



JULY 2023

KENT ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

Making a difference in Kent, Portage County and beyond since 1970



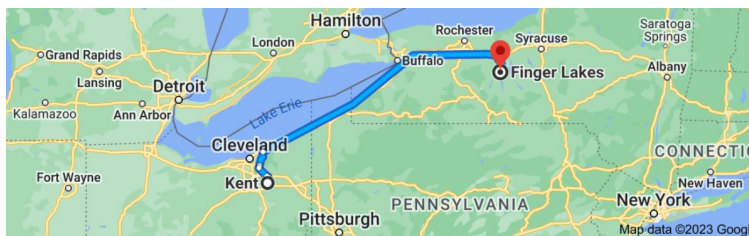
On the Road with Iris: From Ohio to New York to Maine to Canada . . . (to be continued)

KEC member Iris Meltzer is on the road again, this time traveling from Ohio, to New York state, to Maine, to Canada . . . to Oregon . . . and back to Ohio, in a rented RV with many stops along the way. The journey started on June 13 and will conclude later this summer. Here she shares with us in pictures and words some environmental highlights. Let's get started!

June 13: Kent to Finger Lakes in New York

It finally feels as though we are on our way. Left Kent 24 hours ago. Spent our first night in the Finger Lakes region of New York.

Passed one windmill and a solar farm. Heavy downpour most of the way precluded us from taking pictures or exploring, but it did improve the air quality. On to New Hampshire.





June 16-17: Blue Hill, Maine

Here in Blue Hill, Maine, every other car is a Prius, a Prius Prime, or a Tesla. A fair number of homes have solar arrays in their side yards. The roof of the Blue Hill Food Co-Op is covered in solar panels.



June 18: On to New Brunswick, Canada

On our way to Canada, we spotted fields of lupine.



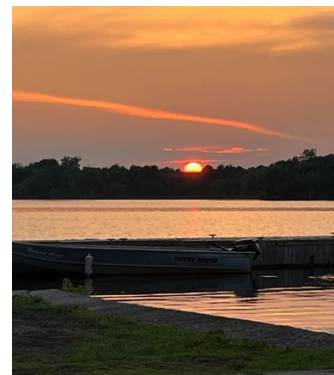
June 19: New Brunswick, Canada

We are now in New Brunswick, Canada. Both here and at the campground we just left in Maine, a green box can be seen among stands of trees. We learned that boxes are designed to capture the invasive the emerald ash borer.



June 26: Cape Breton, Canada

We now are at the shore of the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of Cape Breton, Canada.



July 4: Ontario, Canada

We enjoyed watching the sun set over Lake Ontario in Ontario, Canada.



July 9: Upper Peninsula, Michigan



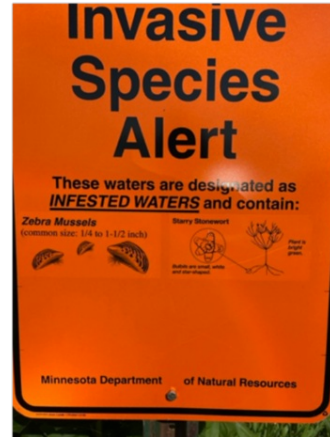
July 9: Munising, Michigan

Time to settle in at our camp at Pictured Rocks RV Park in Munising, Michigan.

On our way back to the United States, we passed over the Soo Locks into Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

July 12: Bemidji, Minnesota

Bemidji, Minnesota, home of Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox and Bemidji Lake. They were putting solar panels on the roof of the visitor center.



Top row, left to right: Solar panels being installed on the visitor center; boat on Bemidji Lake. Bottom row, left to right: sign for the Inclusive Playground, designed by Shane's Inspiration; Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox; invasive-species alert posted by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.



July 13: North Dakota

A lone windmill dots the landscape in North Dakota.



July 13: Minot, North Dakota

A beaver is seen swimming in a river that borders this campground. Just here overnight and then on to Saskatchewan, Canada.



July 13: Saskatchewan, Canada

In Canada, bread-bag clips are stiff cardboard rather than plastic.



July 13: Saskatchewan, Canada

Utensils at Starbucks in Saskatchewan are unlike those you would find at a Starbucks in the United States.



July 13: Alberta, Canada

Windmills in Alberta seen through a haze of smoke.

July 15: Canada

Our home for two days.



July 16: Saskatchewan, Canada

At left, sign outside Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park Visitors Center, Saskatchewan, Canada. At right, sign advertising Farm Park in Saskatchewan, Canada.

GOOD SENSE
 From site selection, to construction materials, to energy and water efficiency, to air quality – this visitor centre was designed and built with an important goal in mind – the health of the environment. Green buildings use less energy and water, generate fewer greenhouse gases and other pollutants, cost less to operate, and typically last longer. That makes good sense and good cents.



July 18: Alberta, Canada

At left, wildlife bridge overpasses being built on Highway 1 in Alberta, Canada. At right, a common sight at Canadian gas stations.



Keep your eyes on the road for more pictures as we continue our travels!

—Iris Meltzer

Lake Erie: The Smartest Lake in the World

How can a lake be smart? People are smart when they're aware of their surroundings and can avoid danger by learning from past experiences. Now, it's the same with Lake Erie, thanks to the actions taken by the Cleveland Water Alliance (CWA) and its partners.

All lakes are affected by the land-use activities in their watersheds. Events in the uplands put materials in the water that are flushed downstream and into the lake during storm events. Also, what happens at one end of the lake can influence events at the other end.

Being able to anticipate possible hazardous events in the lake requires knowing what's happening upstream in the watershed and being able to track events within the lake.

With hundreds of Smart Sensors (like the Smart Buoy in Lake Erie shown above) deployed across open water, at beachfront and river locations, and in inland ponds, creeks, and streams, Lake Erie is now able to do be smart. In collaboration with the Lake Erie Area Research Network, the CWA has outfitted the Lake Erie Watershed with a state-of-the-art telecommunications infrastructure, making it the largest digitally connected freshwater body in the world. The sensors are linked together through the internet of things.



The sensors detect temperature, oxygen dissolved in the water, pH level, nutrient levels, and chlorophyll levels along with other variables. These sensors are connected through an infrastructure that includes LoRaWAN, a low-power, low-cost, long-distance data transmission network that can handle high volumes of data simultaneously. More than 12,000 square miles are linked together in real-time with the data fed to a central computer based in Ann Arbor, Michigan. This network of sensors provides robust, real-time data to industry, utility, agriculture, maritime, research, and recreational interests across the region by enhancing their ability to provide functional, streamlined solutions for monitoring water quality in ever-changing conditions.

The CWA is a consortium of partners drawn from academic, governmental, nongovernmental, industrial and commercial organizations. The goal of CWA is to develop a "water cluster" of economic activity that leads to the creation of jobs and the development of novel technologies to improve and protect water quality and access in the Great Lakes region and across the globe. Established in 2014 as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, the CWA is now recognized as a global leader in facilitating a freshwater economy, mobilizing more than 300 industry-leading companies, research institutions, utilities, and maritime interests, and federal, state, and local government agencies.

Want to know more? Click [here](#).

Photo credit: Cleveland Water Alliance

—Bob Heath

City of Kent Selects Republic Services as Recycling Hauler over Portage County Solid Waste District; Five-Year Contract Effective July 1

Kent City Council voted to accept the bid from Republic Services, which already picks up trash for residents. The Portage County Solid Waste Management District made its last scheduled Kent rounds the week of June 21 and picked up residents' recycling bins immediately after emptying them. Republic Services began dispersing its recycling bins and assured residents that their collection days will remain the same when the Republic Services contract takes effect on July 1.



Republic asks all residents to have their materials at the curb by 7 a.m. on their scheduled collection day. Extra recycling and trash items not placed in bins should be bundled or tied and should not weigh more than 45 pounds. If cardboard is placed outside the bins, it must be flattened and tied with string, not tape. Boxes should not be

placed inside other boxes.

Residents should take care to place only the following items in their Republic Services recycling bins: paper, newspaper, phone books, cartons, cereal boxes, flattened cardboard, aluminum cans, tin cans, steel cans, foil, pie tins, milk cartons, juice cartons aseptic containers, plastic bottles, plastic containers, glass bottles and glass jars. All items must be empty, clean and dry.

All mattresses, box springs and padded furniture must be wrapped in plastic sheeting and sealed with tape. No liquids, pesticides, construction material, dirt, rocks, gravel, sand, shrubs or limbs more than four feet long will be collected.



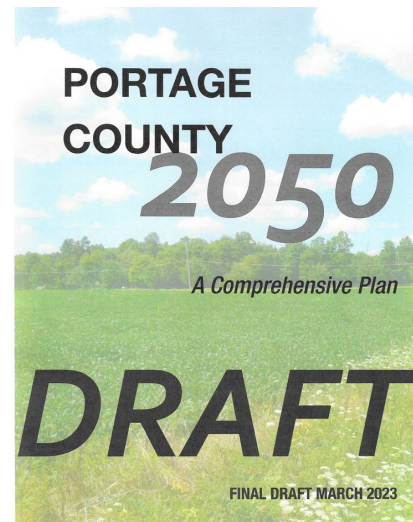
Republic Services does **not** accept the following items for recycling: food waste, yard waste, ceramics or dishes, plastic grocery bags, motor oil containers, electronics, clothing, polystyrene foam, light bulbs, window glass, mirrors, hazardous waste containers, and construction waste.

Source: *The Portager*, June 21, 2023.

—Lorraine McCarty

Portage Commissioners Approve County's First Comprehensive Plan

Portage County commissioners have approved the county's first comprehensive plan. The 175-page document is [available to view](#) on the county website. According to Todd Peetz, director of the Portage County Regional Planning Commission, the information in the plan about population, income and growth shows that Portage County's buying power is not as strong as it once was, but it is second only to Geauga County compared with other counties in Ohio. "It's a living document, so it can be updated at any time," Peetz said. "We're also trying to balance growth with maintaining our rural character." The Kent Environmental Council participated in the development of the plan, giving input on environmental matters covered during the planning process. Read more about the plan [here](#).



Good News Is Always Welcome

Good news is always welcome—especially when it comes to the environment. Here are some of the latest developments.

Tracking Methane Leaks Is Now a Reality with MethaneSAT Satellite

The Environmental Defense Fund is the leading international environmental organization on oil and gas methane mitigation. With the deployment of the MethaneSAT satellite in 2023, methane emitters can no longer hide. (Source: *EDF Climate*, 2023. Photo credit: [Environmental Defense Fund](#))



Finding Savings for Individuals in the IRA

Thanks to the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), millions of Americans can save money and reduce their carbon footprints in their own homes, but don't know about it. Just 22% of the Americans who have heard about the IRA do not think they will personally benefit from this landmark climate bill. To increase awareness, the U.S. Department of Energy created the Energy Savings Hub—a one-stop shop where people can see which tax credits and rebates they and their families qualify for by upgrading their homes to be more energy efficient. President Joe Biden and members of the U.S. House of Representatives [Sustainable Energy & Environmental Coalition](#) are putting money back into Americans' pockets just for going green. On average, households can save \$10,600 by accessing initiatives to electrify their homes and, by doing so, help the country halve its greenhouse gas emissions as early as 2030. (Source: Sustainable Energy & Environmental Coalition, June 27, 2023. Illustration credit: U.S. Department of Energy)



UN Treaty a Game Changer for Ocean Wildlife



The goal of preserving 30% of Earth's oceans by 2030 is important because more than 60% of the oceans lie outside of any one country's jurisdiction. Only 1% of these international waters is protected, leaving the rest to a hodge-podge of international agreements that have failed to prevent overfishing, damage to deep-sea corals, and other fragile habitats or the slide to extinction of various sea animals. The treaty aims to establish large, fully protected marine parks where

struggling wildlife can thrive by being shielded from industrial human activity. The treaty also will help areas outside of these marine parks by strengthening the management of fishing, shipping and other industrial activities. The treaty is a win not only for marine wildlife but also for the billions of people who depend on oceans for their nutrition, livelihoods and cultural heritage. The race to win ratification is now on. (Source: *NRDC Nature's Voice*, Summer 2023)

People Power! A Community Took On a Dirty Coal Power Plant—and Won

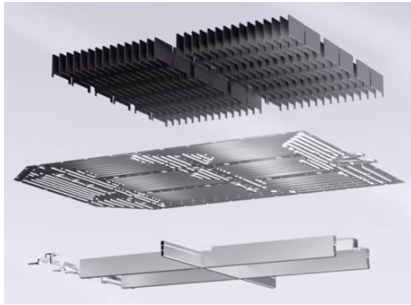
After six years of litigation, the E.D. Edwards coal-fired power plant near Peoria, Illinois, was ordered shuttered for routinely violating federal pollution limits, belching unhealthy levels of fine particulate matter into the air, and contributing to premature deaths, heart attacks, and asthma attacks in the community. The company also paid \$8.6 million into a settlement fund for community-based projects. According to *Nature's*



Voice, "Projects run the gamut from new electric buses to lung-health screenings to the launch of a two-year Renewable Energy Training curriculum at the local technical high school. Solar panels have been installed atop a local arts center and a new fire station. Hundreds of homes of low-income residents, many of them elderly, have received new windows and other energy efficient retrofits. A faith-based nonprofit that focuses on

employment has helped to place more than 100 residents in new jobs.” The old power plant will be turned into a battery-storage facility for renewable energy. It is hoped that the landmark settlement will be a model for other communities who have suffered from the effects of the fossil fuel industry. (Source: *NRDC Nature’s Voice*, Summer 2023. Photo credit: [NRDC](#))

Battery Behemoth Making Great Progress



Contemporary Amperex Technology (CATL) of Fujian, China, is the world’s largest battery maker. This spring, it started mass-producing the new Qilin battery, which extends the range of electric vehicles to 600 miles on a single charge, as opposed to the average U.S. EV range of about 300 miles. The company also unveiled new technology for a semi-solid-state lithium battery it says will store nearly twice as much energy as the best ones on the market today, thereby extending the EV range even further

and bringing electric passenger planes closer. Best of all, CATL says the new battery will be in commercial production in only six months. (Source: *Time*, July 3, 2023. Photo source: [Time](#).)

S Korean Conglomerate Partnering with US Automakers for Battery Build-Out

The South Korean conglomerate SK Group is partnering with U.S. automakers to build new battery factories. Fueled by federal clean energy credits to encourage domestic production, the partnership will help the United States reduce its reliance on China and create a southern battery belt that includes a \$5 billion Hyundai plant in Georgia and two Ford facilities worth \$11.4 billion, including one in Kentucky that will be the largest in the United States. (Source: *Time*, July 3, 2023)



Sensor-Equipped Cars Helping to Map Air Pollution in US



Aclima’s sensor-equipped cars are giving policymakers across the United States block-by-block measures of greenhouse gases and air pollutants. The data can be used, for example, to track the impact of diesel trucks on a particular community and to help policymakers to make more informed decisions about funding and actions. Oakland, California, for example, used this data in 2022 to develop an air quality plan that includes

relocating truck yards, implementing new building requirements, and installing air-filtration systems at senior centers. Aclima also is helping New York state meet its emission-reduction goals. (Source: *Time*, July 3, 2023. Photo source: [Aclima](#))

Case Engineering Students Develop Microplastics Filter for Washing Machines

A startup company, created by three engineering students at Case Western Reserve University, has developed a filter solution to help washing machine manufacturers meet pending legislation in Europe that would require microplastic filters on all new washing machines by 2025. The company, CLEANR, plans to offer both an external filter that attaches to a hose and internal filters to be built into washing machines during manufacturing. The founders have more than 10 engineers on contract and are working with consultants and advisors to continue developing the next iteration of their



New York Bans Sale of New Gas Cars by 2035



Following California's vote to ban the sale of new gas-powered vehicles in 2035, New York Gov. Kathy Hochul ordered state regulators to require all new vehicles sold in New York to be zero emissions by 2035. The regulation will be phased in with 35% of sales in model year 2026, 68% of sales by 2030 and 100% by 2035. (*Greenpeace*, Spring 2023)

Sediment-Diversion Project to Bring Back Wetlands in Louisiana

Louisiana broke ground this year on a \$2.3 billion sediment diversion project to stem the loss of wetlands to rising sea levels. The project will use the power of the Mississippi River to move freshwater and sediment into degraded wetlands, which is much like the natural processes that originally occurred to build up southern Louisiana. The work to be done in Louisiana represents one of the largest ecosystem restoration projects in the world and will help ensure the long-term sustainability of the area, which is losing the equivalent of one football field every 100 minutes.



—Lorraine McCarty

Environment Watch

We are skipping the *Washington Post's* roundup of the Biden administration's proposed, implemented and overturned environmental achievements in this issue, but we will catch you up on those in our next newsletter.



The following are just a few of the current developments:

- **New energy efficiency standards.** New energy efficiency standards from the Department of Energy for residential refrigerators and freezers are projected to save consumers over \$1.8 billion a year while preventing 1.8 billion tons of climate-warming carbon pollution over the next 30 years.
- **Renewable energy in rural communities.** The Department of Agriculture will spend almost \$11 billion to fund renewable energy development in rural communities throughout the country. This is the largest investment in rural electrification since Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal in 1936. The Empowering Rural America program will invest \$9.7 billion for rural electric cooperatives to create renewable energy, zero emission and carbon capture systems. Rural electric cooperatives, renewable energy companies and electric utilities can all apply for funding through the program.
- **Nonlethal Initiative program.** Congress has doubled the funding for the Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services' Nonlethal Initiative program which seeks to prevent human-wildlife conflicts and thereby spare the lives of animals. The program attempts to break old cycles of loss and killing by investing in proactive solutions such as electronic fencing to prevent bears from accessing calving pastures and trained range-riders to deter wolf activity near livestock.

- **Stricter emission limits for new coal and gas power plants.** The Environmental Protection Agency has proposed stricter emission limits on new coal and gas power plants, forcing plants to capture emissions using technology that has been promised but has not yet been implemented. Since these plants account for 25% of U.S. emissions, restricting carbon dioxide would prevent the release of up to 617 million metric tons (the equivalent to emissions from 137 million passenger cars) through 2042, lead to significantly better air quality and health benefits, and probably propel the development of carbon-capture technology. Nearly all plants would have to cut or capture nearly all their carbon dioxide emissions by 2038. The fossil fuel industry is expected to oppose these regulations.
- **New permits for West Virginia pipeline.** New permits were approved for the \$6.6 billion Mountain Valley Pipeline, a 303-mile pipeline that runs through the Jefferson National Forest in West Virginia. Sen. Joe Manchin has called the pipeline crucial to the country's energy infrastructure and has noted that the courts have for the third time permitted it to proceed. Environmental advocates contend that those who are supposed to guard the country's public treasures have failed to do so and say they plan to take the project back to court. The U.S. Forest Service said that the permit decision will enable the project to move forward while minimizing environmental impacts to soil, water, scenery and other resources. The amended plan calls for 85% of the soil dedicated to growing vegetation to be left in place and revegetation of the area to be completed within five years.

(Sources: *Akron Beacon Journal*, May 12, 2023; *Akron Beacon Journal*, May 17, 2023; *NRDC Nature's Voice*, Summer 2023)

—Lorraine McCarty

Environment in the News

Vermont Braces for More Rain *Akron Beacon Journal*, July 14, 2023

Communities are assessing damage as they prepare for the next round of thunderstorms and possibly a tornado, which could cause more flash flooding—even heavier than the previous round last week. In the capital city, Montpelier, the downtown flooded, damaging the elevator in the city hall and making the building inaccessible. Repairs are expected to take several months, and city hall is closed until further notice. Several relief organizations are holding fundraisers so Vermonters can help each other. Other New England states were affected also, including New Hampshire, where some roads, towns and campgrounds were flooded, and Connecticut, where officials warned boaters and others about dangerous debris in the Connecticut River, including large trees and a whole dock with several attached boats that was washed down the river from Glastonbury. Amtrak and other railroad services were suspended. In New York, one death was blamed on the storm when a woman was swept away by the Hudson River.



Oil Recyclers Having to Take Care of Own Mess

Akron Beacon Journal, July 11, 2023; *Akron Beacon Journal*, July 12, 2023; *Akron Beacon Journal*, July 14, 2023

Noble Oil Services, a company that helps clean up oil spills and recycle the oil, was transferring oil from a tanker truck to a rail car on Snyder Avenue in Barberton, when the oil spilled into a storm sewer that drains into the Tuscarawas River, near Wolf Creek. The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, and the Barberton Fire Department have been working to remediate the spill. The EPA has not yet determined the amount spilled but says that the reservoir that supplies Barberton's drinking water is upstream from the spill and should not be affected. Downstream communities have been notified and, based on current information, they

have not been affected. The ODNR has found oil-covered birds and has cleaned them. James Carnahan, a bicyclist and fisherman who discovered and reported the spill, said he also has seen a muskrat drenched in oil and unable to walk. He worries that deer will cross the river, get oil on their feet and try to lick it off, poisoning their digestive tract. The active cleanup could end as soon as Friday July 14, but the booms used to capture the oil may remain in place until the EPA gives the okay to remove them. Noble Oil is responsible for the cleanup costs.

Canadian Wildfires Creating Smoke in US

The Portager, June 30, 2023

Intense wildfires raging in Canada and the greenhouse gas emissions from them are equal to an entire year of Canada's regular emissions. It's not just an anomaly. Climate change with other natural patterns piled on top are creating the perfect storm for record heat and wildfires. It is likely that more of the same lies in the future.

Approval Process Continues to Delay Building of Grain Belt Express

New York Times, June 12, 2023

Intense For the past 13 years, developers have been trying to build a large power line—the Grain Belt Express project—connecting Kansas with Missouri, Illinois and Indiana to bring the clean energy generated in Kansas, from both wind turbines and solar panels, to states with much bigger populations. Construction, however, has not even started because federal permission is needed along with approval from every local and state jurisdiction the power line passes through. At different times since 2010, at least one agency has resisted granting its approval. The approval process is just one example of a bigger problem: a fragmented and decentralized system that makes it hard to connect clean energy solutions to the grid. Federal, state and local leaders are considering changes to the permitting process for energy projects that provide a better balance between speed and protecting various rights and concerns. Some fossil-fuel projects already go through a streamlined federal process, and reforms could give clean-energy projects the same chance.

World Sees Hottest Days on Record

Akron Beacon Journal, June 6, 2023; Akron Beacon Journal, June 7, 2023

The hottest worldwide average temperature of 62.9 degrees Fahrenheit continued for two days in a row, according to the University of Maine's climate calculator, which uses satellite data and computer simulations. Along with record temperatures in many places, another contributing factor is that Antarctica's exceptionally mild winter had an average temperature that was a whopping 8.1 degrees Fahrenheit warmer than the 1979-2000 average. The figures are not official government records because scientists generally use longer measurements to track Earth's warming, but the daily highs are an indicator that climate change is reaching uncharted territories and can create brutal conditions for people all over the world.

Study Warns Extinction Looms for Many Species

Akron Beacon Journal - May 28, 2023

Researchers Researchers at Queen's University Belfast tried to get past the simplistic view that "everything is going to hell." A study of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish and insects found that while overall, species are declining, many are doing okay or even better. They found that 48% of the species were declining and only 3% were increasing, while the remaining 48% remained stable. Biodiversity is under increasing threat from habitat destruction, invasive species and other factors, and the number of populations collapsing is far higher than the species adaptively catching up. Population trends are mostly unknown for species in the tropics. Amphibians are seeing some of the greatest decreases in losses (63%) among the examined species. Overall, the findings are mixed, with some findings being rather grim while other findings are more optimistic, such as with endangered species.

350% Rate of Increase in Consumer Demand for Electric Vehicles

Consumer Reports - August 2023

The Supply is not meeting the demand for electric vehicles and might not catch up until 2030, according to a recent analysis by *Consumer Reports*. There are now about 45 ready buyers for every EV being manufactured.

—Summarized by Lorraine McCarty

KEC Membership: Join Today!

We welcome anyone who wants to join the Kent Environmental Council and support our efforts. If you are already a member, you will be receiving a reminder of renewal by mail the month before the expiration date for your dues. Remember, dues are the main source of income for KEC.



Basic memberships help us maintain communication among our members for many of our activities.

Sustaining, Organizational and Lifetime memberships enhance our ability to implement our education and advocacy responsibilities and to have a grant program to encourage innovative environmental projects.

Membership levels are **Student: \$5; Golden Buckeye: \$15; First-Year Member Special: \$25; Individual: \$35; Household: \$50; Sustaining: \$100; Organization: \$100; Lifetime: \$500**

To join or renew, send your name, address, phone number, email address and check made payable to Kent Environmental Council, P.O. Box 395, Kent, OH 44240.

To join or renew online with PayPal, click [here](#).

*KEC dues are **not** tax deductible because the organization has a 501(c)(4) status.*

Informal Breakfast and Discussion Every Friday

KEC members have decided to meet every Friday at 8 a.m. for their informal environmental breakfast discussion at the **Nineteen 10 restaurant in the Kent State Hotel**, 215 S. Depeyster St., Kent, OH 44242. Participants order off the menu, and all are welcome. No reservations are necessary. We hope you will join us for good food and good conversation.



KEC Board: [Renee Ruchotzke](#), Chair; [Bob Heath](#), Vice Chair; [Brad Brotje](#), Secretary; [Bob Wilson](#), Treasurer; [Jeff Ingram](#); [Audrey Cielinski Kessler](#); [Chris Mallin](#); [Lorraine McCarty](#); [Ann Ward](#)



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