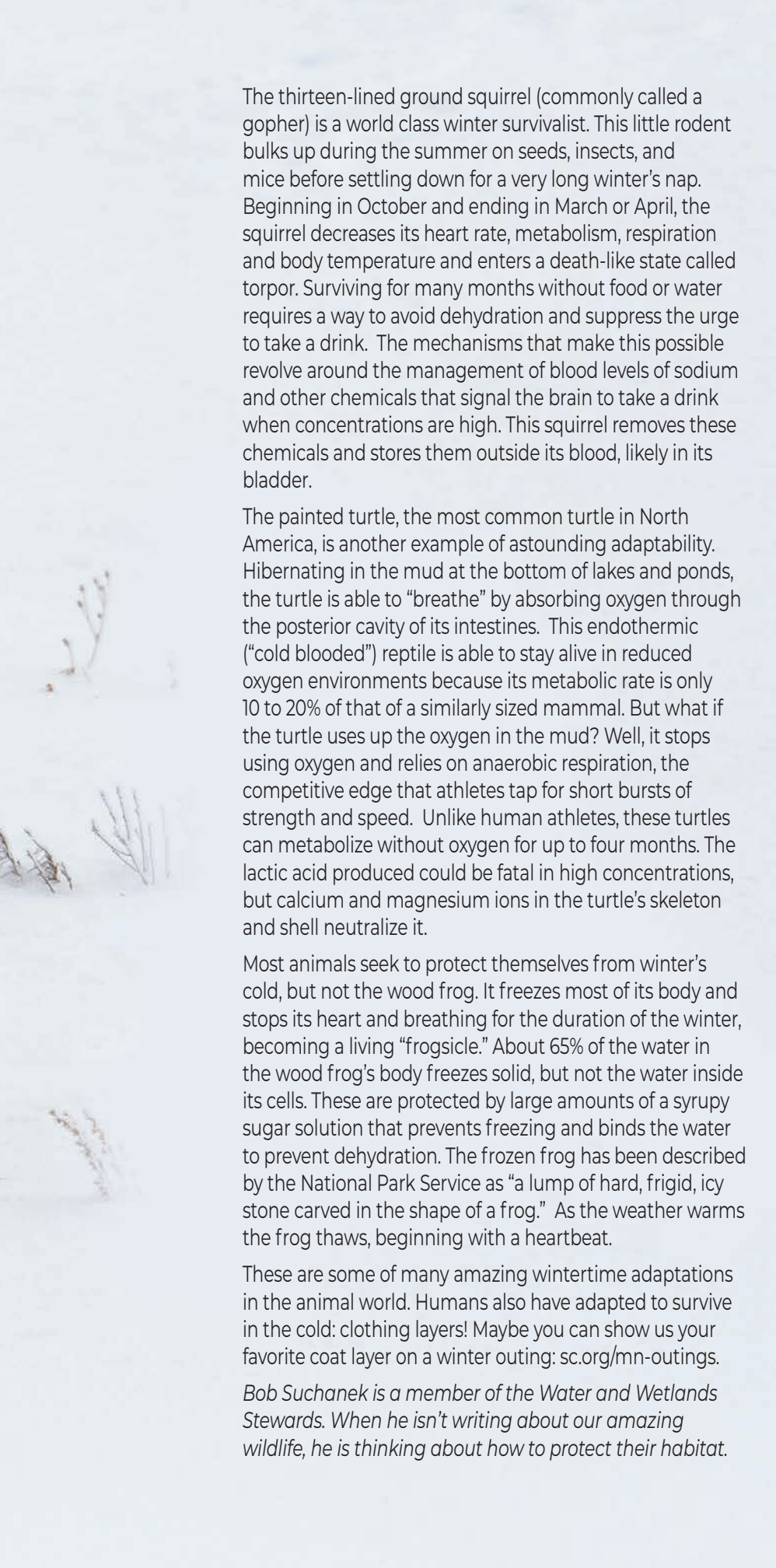
Winter Hunting. Photo Credit: National Parks Gallery

Bob Suchanek

Entire ecosystems are adapted to the challenges of winter. Leaves change color; butterflies and birds migrate. The natural world knows what's coming.

As trees and fields sleep, many animals carry on under the terms nature imposes. Harsh terms, but the animals are well-prepared.

Red foxes, for example, have doubly insulated winter coats and thick foot fur, which allows them to stay warm on top of the snow and hunt the mice below. The list of double-coated and thick-furred mammals includes wolves, deer, gray squirrels, bear, and bison. The coats of deer and wolves are so effective that snow accumulates on them without melting.



The thirteen-lined ground squirrel (commonly called a gopher) is a world class winter survivalist. This little rodent bulks up during the summer on seeds, insects, and mice before settling down for a very long winter's nap. Beginning in October and ending in March or April, the squirrel decreases its heart rate, metabolism, respiration and body temperature and enters a death-like state called torpor. Surviving for many months without food or water requires a way to avoid dehydration and suppress the urge to take a drink. The mechanisms that make this possible revolve around the management of blood levels of sodium and other chemicals that signal the brain to take a drink when concentrations are high. This squirrel removes these chemicals and stores them outside its blood, likely in its bladder.

The painted turtle, the most common turtle in North America, is another example of astounding adaptability. Hibernating in the mud at the bottom of lakes and ponds, the turtle is able to "breathe" by absorbing oxygen through the posterior cavity of its intestines. This endothermic ("cold blooded") reptile is able to stay alive in reduced oxygen environments because its metabolic rate is only 10 to 20% of that of a similarly sized mammal. But what if the turtle uses up the oxygen in the mud? Well, it stops using oxygen and relies on anaerobic respiration, the competitive edge that athletes tap for short bursts of strength and speed. Unlike human athletes, these turtles can metabolize without oxygen for up to four months. The lactic acid produced could be fatal in high concentrations, but calcium and magnesium ions in the turtle's skeleton and shell neutralize it.

Most animals seek to protect themselves from winter's cold, but not the wood frog. It freezes most of its body and stops its heart and breathing for the duration of the winter, becoming a living "frogsicle." About 65% of the water in the wood frog's body freezes solid, but not the water inside its cells. These are protected by large amounts of a syrupy sugar solution that prevents freezing and binds the water to prevent dehydration. The frozen frog has been described by the National Park Service as "a lump of hard, frigid, icy stone carved in the shape of a frog." As the weather warms the frog thaws, beginning with a heartbeat.

These are some of many amazing wintertime adaptations in the animal world. Humans also have adapted to survive in the cold: clothing layers! Maybe you can show us your favorite coat layer on a winter outing: sc.org/mn-outings.

Bob Suchanek is a member of the Water and Wetlands Stewards. When he isn't writing about our amazing wildlife, he is thinking about how to protect their habitat.

Who are the Stewards?

Among the chapter's amazing volunteer teams are two groups of Stewards: Forests and Wildlife, and Water and Wetlands. These gadflies get into the weeds to protect our environment, serving as citizen scientists and researchers, regulatory watchdogs, and promoters of positive legislation and rules, while spurring other Sierra Club members to act on important matters that might otherwise go unnoticed.

Among the Stewards' actions the past year:

Advocating for the protection of old growth forests as the most effective means of carbon sequestration.

Fighting unregulated wake boats, which tear up fragile shorelines.

Joining the conversation about limiting all-terrain vehicles in our forests and wetlands.

Advocating at the DNR for Minnesota's gray wolves.

Helping create a realistic, water-aware Master Plan for the Lake Hiawatha golf course.

These dedicated volunteers make a huge contribution to the North Star chapter's mission. None of them started out as experts, but they became so by watching, listening, and learning. Are you interested in joining them? Check out sc.org/mn or just drop into one of the teams' monthly meetings, listed on our website's calendar.

THE SIERRA CLUB STANDS WITH THE EAST PHILLIPS COMMUNITY AS THEY FIGHT FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE.

Satish Desai

The unused Roof Depot warehouse in the heart of the Minneapolis Southside Green Zone sits atop an arsenic plume from a pesticide plant that operated in the East Phillips neighborhood a century ago.

Parts of the neighborhood were declared Superfund sites and most of the arsenic was cleaned up – except under the Roof Depot warehouse, where a parking lot and concrete flooring contained the pollution. But now Minneapolis Mayor Frey and some members of the City Council want to demolish the building to expand an adjacent public works facility and add a parking garage for employees and diesel trucks.

In 2017, Minneapolis launched its Green Zone initiative to support the health and economic development of its most marginalized communities, including East Phillips. But the city's controversial plan for the warehouse site would do the opposite, exposing the neighborhood to underground arsenic and even more vehicle pollution.

This is a big deal: a recent study found that air pollution kills far more people in the Twin Cities than homicide, as reported by the Minnesota Reformer. Those deaths are disproportionately concentrated in the Minneapolis Green Zones.

Meanwhile, neighborhood leaders have an alternate plan for the site that would meet the goals of the Green Zone; they want to turn the Roof Depot into an indoor urban farm that would bring green jobs, generational wealth, and affordable housing to one of the most polluted and impoverished parts of Minneapolis.

For eight years, through lawsuits and direct action, the East Phillips community has struggled to stop the city from increasing pollution. This summer, they brought Minneapolis leaders to the negotiating table. But the city proposed a compromise that is simply not acceptable. Part of the site would be an urban farm, but the building would be demolished, risking arsenic leaks. And polluting city trucks would use the site. This compromise proposal fails to live up to the city's Green Zone commitments.

Sierra Club Role

The Sierra Club has supported the community's vision all



Satish Desai, the author, holds a sign at a press conference outside City Hall. Photo Credit: Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy

along. Recently, we became active allies in this, one of the clearest environmental justice fights in Minneapolis. You can help by contacting Minneapolis City Council members, supporting the East Phillips legal action fund, and sharing this story through videos and social media.

Since I joined this fight as a Sierra Club volunteer a little over a year ago, I have come to see Minneapolis with new eyes. This April, on an annual brewery crawl with friends in Northeast Minneapolis, I noticed how many breweries are in old warehouses. I saw how warehouses in more affluent parts of the city were repurposed into fashionable office spaces and other amenities that enrich their communities. The stark contrast between these redevelopment efforts and



Joe Vital, East Phillips organizer, speaks at a press conference outside City Hall.
Photo Credit: Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy

Minneapolis' plan for the old Roof Depot warehouse reinforced my need to stand with my neighbors and fight for their vision for an urban farm. Together we are calling on Minneapolis to live up to its promises and support an urban farm, not more toxic harm.

Satish Desai is a volunteer with the Sierra Club's Clean Energy Team and regular volunteer with the East Phillips Neighborhood Institute. In this role he seeks to ensure the Sierra Club's power can support the East Phillips neighborhood.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZING FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ON SAINT PAUL'S WEST SIDE



LEARN MORE

Metropolitan Wastewater Treatment Plant in Saint Paul. Photo Credit: Metropolitan Council

Dominique Diaddigo-Cash

Generations of Minnesotans living on St. Paul's West Side have been exposed to the environmental hazards and air pollution that come from their neighborhood being treated as a dumping ground for toxic waste.

West Siders know it's no coincidence that across the country and right here at home, polluters can easily set up shop in neighborhoods where immigrants, Black and brown folks, and working class people live – assuming no one will speak out. But communities have the right to be part of the decisions that impact the health and future of our families.

Right now, the Sierra Club is standing with the West Side Community Organization as they evaluate a proposal for a new sewage incinerator near the West Side of Saint Paul.

This work is part of the Sierra Club's Healthy Communities Campaign. Organizers with the campaign build solidarity and listen to impacted residents because together we have the power to hold public agencies accountable for equitable decision making.

In the words of Sherilyn Young, West Side community member, "I believe we need to help our elected officials make decisions that will allow all of us—plants, animals, and the ecosystem—to survive this destructive, consumption-based economy. Empowering ourselves, with support from the Sierra Club, is a way we can help set the agenda to protect water for future generations."

Dominique Diaddigo-Cash is an organizer with the Healthy Communities Campaign.

100% CLEAN ENERGY FOR THE NORTHLAND

ORGANIZING FOR AN EQUITABLE AND RENEWABLE ENERGY FUTURE IN NORTHEASTERN MINNESOTA



Jenna Yeakle

Thanks to the leadership of volunteers and community partners, our movement has collectively submitted over 1,500 public comments to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (PUC) to urge Minnesota Power to participate in the necessary transition to clean, equitable energy in the Northland through their long-term energy resource plans.

Over the past two years, we have sent hundreds of powerful, personal messages to the PUC – including comments from community groups and leaders, tribal governments and public officials, locally owned businesses, teachers, healthcare workers, parents and grandparents, and so many others from across the region. In addition to public comments, our coalition of Clean Energy Organizations submitted formal technical comments that show how Minnesota Power can meet our region's energy needs with clean, renewable energy.

Our public pressure made a difference. Your activism and support made a difference.

On Thursday, November 10th, the Public Utility Commission approved a long-term energy plan for Minnesota Power. This plan reflects years of hard, collaborative work

among clean energy allies, community partners, and Minnesotans. The plan also reflects an exciting agreement reached between Minnesota Power and multiple parties including Sierra Club's Clean Energy Organizations coalition, labor unions, industrial customers, and the Boswell coal plant host communities to more quickly transition towards a reliable and cleaner electric system that works for everyone.



Graphics part of our campaign to thank and highlight residents and leaders for submitting comments to the Public Utilities Commission. Graphic Credit: Maya Hernandez



Here are the highlights:

- **More renewables!** Minnesota Power will acquire up to 400 MW of wind, 300 MW of solar and 500 MW of storage by 2026. These additions of renewables and storage will help bring the utility from 50% to 70% carbon-free energy by 2030.
- **Saying 'so long!' to coal.** Minnesota Power will cease coal operations at the Boswell coal unit 3 in 2029 and begin thoughtful planning for the retirement of unit 4 as early as 2030. About a decade ago, Minnesota Power's generation was 95% coal. We've made a lot of progress!
- **Fossil gas? Not quite.** Minnesota Power has been ordered to analyze whether or not their proposed gas plant, NTEC, is in the public and ratepayer interest as part of the next long-term energy plan or sooner. This decision to delay determinations on any new gas strengthens our case that NTEC is risky for communities, customers and the climate.
- **Community input, please!** Minnesota Power must conduct further cost-benefit analysis and stakeholder engagement on the polluting Hibbard biomass plant in West Duluth before or in the next planning process. The utility will consult low-income ratepayers and BIPOC communities.

- **Climate action.** Minnesota Power needs to analyze near-term steps related to local and state clean energy goals such as the city of Duluth's Climate Action Plan and the state's Climate Action Framework.
- **Equity in energy.** Minnesota Power has been ordered to explore how distributed solar might fit in their next plan. Because everyone deserves access to the benefits of clean energy!

This decision is an exciting step towards building a cleaner energy system in our corner of the world. We are grateful to our partners, community leaders and Minnesotans across the Northland. **Together, we are creating positive change for the sake of our communities, now and for the future.**

Stay tuned for an invitation to join our informational webinar about what this means for Minnesotans and local, in-person gatherings to celebrate our wins!

Want to join this important work? Connect with Jenna, our Duluth organizer, at jenna.yeakle@sierraclub.org.

Jenna Yeakle is a Duluth-based organizer with the Sierra Club. Outside of work, Jenna is a community gardener and food justice activist; a bike commuter and avid reader.

YOU MAKE MINNESOTA SUSTAINABLE

The Sierra Club North Star Chapter is 50,000 Minnesotans united to make our communities and planet healthy for everyone who lives here. Together we care for the air, water, lands, and climate that make up our home.

Progress in 2022

- Transforming our energy system: Xcel Energy is investing more in wind, solar, and community-based clean energy, and has canceled its proposed fossil gas plant in response to public pressure. After years of organizing, the City of Rochester set new emissions reduction targets at 50% by 2030 and 100% by 2050!
- Advancing clean transportation options: We secured funding for the Metro “E” and “F” Bus Rapid Transit lines, a second daily train to Chicago, transition toward Zero Emissions buses, and investments in walking and biking options.
- Electing climate & environmental champions: The Sierra Club played a key role in competitive legislative districts winning House and Senate DFL majorities which will make environmental victories possible in 2023.

How can you help?

In 2022 we hosted 294 events and actions on topics such as banning forever chemicals, funding public transit, expanding bikeways, and fighting for climate solutions. This is possible because of our amazing volunteer leaders. Join us!

We are looking for volunteers to:

- Lead adult, youth, BIPOC, and military veterans' outings
- Organize for strong environmental laws
- Research and monitor state agency plans
- Write, edit, design, and take photographs

Learn more and start volunteering: sierraclub.org/minnesota/volunteer-opportunities

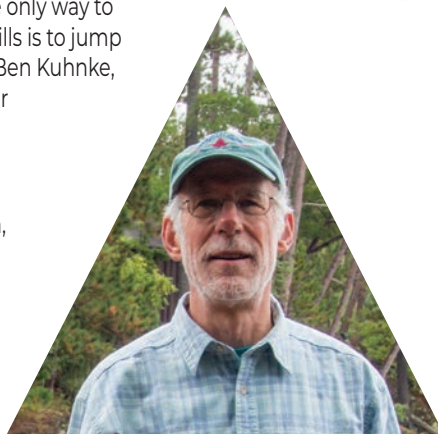


“Don’t be apprehensive about trying new things. Very few people have a natural talent for organizing activities such as phone banking, canvassing, or planning. The only way to develop these skills is to jump in and practice.” - Ben Kuhnke, SierraAction Co-Chair

“There are so many ways to get involved. Come join us!”
- Marilyn Gayda, Outings Leader



“My advice is to get engaged on some issue, learn all you can, and find a role to play that fits you. That could be technical analysis, communicating about the issue, producing art that supports the issue, and perhaps being an organizer. Or, it could be working with others to stuff envelopes or make phone calls.” - Steve Ring, Water Stewards Chair



NORTH STAR
JOURNAL 

PLEASE VOTE FOR YOUR CHAPTER LEADERS BY JANUARY 4, 2023.

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. There are 15 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 chapter thrive and grow.



Candidate Statements



Luther Dale
Shoreview

I want to thank all of you who support and volunteer in Sierra Club work in so many important ways. You inspire me and Chapter leaders as we continue together to fight for clean water, healthy forests, a clean energy future and for equity and justice in its many forms. I would like to serve on the ExCom as we continue to strengthen our work by focusing on volunteer recruitment and training, climate justice, support new outings, build impactful political power and strategic public messaging that reshapes thinking and behavior on critical environmental issues. I have served in a variety of ways including Co-chair of the Shoreview Green Community, Chapter Chair, a Chapter presence in national Sierra Club work, a liaison on sulfide mining issues and as a presenter on climate change. I would like to continue to leverage my mining work as we address the new challenges of the proposed Talon nickel mine near Tamarack MN. Our Sierra Club work is needed more than ever in facing a future with many environmental threats. I would be honored to continue to serve you on the ExCom as we work together to build a just and livable future for ourselves and especially for future generations.



Drew Davis
Minneapolis

I have served as part of the Executive Committee for the last few years, first starting as Assistant Treasurer, then stepping up as Treasurer to fill a vacant seat, and finally getting elected for a one-year term last year. I am grateful to have the opportunity to utilize my background in accounting and finance to help the chapter manage its finances and lend my voice to help and support the chapter. I have strong faith in the mission of the Sierra Club and I am constantly amazed by the work put in by staff and volunteers of the North Star chapter. I am a transplant to Minnesota, but now call this great state home.

I want current and future generations to experience the beauty of this state, as well as live in strong and equitable communities. I have witnessed how hard and effectively the chapter fights for these causes and I would be honored to continue offering my own skillset and perspectives on the Executive Committee in service of the chapter.



Emily Jo "EJ" Hood
Albert Lea

I would love to be considered for a position on the Sierra Club Executive Committee. Since I was a young the environment has been heavy on my heart, when I gave my mother my hard-earned five dollars to donate to "Save the Whales"! As a young adult I worked for a natural grocer and furthered my education and awareness of our ecological footprint and looked for ways to make a difference. Volunteering for a zero waste food distribution non-profit in South Minneapolis was an honor I enjoyed very much. I live in Albert Lea where I am involved in the community and participated in actions for racial justice following George Floyd's murder.

I carry a long history of advocacy, and believe my skill set and passion for climate and social justice would be a helpful addition to the Sierra Club. I have thrived through adversity and want to lend a voice to the voiceless in issues that affect one's ability to live a fruitful and just life. Thank you so much, I am grateful for the opportunity to be considered.

Candidate statements continued from previous page



Lois Norrgard
Bloomington

I have been involved in the chapter for many years now, both as Executive Committee member and actively working with the Forests and Wildlands Stewards Team. I became involved initially because of my love and interest in wildlands, wildlife and protecting biodiversity. I now understand that we must stand against exploitation of any kind – of wildlife, wildlands, but also of people, communities, and the Earth.

I love working with the grassroots and have been fortunate because in my work I've had the opportunity to work with and advocate for grassroots citizens and issues. I have served on many action committees and presently work full-time in the environment field as lobbyist and grassroots organizer for Alaska Wilderness League. I feel strongly that the best way to create the world we want is for all people to work together caring about those around us and our air, water, and fellow beings. I am dedicated to this work.

I would be honored to continue to serve on our Executive Committee. Sierra Club understands the strength of empowered citizens and I am proud of, and amazed at, the dedication and passion our membership shows for improving Minnesota's environment and working for a world that is just and fair. And yes, I continue to be impressed by the vibrancy and optimism the North Star Chapter brings to the hard work of influencing environment policy!



Rhyan Schicker
Madison

Born and raised in western NY I have proudly called western MN my home since 2017. The prairies and wetlands that inhabit this county are a gem I had not previously experienced, and I cannot imagine my life without. Often the idea that agriculture and conservation can't work in tandem prevents land operators from making changes that can give benefit back to the land. My professional goal as a District Manager of a Soil and Water Conservation District is to help remove those physical and mental barriers and work with a more holistic view.

My passion for this work has led me to become involved in a multitude of projects, committees and organizations that work to increase sustainability on the landscape, advocate for equitable systems, and help break down the rural and urban divide, as well as taking political action in these fields. My current main focuses revolve around working with the community to advance local food systems and to become a more climate resilient region through soil healthy farming practices and community action. Working with the Sierra Club Executive Committee would further increase the reach of this work and help propel it forward.



Tom Thompson
Duluth

Growing up near Cleveland, I enjoyed camping and hiking in beautiful parks throughout the area. I also learned to leave a campsite better off than when I got there. When the Cuyahoga River caught fire I learned more was needed to keep the Earth safe.

I moved to Kansas where I joined Sierra Club, became a leader on their Executive Committee and was hired to lobby. As lobbyist I worked with members and other organizations to keep a coal-fired power plant, denied a permit, from being built. Legislation attempted to force the issue but was successfully stopped. I moved to north of Duluth Minnesota where I learned about treacherous mining and pipeline endeavors. I continued my Sierra Club involvement on the Minnesota Political Committee, Duluth Leadership Team, Mining Committee, Coordinating Team, Chapter Executive-Committee and the national Sierra Club Council. This year I was elected Co-Chair of the Executive-Committee.

I have witnessed the Sierra Club evolve by including more BIPOC and LGBTQ concerns and planning and reaching out to underserved communities to fill leadership roles. I would appreciate being re-elected to the Executive-Committee so I can continue fighting for environmental justice and issues that keep the environment healthy for all.



Ensure your environmental legacy by naming Sierra Club or your favorite Sierra Club Chapter in your will or trust. These gifts cost you nothing now. You can hold on to your assets for as long as you need them and you can change your beneficiaries at any time.

If you have named Sierra Club or your Chapter as a beneficiary or would like to discuss doing so, please contact us today

LORI SULLIVAN Director of Gift Planning
2101 Webster St, Suite 1300, Oakland, CA 94612

(800) 932-4270
gift.planning@sierraclub.org
myplan.sierraclub.org



ELECTION BALLOT FOR NORTH STAR CHAPTER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2023 Please vote for up to five candidates:

	MEMBERS VOTE HERE	JOINT MEMBERS VOTE HERE
Luther Dale	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
Drew Davis	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
Emily Jo "EJ" Hood	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
Lois Norrgard	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
Rhyan Schicker	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
Tom Thompson	<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"/>

**PLEASE VOTE FOR YOUR CHAPTER LEADERS
BY JANUARY 4, 2023.**

Current members of the North Star Chapter ExCom:

TERM EXPIRES 2022	TERM EXPIRES 2023	TERM EXPIRES 2024
DREW DAVIS	DAWN GOODWIN	CONSTANCE CARLSON
LUTHER DALE	MICHELLE HESTERBERG	MARTY COBENAIS
LOIS NORRGARD	SASHA LEWIS-NORELLE	KATIE EUKEL
TOM THOMPSON	KRISTEL PORTER	PETER TEIGLAND
ALICIA UZAREK	KAMAU WILKINS	SARAH WOVCHA

VOTING INSTRUCTIONS:

To vote by mail:

- Your member number is printed above 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. Joint memberships are allowed two votes. 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 be received by January 4, 2023 to:

Elections Committee
Sierra Club North Star Chapter
2300 Myrtle Avenue, Suite 260
St. Paul, MN 55114

To vote by email:

- Locate your membership number which is printed above 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 one non-listed candidate's name. Joint memberships are allowed two votes. 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 4, 2023 at 5 p.m.
- The chapter plans to send an electronic ballot to current member addresses within our system. If duplicate votes are received, the most recent vote will be considered valid.

Vote via online ballot:



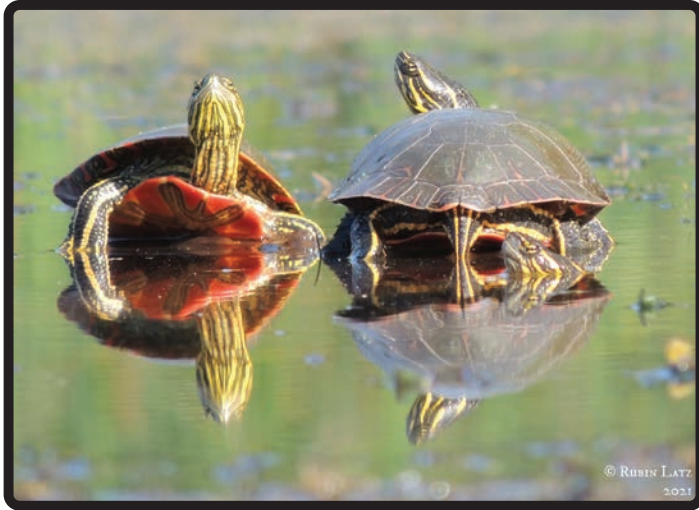


Photo Credit: Rubin Latz

or current resident

Volunteers Wanted!

Contribute your time to protect the air, water, lands, and climate we all depend on.

CAMPAIGN TEAMS: Lead grassroots advocacy campaigns on our most pressing issues.

Beyond Oil, 2nd Wednesday at 6:30 PM
marcy.leussler@northstar.sierraclub.org

Land Use & Transportation, 1st Monday at 6:00 PM
risa.hustad@northstar.sierraclub.org

Zero Waste, 1st Tuesday at 7:00 PM
lori.olinger@northstar.sierraclub.org

100% Clean Energy, 4th Tuesday at 6:30 PM
john.krenn@northstar.sierraclub.org

GEOGRAPHIC TEAMS: Organize in your city for 100% Clean Energy, the environment and your community.

Rochester, 2nd Monday at 6:30 PM
rochester@northstar.sierraclub.org

Duluth, 1st Tuesday at 5:30 PM
jenna.yeakle@sierraclub.org

STEWARDS TEAMS: Research, monitor and advocate for environmental issues.

Forests and Wildlife Stewards, 2nd Monday at 7:00 PM
bob.graves@northstar.sierraclub.org

Waters and Wetlands Stewards, 2nd Monday at 7:00 PM
steve.ring@northstar.sierraclub.org

CAPACITY TEAMS: Share your talents and skills with us.

SierraAction: Use our grassroots power to impact legislation.
3rd Wednesday, sam.rosemark@northstar.sierraclub.org
ben.kuhnke@northstar.sierraclub.org

Communications: Hone your photography, design, and writing skills. Quarterly meetings, mary.blitzer@sierraclub.org

Community Outreach: Spread the word about protecting our planet. Events ongoing, patty.okeefe@sierraclub.org

Outings: Find new friends and explore Minnesota parks. Join general, youth, BIPOC or MilVet events as a volunteer leader or participant. Events ongoing, sc.org/mn-outings

For the most up-to-date information and many more events, visit sc.org/mn. Email north.star.chapter@sierraclub.org or call 612-659-9124 with any volunteer questions.