



# MICHIANA SIERRA NEWS

The newsletter of the Michiana Group of the Sierra Club Hoosier Chapter  
*To explore, enjoy, and protect the planet*

April, May,  
June  
2006

## “Can You Smell It Coming?”

That’s the title of a flyer issued by Quality of Life, a group of concerned citizens who are opposing a 3,500-head dairy factory farm in southern St. Joseph County. Also known as CAFOs (Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation), these mega-complexes have enormous impact on the environment, including toxic gases (hydrogen sulfide, ammonia, and methane), huge amounts of manure which may contain antibiotics as well as pathogens, and potential pollution of streams from the overflow of giant cesspools (euphemistically called “lagoons”). The weight of tons of semi-trucks per day damages rural roads. The small number of jobs created are outnumbered by the jobs once provided by family farms that they displace. CAFOs destroy communities, yet they receive twice the amount of federal subsidies that family farms receive.

.....*This article by Laura Fuderer is continued on page 2.*



## Inside This Issue ....

- *Community Forum on Economic Development*
- *Environmental Fair “Caring for God’s Creation”*
- *Insurance Companies, Pension Funds and Wall Street Take Note of Global Warming*
- *Help Sierra Through “World’s Largest Garage Sale”*
- *Great Outings and Service Projects - including mountain biking, camping, wildflower walks, kayaking, helping the Hoosier Hiking Council and the Pumpkinvine Trail.*
- *The World Gets Greener—the growth of organic farming*
- *Share Your Time, Talents and Ideas by contacting michiana-sierra@comcast.net*

## Welcome New Members!

Join us in welcoming these new members to the Sierra Club: William Bostedt, Alice Campbell, Mary Clardy, Janet Collins, Tom Conway, Diana Devlin, Kim Dexter, Paul Farthing, Jonathan and Julie Fridley, Jill Galloway, Robert Grauel, Deb Haffner, Kathy Johnson, Donna Kane, Shirley Kinney, Steve Krojniewski, Michael Lewis, Lois Martin, Jeremy McCloud, Jennifer Meier, Constance Mummet, Laura Munkel, June Nielsen, Carolyn Nordstrom, Janet Pace, Barry Painter, Becky Ponder, Dr. Y. Prasertwanitch, Loretta Pressel, S. Privitt, Anthony Quinn, G. Lee Rarick, Mark Richter, Suzanne Rickey, Lucy Rzeszutek, Julia Smith, Sharon Strati, Dale Stutsman, Diana Tice, and Michelle Wood.

## Monthly Programs

Thursday, April 20, 7 p.m.

**Brian Bengtsson, General Manager**  
**Child’s Play Organic Lawns**

Safe for use around children and pets, Child’s Play emphasizes lawn care without the use of toxic pesticides. Enjoy a beautiful lawn and garden this spring. But before using chemicals, find out about ingredients that are more effective, last longer, and benefit your family and the earth.

Thursday, May 18, 7 p.m.

**Jessica Spenner, Education Coordinator**  
**of the St. Joseph County Solid Waste District**

Join us for a discussion of the economic and environmental benefits of recycling. Ms. Spenner will explain how the county’s recyclables are used, and discuss the hazardous waste program and the dangers posed by the interactions of common household chemicals.

Thursday, June 15, 7 p.m.

**Steve Park, Architect**

An architect with Moake-Park, Steve explains how designing environmentally responsible products and building materials makes a difference in our world. He will also share his experiences in Costa Rica, looking at how different cultures protect their water and environment.

*Meetings are held on the 3rd Thursday of each month at the Res, 13950 Scout Lane, Mishawaka. Programs are free and open to the public as a community service.*



**“In practice, raising animals with humane methods goes hand-in-hand with protection of air, water and good land stewardship.”**  
**Ken Midkiff, Sierra Club**

## Food for Thought .....

A CAFO is required to have a **30 ft.** set-back from a home’s property line. A dog kennel is required to have a **300 ft.** set-back.

The EPA suspended enforcement of clean air and water laws on 2,500 CAFOs for the next 4 years, so that they can study pollution results provided and funded by pork producers.

Indiana has about 500 large CAFOs and 1,700 smaller CFOs. IDEM is responsible for monitoring these, along with landfills, combined sewage overflows, large industrial complexes, and water treatment sites - with only **14** inspectors statewide. - *Kathleen Neal*

**“CARING FOR GOD’S CREATION”**

As part of their stewardship effort, Grace United Methodist Church, Twyckenham Drive, South Bend, is hosting an environmental fair, “Caring for God’s Creation,” April 23 (Sunday), 1-4 pm. The event hopes to raise awareness that caring for the natural environment is an important spiritual and human value. We all are stewards of our world! Michiana Sierra will join the festivities with an information table and showings of the documentary “Kilowatt Ours.” There also will be numerous activities for children and families. Please come and support the Sierra Club and our community, and enjoy a lovely, fun-filled afternoon!

*This is a factory, not a farm!!!*



**CAFO article continued from page one ...**

CAFOs are spreading like wildfire around the country. Since the Netherlands cracked down on the excessive pollution of CAFOs, Dutch companies have targeted Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio as locations because these states have few protections against factory farms. Nationally there are no standards for regulating animal waste. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recently made a deal with thousands of CAFOs around the country that allows them to continue polluting so long as they report the extent of pollution to the government. This was passed off to the public as “sound science.”

Activists are pressuring the County Council for an immediate moratorium on factory farms in order to develop an ordinance that would protect public health and the environment. Joe Miller, a local environmental advocate, writes “We need to dramatically raise the public’s and media’s awareness about the multiple and escalating threats posed by CAFOs.” Constituents know it is important to write or call their Councilman, send letters to the newspaper, and talk with neighbors and friends. Residents in other counties are encouraged to do the same because a CAFO may already be coming to your backyard (e.g., the 8,000-swine CAFO being planned in Marshall County).

*Editor’s Note: St. Joseph County Council and Commission members are listed at <http://www.stjosephcountyindiana.com/index1.htm>. (click on County Directory, then Elected Officials). City, county, state, and federal governments have web sites listing elected officials and agency heads. If you do not have a home computer, one is available at your public library.*

**COMMUNITY FORUM ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:  
IMPROVING OUR QUALITY OF LIFE**

Conventional wisdom tells us that, in order to develop our economy, we must attract new businesses by offering large tax subsidies with no strings attached. But how does this approach affect our community? Do such subsidies negatively affect public services and increase the amount of taxes the rest of us pay? Are they unfair to existing businesses and workers? Does subsidized development of fringe areas stifle inner city growth and decrease opportunities for lower-income and minority residents? Does such development threaten our public health, natural resources and overall quality of life?

Come to the Community Forum and help create a new vision of economic development! Discuss whether (and how) subsidized businesses can be held accountable to community values. Identify positive examples of local economic development and envision how we can build on those foundations. Can we make our community better and more attractive to businesses and workers alike by investing in and improving our schools, libraries and public resources, rather than giving away our tax revenues and lowering our wages?

On Saturday, April 22 (**Earth Day!**), 9-4 pm, the St. Joseph Valley Project, sponsored by the Sierra Club Michiana Group and other organizations, is hosting a Community Forum on Economic Development at Indiana University South Bend, Weikamp Hall 1001. There is no registration fee, although there may be a small optional charge for lunch. For information, please contact [developmentforum@sivp.org](mailto:developmentforum@sivp.org) (leave your name and phone number) or call Linda Wolfson at (574) 234-7235. Everyone is welcome!



Michiana Sierra will be at the “World’s Largest Garage Sale” on Saturday, June 3, from 8:30 to 2:30. Sponsored by the Parks and Recreation Department, the big sale will be at the parking garage on the corner of Wayne and St. Joseph Streets in downtown South Bend.

Please contact Julie at [hikerjules@sbcglobal.net](mailto:hikerjules@sbcglobal.net) or (574)246-0133 if you can donate items for our booth. All proceeds benefit the Michiana Sierra Group.

“Every good thing, great and small, needs defense.”— John Muir


**Join today and receive a FREE Sierra Club Weekender Bag**



My Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_  
 State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 email \_\_\_\_\_  
 Check enclosed, made payable to Sierra Club  
 Please charge my  Mastercard  Visa  
 Exp. Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
 Cardholder Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Card Number \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Categories	INDIVIDUAL	JOINT
<b>INTRODUCTORY</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	
REGULAR	<input type="checkbox"/> \$39	<input type="checkbox"/> \$47

Contributions, gifts and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to *Sierra* magazine and \$1.00 for your Chapter newsletter.

**F94Q W4903 1**  
 **SIERRA CLUB**  
 FOUNDED 1892  
 Enclose check and mail to:  
**Sierra Club**  
 P.O. Box 52968  
 Boulder, CO 80322-2968

Michiana Sierra News is published quarterly by the Michiana Group (St. Joseph, Elkhart, Marshall, and Kosciusko Counties). Send articles, news, and comments to P. O. Box 1002, South Bend, IN, 46624, or email them to [michiana-sierra@comcast.net](mailto:michiana-sierra@comcast.net). This newsletter is printed on 100% recycled stock.

**Kudos to ... Rich Mah and Bob Perkins** for a great interview (and photo!) about the Sierra Club and outdoor adventures in the South Bend Tribune’s Sunday paper, February 26, 2006. Great Job!



Organic farming is one of the fastest growing segments of the economy in our United States, both in farming/production and sales. However, other countries are catching on quickly and taking a leading role. The Cambodian government recently announced that it wants to become the "green farm of Southeast Asia" by stimulating organic farming. The change, financially and technologically supported by the European Union, is not only inspired by the large amounts of poison currently contaminating the country's farmland, but by a desire to tap into a new market. According to *WorldWatch* (July/August 2005), some 2,000 Cambodian farmers have already learned how to produce their own organic fertilizer. Farmers who make their own insecticides from lemon grass, tobacco and the husk of the bitter *sdao* plant suffer less from headaches, nausea and other health problems.

**Calling All Volunteers!**

Would you like to think globally, but act locally? Get involved with your local Sierra group! Whether you would like to serve on one or more committees (conservation, outings, programs, service projects, newsletter, political), bring refreshments to a meeting, help plan a social, suggest other times/venues/locales for get-togethers, or report on your community's environmental news, let us hear from you. Our volunteers are great folks and very much appreciated!

Here is another reminder for all of our members. If you do not know who your lawmakers are or how to contact them (local, state, or federal), need help in understanding an environmental issue, or would like to know who to contact about a conservation problem, Michiana Sierra will do our best to help or direct you to the proper resources. There is nothing more effective than grassroots efforts and lawmakers hearing from informed constituents. Do not let anything stand in your way.

*"Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter."*  
**Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**

**Money Talks**

Global warming and climate change has caused catastrophes around the world, and U. S. insurance companies have seen a 15-fold increase in loss claims over the last 30 years. Hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, droughts, fires, hailstorms, and other damaging weather systems have led the National Association of Insurance Commissioners to form a national task force to examine what climate change may ultimately mean for their industry.

Major pension funds (such as the California Teachers and State Employees) have also taken note and want the industries they invest in to analyze how global warming will affect their value. As reported in the Dallas Morning News, the Investor Network on Climate Risk, whose members manage \$3 trillion in assets and include high profile Wall Street firms, had a large turnout to its 2005 summit on this issue.

Perhaps this is the type of *green* that will motivate our government to join other Western nations to lower carbon emissions and enforce mandatory limits.

**Mountain Bike Outing Back By Popular Demand**

Michiana Group's Rum Village mountain bike outing is back! (Details on last page.) The trails have 3 levels of expertise, and participants will learn what it took to convert a public dump into a recreational facility, topped off with a thrilling test of riding skills.

This will be an up front and personal chance to see what community projects can do for the enjoyment of citizens. Jim Hamann and about 25 other mountain bikers in the area started this project in 1994. (Indiana ranks 50th in the nation for mountain bike trails.) They were using a small piece of land on loan from a local farmer, but the group looked to the South Bend Parks Dept. for a more permanent place. The first contact was made in a meeting with Mayor Joe Kernan. The city had received a parcel of land (63 acres) donated by the passing of Judge Peak across from the current Rum Village Park. This land had become a dump for old appliances and trash, and 4-wheel ATVs were tearing up the remaining landscape. The Parks Dept. said the land could be used if the mountain bikers would clean it up. This small group of bikers jumped at the chance. The city furnished a dump truck, and this band of brothers hauled out over 25 truckloads of debris. They then closed off the trails to prevent access by the 4-wheel vehicles and started work on the trails, finishing in 1995.

The trails have changed many times, but they provide a great place for lovers of the sport. Trails are designed to prevent erosion and bikers are not allowed on them if it is too muddy. The mountain bike group also made trails for hikers. Join the fun and get inspired! - *Bob Mayernick*

*Special Thanks go out this month to Dave Norris and Geza Csapo for sharing so much of their time and talents with Michiana Sierra, for serving on the Executive Committee, and for helping our world to be a better place.*



Sierran Carol Mayernick begins her luge run at Muskegon State Park. Look out Olympics! (Is it true Bob tried it without a sled?!)

**ANWR and the Endangered Species Act**

Once again as this newsletter goes to press, Congress is debating drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, and gutting the Endangered Species Act (partly to open the land to many other uses). If you care about these issues, contact your congressmen. A phone call takes about 3 minutes.

**Michiana Group Contacts**

- Chair: Christine Fiordalis (574) 237-1161
- Vice-Chair: Dawn Kessler (574) 294-3619
- Outings: Rich Mah (574) 282-1633
- Service: Jeff Kessler (574) 294-3619
- Editor: Hazel Stevens (574) 210-8691
- ExCom: Donna Osborn  
Julie Hyndman  
Bob Mayernick



**Michiana Group of the Sierra Club**  
P. O. Box 1002  
South Bend, Indiana 46624

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage Paid  
South Bend, IN  
Permit No. 102



## OUTINGS CALENDAR

**Friday, April 7 to Sunday, April 9 — Cabin Outing, Potato Creek State Park:** Join the Michiana Group and Geza Csapo in Family Cabin #14, any time after 4 p.m. Friday to noon Sunday. We will explore the park to see if the osprey are nesting yet and learn about our governor's plans for a 100 room lodge on the shores of Worster Lake (to be operated by a private company). The cabin has a full kitchen, plus room for 8 overnights on beds or rollaway sleepers. Geza would appreciate any freewill donation towards the cabin rental. For more information go to [www.in.gov/dnr/parklake/properties/park\\_potatocreek.html](http://www.in.gov/dnr/parklake/properties/park_potatocreek.html), or call Geza at (574) 255-9960 for details about this semi-annual tradition. (Easy/Moderate)

**Saturday, April 8—Service Project at Potato Creek State Park:** Meet at the Nature Center at 9 a.m., and help a park naturalist with a Garlic Mustard Pull, removing this invasive plant species. We stop at noon, so bring a lunch, go by Geza's cabin (see above), stay for an afternoon hike and share tall tales of wilderness adventures. For more information, call Jeff Kessler, (574) 294-3619. (Easy/Moderate)

**Saturday, April 15—Service Project at the Pumpkinvine Trail:** Beginning at 9 a.m., lend a hand clearing brush and trees from 1.2 miles of newly acquired trail between County Roads 26 and 33, northeast of Goshen. The Pumpkinvine's web site, [www.pumpkinvine.org](http://www.pumpkinvine.org), has more details and a map. (Look for the link [Schedule of Pumpkinvine Events](#) on the home page.) For additional information or directions, contact Bob Carrico (574) 266-1362, [rjcarri1@verizon.net](mailto:rjcarri1@verizon.net). (Strenuous)

**Sunday, April 23—Wildflower and Nature Walk, Love Creek County Park, Berrien Center, Michigan:** A park naturalist will help us celebrate spring with a guided wildflower walk through this beautiful park. Meet at 10 a.m. at the Nature Center. (Michigan and Indiana are on the same time.) The tour will last approximately 1 1/2 hours, as we learn about habitats represented in the park and how to identify their wildflowers. Entrance fee per car: Berrien County residents \$3, non-residents \$5. The park is located outside Berrien Center at 9228 Huckleberry Road. For more information, call the park at (269)471-2617, or contact trip leader Julie Hyndman, (574)246-0133, [hikerjules@sbcglobal.net](mailto:hikerjules@sbcglobal.net). (Easy/Moderate)

**Friday, May 5 to Sunday, May 7—Service Project on the Knobstone Trail with Hoosier Hiking Council:** Head to southern Indiana to improve existing trails and clear new ones on the Knobstone Trail, working with members of Sierra and HHC. The rugged terrain of this 58 mile backcountry hiking trail is often compared to the Appalachian Trail (AT) and many people use it to train for the AT. Plan to backpack in and camp on site. For details, meeting location, and weekend schedule, call Jeff Kessler (574)294-3619. (Strenuous)

**Sunday, May 21—Mountain Biking at Rum Village, South Bend:** Meet at 10 a.m. at the Rum Village mountain bike trail, located on Gertrude Street, near Ewing. The trail has 3 levels to choose from: beginner, intermediate, and advanced. We prefer sun, but a little rain will not cancel this outing. Helmets are required and a must. This is not a "ride in the park" so children should be 12 or older. Smaller children can enjoy the Rum Village Park across the street with its nature center and play grounds. There are also hiking trails. For further information and directions, contact Bob Mayer-nick (574)287-6650 or see the web site of the Northern Indiana Mountain Bike Association, [www.nimbabike.org](http://www.nimbabike.org). (Moderate/Strenuous)

**Friday, June 9 to Sunday, June 11—Weekend Camping Trip, Ludington State Park, Michigan:** Celebrate summer at this beautiful 3,500 acre park, with 18 miles of hiking trails through forests, hills, ravines, and lofty dunes. Swim, bike, or kayak (rentals available), or just bask in the sun on the beach of Lake Michigan or Hamlin Lake. Discover the village's history, and learn about the reptiles, amphibians, insects, and plant life through interpretive signs along the lake trail. There is a 2-night camping minimum at the park, and sites fill up fast, so make reservations early. Multiple cars can share the same campsite. For more information, call Donna Osborn (574) 289-5393, or Julie Hyndman (574) 246-0133. (Easy/Moderate/Strenuous)