



The Trailblazer

The Niagara Group of The Sierra Club • <http://NiagaraSierraClub.com> • Vol. 52 No. 4 October 2017

Executive Committee Endorses Political Candidates

By Roger Cook, Political Committee Chair

The Sierra Club Niagara Group Executive Committee has endorsed sixteen candidates for local and regional offices. Our intent in making these endorsements is to identify the candidates who best represent and will support our mission:

To explore, enjoy and protect the planet. To practice and promote the responsible use of the earth's ecosystems and resources; to educate and enlist humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment; and to use all lawful means to carry out those objectives.

From a local standpoint, we identified candidates who are committed to preventing sprawl, protecting our air, water, and open spaces, and promoting effective use of our resources. In providing an agenda of issues to local candidates, we intend that our endorsed candidates will use this information as a guideline for introducing and fighting for legislation that will enhance the quality of life for the men and women in New York and protect the environment in which we live, work, and play.

To determine these endorsements, the Niagara Group's Political Committee sent out a seventeen-question survey that addresses a variety of environmental, habitat, and wildlife issues. After receiving candidate responses, the Political Committee conducted a number of follow-up phone interviews with candidates for clarification of their responses. On the basis of this information, it recommended the endorsement of specific candidates. The Executive Committee members then received the Political Committee recommendations along with all

of the candidates' responses. At the September meeting they voted to endorse the candidates listed below.

All of the candidates we endorsed are in support of the following key issues:

- Opposition to National Fuel's Northern Access Pipeline (which is proposed to go through many Erie County towns)
- Solar ordinances and solarization campaigns (for municipal buildings, residences, and business)
- Clean Energy Community and Climate Smart Community designations
- Ensuring that wetland, forest, wildlife habitat, creek, stream, green space, agricultural district, and water supply protections are incorporated into ordinances and/or Master Plans
- Adopting Town Energy Plans: energy conservation and renewable energy policies (in Master Plans and/or ordinances)
- Developing plans for a system of sidewalks, bicycle paths, walkable trails that connect town centers to schools, neighborhoods, libraries, recreational facilities, and other public areas throughout the town
- Advocacy for the expansion of public transportation (including electric buses) from outlying towns to the City of Buffalo
- Ensuring that IDA subsidies are given only to companies that adhere to job retention, labor, environmental, civil rights and anti-sprawl standards; and that "clawback" provisions are in place when companies fail to comply

Our Endorsements:

- Town of Tonawanda Council
 - Linda Chimera (incumbent)
 - William Conrad (incumbent)
- Town of Cheektowaga Council
 - James Rogowski (incumbent)
 - Brian Nowak (non-incumbent)
- Town of Concord Council/Supervisor
 - Jon Hamann (non-incumbent)
 - William Krebs (Supervisor/non-incumbent)
- Town of Hamburg Council
 - Matthew Kibler (non-incumbent)
- Town of Lockport Council
 - Michelle Roman (non-incumbent)
- Town of Amherst Council
 - Jacqui Berger (non-incumbent)
 - Brian Kulpa (Supervisor/non-incumbent)
- Town of Grand Island Council (two open seats)
 - Cyndy Montana
 - Celia Scapone
- City of Niagara Falls Council
 - Andrew Touma (incumbent)
- Erie County Legislature
 - Kevin Hardwick (incumbent; Grand Island/Town of Tonawanda/City of Tonawanda)
 - Tom Loughran (incumbent; Amherst)
 - Patrick Burke (incumbent; S. Buffalo/Cheektowaga)

We strongly encourage our members to consider these endorsements when voting in November. Our strength as a voting bloc, and our ability to influence policy through our political participation, are among our greatest assets in protecting the Earth.

Sierra Club Niagara Group
P.O. Box 1127
Williamsville, NY 14221-1127



Explore, Enjoy, and Protect the Planet

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and upcoming events, visit
NiagaraSierraClub.com

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SEE IMPORTANT ELECTION BIOS AND BALLOTS ON PAGE 2!

What's all the buzz? What you can do to help promote insect conservation

By Tara Cornelisse, PhD, Assistant Professor at Canisius College (Animal Behavior, Ecology, and Conservation) and Board Member of Pollinator Conservation Association

While you begin to prepare yourself and your house for the colder days, insects are doing the same and you can help. Why do they need your help? Well, it is estimated that we have lost upwards of 40% of insect species due to habitat destruction and degradation-which includes our yards. This dramatic loss is especially alarming as insects perform many ecosystem functions- from decomposition and soil aeration to pollination and seed dispersal- upon which we all depend.

I have spent my career studying rare insects and while there is a lot to be worried about, there is also hope in small spaces. Insects have small ranges as well as complex sensory systems and fast generation times that permit rapid adaptation to our human world. Of course, they still need green spaces that provide nesting sites, food, and areas free of the poisons we call pesticides. That is where you come in: you can enhance their populations through simple insect-friendly yard practices this fall. Here are some things you can do and how they help:

- Keep or enhance fall flowers: Monarchs can emerge as late as October and need to bulk up on nectar before flying to Mexico. Bumblebee queens (among other types of bees) hibernate all winter and so need fall flowers to stock up, as only the

fattest survive. While native plants are ideal, non-native flowers are better than no flowers, and always herbicide and pesticide free.

- Provide over-wintering sites: many insects can survive outside during the winter with adequate shelter. You can assist by providing bare ground or containers like flower pots with loose soil. Also, leave out abandoned bird boxes or even construct new boxes with insulating material. Practice coexistence with bumblebee queens under your shed floor or lady bugs in your attic space.
- Leave your leaves: fall leaves are primary habitat and natural insulation for overwintering insects. If you remove fallen leaves, you are discarding a vibrant ecosystem including moth cocoons, butter-

fly eggs, and firefly larvae. More than 50% of bee species in New York are ground nesting and need leaf litter insulation overwinter. Store-bought mulch does not replace leaves as it does not decompose and blocks important bare ground come spring.

- Encourage your neighbors: even if your yard is an insect oasis, healthy insect populations need connected habitats. As such, encourage your neighbors to practice insect-friendly yard care. Organizations like the National Wildlife Federation and the Xerces Society provide "wildlife" or "pollinator" friendly habitat signs you should display in your yard: be proud, you are doing your part to stem extinction.

Sierra Club Niagara Group Annual Awards Dinner

November 18 at 6:30pm • Eagle House, 5578 Main St., Williamsville

Ticket cost is \$30 per person (Cash, check or credit card)

[Note: To order student priced tickets contact Larry S. (716) 634-8715]

For tickets and more information go online to NiagaraSierraClub.com

Elections 2017: Time to Vote!

As a member of the Sierra Club, you are asked to participate in two elections this fall. The first is our Niagara Group election of members of the Executive Committee – see information in this Trailblazer. The other election is for members At Large for the Atlantic Chapter (New York State) of the Sierra Club. Information will be available in the next issue of Sierra Atlantic, and also on the website: <http://atlantic2.sierraclub.org/>. We ask for your considered participation!!!

Please read the following biographies of the candidates.

DIANA STRABLOW - Our local Sierra Club Niagara Group has been an effective means to act on my passion to mitigate climate change since 2012. I began by attending meetings of the Energy Committee where I learned from experienced members then joined with them in exploring ways to raise public awareness, promote renewable energy, and reduce use of fossil fuels.

One of my first actions was partnering with Singer Farm Naturals to plan a Relay for Renewables. Since then I have helped plan and organize a number of rallies, marches, film screenings and public events and currently maintain our Sierra Club Niagara Group website. In the spring of 2016, I organized a visit and film screening by Josh Fox in Pendleton, NY to raise awareness of the proposed Northern Access Pipeline and it's potential impact on climate due to the fracked gas or highly potent heat trapping methane it would have transported. From there, I led a year-long campaign to stop the pipeline that would have impacted waterways, health and climate throughout Western NY.

With your support to continue serving on the Executive Committee, my areas of focus will be further mitigation of climate change especially by reducing methane emissions, and supporting renewable energy. I also hope to explore with our group, effective ways to encourage more active participation from our membership during these times when protection of all life on this planet we call home, is more crucial than ever. As Naomi Klein says, "To change everything, we need everyone."

SARA SCHULTZ - Before I joined the Niagara Group Executive Committee in 2010, my activism was more on a personal level. I went to rallies and participated in clean-ups. I taught children, including my own, in camps, as a youth group advisor and at our Synagogue's religious school about how we need to live in harmony with our environment. I have been on the "green team" at all three of my places of employment. My lifestyle choices have followed my values, including eating a plant-based diet, driving the first hybrid and now a plug-in, living in a green certified home with geo-thermal energy and wind powered electricity, and paying close attention to the rules of reduce, re-use, recycle.

Getting active in the Sierra Club has opened up a wider range of opportunities to contribute. I am the secretary for the Niagara Group. I also Co-Chair the tabling committee, write articles, speak at public meetings, assist with the organization of events, lobby our legislators, participate in bomb-train counts and manage our Meet-Up page. I have contributed to the Sierra Club at the state level since January 2015 and am currently the Atlantic Chapter Secretary.

I have been very active in my town with the "Amherst AgainstFracking" group. Together with our small team, we passed a resolution to ban fracking and fracking waste in our municipality. I am most passionate about renewable energy, anti-fracking work, campaign finance reform, industrial farming and the devastation it is causing to both animals and the environment, and participation in interfaith environmental education. Finally, my husband and I are both compassionate about experiencing the natural environment and viewing wildlife. We would like to share our love of this with others. I am very eager to serve this critical cause of environmental justice with passion and conviction.

PAMELA HUGHES – My history with the Sierra Club began in 2010 where my interest in planting trees prompted my later nomination as Forestry Chair. In 2011, I was nominated to the Executive Committee, and later served as the Western New York Environmental Alliance delegate, Newsletter Editor (2012-2016), Vice-Chair (2013-2015), and finally assumed the role of Chair (2016-Present).

There has never been more urgency to address environmental issues than in these politically and socially tumultuous times. My passion for protecting the environment has paralleled our mounting collective needs to confront matters around loss of habitat, air and water pollution, and mass extinction of wildlife. Topping that urgency is the most important crusade of our generation ~ Climate Change! Our shared future is currently unknown and we have surpassed globally driven tipping points. But our purpose is clear ~ to mobilize our region toward protecting what we have left.

RICHARD LIPPES - My background and accomplishments may be summarized by the following description: As an Environmental Lawyer, I have handled many noteworthy cases, including Love Canal and as special environmental counsel for the plaintiffs in Three Mile Island disaster. As one of the original Executive Committee members in the Niagara Group over the last 44 years, I have also served twice as Chair over an 8 year period, been a member of Atlantic Chapter Executive Committee at various times, and Chairperson of Chapter Executive Committee from 1978-1982. In addition, I was formerly the Northeast Region Vice President of the Sierra Club, Founder of National Club Hazardous Materials Committee, and have been retained as the Sierra Club Chapter legal advisor for the past 42 years.

Other ongoing activities include retention as general counsel for many local environmental organizations, including Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper, and Atlantic States Legal Foundation. I am co-founder of the American Clean Water project and currently dealing with many legal cases of people whose water has been contaminated by hydro-fracking. As an active member of the anti-fracking crusade, I am compelled to continue legal action against the consequential results of hydro-fracking well into the future.

ROGER COOK - My interest in the environmental movement began with the Love Canal relocation effort where I helped organize the religious community (Ecumenical Task Force) toward advocating for relocation of the residents. Subsequently, the Ecumenical Task Force helped form the NYS Labor-Environmental Network, a coalition of labor unions and grassroots environmental groups based in communities around NYS

impacted by toxic waste dumps. Also, at this time, I became director of the Western New York Council (COSH) where we were able to engage workers in the fight for safer workplaces and communities. In the early 1980s, we joined the national OSHA-Environmental Network (co-chaired by the AFL-CIO and the Sierra Club); locally WNYCOSH worked with the local Sierra Club in part of the national effort to implement the Clean Air Act, which was under assault by the Reagan Administration.

My years of environmental/workplace safety and health activism has spanned from 1978 to the present 2015. My main interest is in building coalitions among labor/environmental/community activists to protect the environment, including the workplace environment. When workers are successful in eliminating unsafe chemicals in the workplace, both the environment and community benefit. Today, climate change has become a key issue for our society; workers are very interested in the "green economy" because it can bring jobs in the manufacturing and installation of renewable energy, and the retrofitting of homes. Having served on Executive Committee of the Niagara Group. I would like to continue my partnership work between labor, environmental, and community activism, forming systemic alliances that will ultimately strengthen our ability to achieve our common goals.

LYNDA SCHNEEKLOTH - I would be honored to join the ExCom of the Sierra Club Niagara and support the work of this group. I have been an active member of the Niagara Group for over 10 years and believe that the work that we do around climate justice and preservation of the world is critical. And of course, given the pace of climate change and the current context of the world, we have so much work to do to provide a habitable and just planet for future generations.

I would like to continue the practice of networking between the Sierra Club and many others in our region who are actively working on climate justice. I currently serve as the Advocacy Chair of the Western New York Environmental Alliance and as the Board Member Emerita for the Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper. I have also been participating with the Crossroads Collective and the Interfaith Climate Justice Community. Because of the scope of climate change, we are in need of a very board movement to overcome the inertia and doubt to move us into a more regenerative culture. I think that the Sierra Club is a good place to hold, with others, the nexus of this movement and to bring our experience and expertise and open hearts to this work.

If elected, I will continue to serve as an active member of the board with the focus on movement building in the region.

HABITAT CORNER

- Ragweed is a wind-pollinated plant that benefits wildlife. Many grasshopper species live around the plant as well as caterpillars of several moths eat the foliage, flowers or seeds. The oil-rich seeds are a valuable source of winter food for birds and small mammals.

- Smartweeds are members of the buckwheat family and also are a source of food for wildlife.

- Canada thistle is a favorite weed of Goldfinches while Goldenrod is a favorite of butterflies, bees and other pollinators.



Nominees for 2018-19 term on Niagara Group Executive Committee

IMPORTANT: Single Membership - Use one ballot. Joint Membership - Use both ballots. Ballots must be received by December 25, 2017

NIAGARA GROUP OFFICIAL BALLOTS

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

- DIANA STRABLOW
- SARA SCHULTZ
- PAMELA HUGHES
- RICHARD LIPPES
- ROGER COOK
- LYNDA SCHNEEKLOTH

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

- DIANA STRABLOW
- SARA SCHULTZ
- PAMELA HUGHES
- RICHARD LIPPES
- ROGER COOK
- LYNDA SCHNEEKLOTH

Election Instructions:

To be eligible to vote, you must be a member in good standing with the Niagara Group as verified by a member's mailing label. Please read all of the candidates' statements on Page 2. Indicate your choices by checking the box next to the candidates' names on the ballot. Each member may complete one ballot. Joint members may complete two ballots. Please detach this page and mail your ballot(s) to the address below in an ordinary letter-size envelope with proper postage. Send your ballots to:

Niagara Group Elections Committee • Sierra Club Niagara Group • P.O. Box 1127 • Williamsville, NY 14221-1127

Ballots must be received on or before 12/25/2017