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Day 14 Greenest Challenge

My adventure today was... not your typical adventure. It has been raining all day where I live- and so I was not able to go outside to have an adventure. So, after asking one of PGC mentors from the PGC Participants Facebook page, she told me to be creative. So, my adventure instead was I went to Chicago and I saw the Gubernatorial Environmental Candidate Forum hosted by the Sierra Club at UIC (University of Illinois at Chicago). Therefore, given the pouring rain conditions, it was hard to find any wildlife or birds or pollinators in the city- but I made the most out of the weather situation to try and complete this task as fully as possible.



This is a picture that I took from my seat at the restaurant. I took this photo because (although it is kind of hard to see from the angle) the roof of this building has a garden on it. Being in such a 'concrete jungle' in Chicago, IL, I was happy and (even in a weird way) grateful, to see a building with a rooftop garden- because it was a reminder of how we as a community can live sustainably- no matter if you live in the country, the suburbs, or even a

city like Chicago, and what was better was to see people doing it, like the people of this building did!

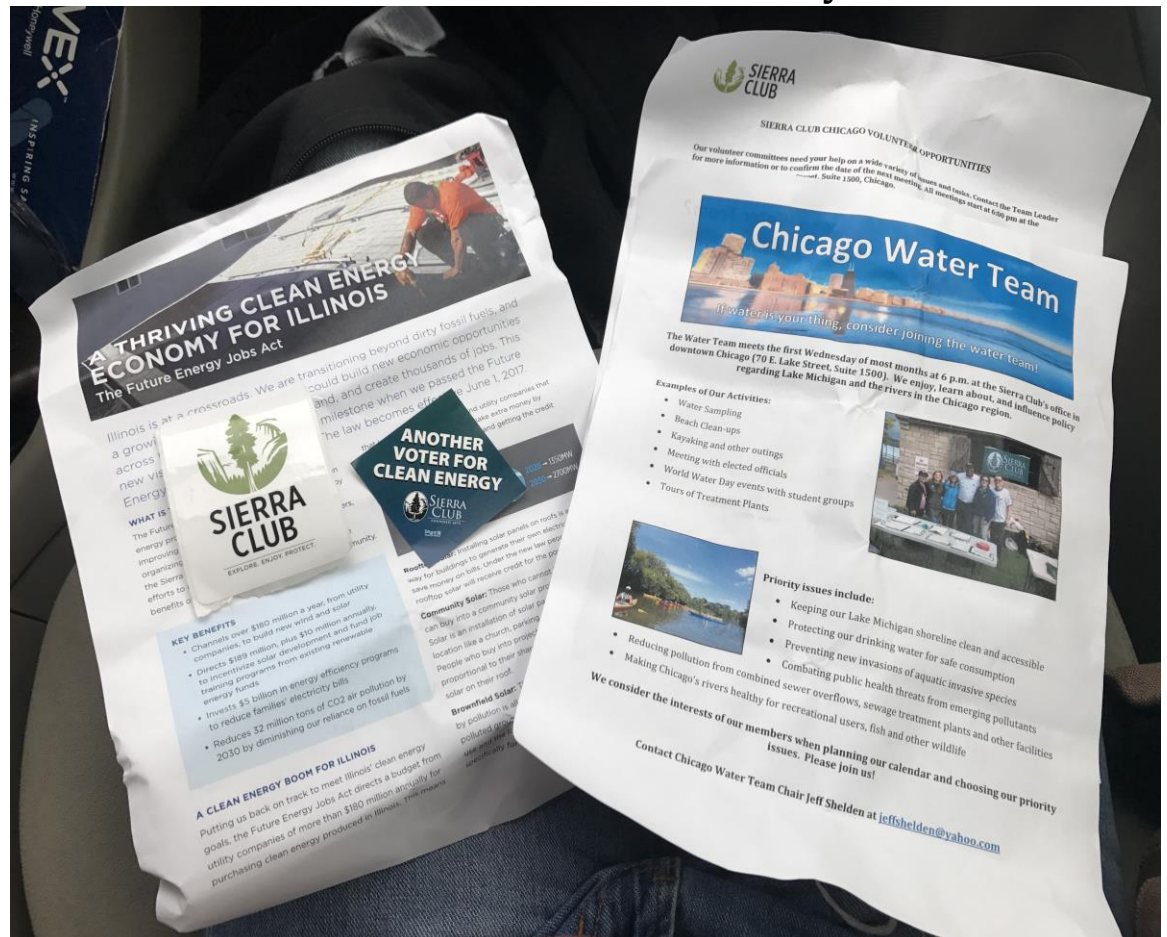
Items from the PGC Scavenger Hunt

- I did not find any pollinators on such a gloomy day in the city of Chicago- but after the candidate forum, I got to talk to one of the candidates, Daniel Biss (who I felt was the most promising), and my question to him was, “How do you feel we should handle pesticide use in Illinois, especially neonics that our harming our bee population?” His response was that he admitted not having an extensive knowledge on pesticides, but that he knows that some legislation has been pushed about such pesticides, but as governor he plans to work to give push even harder to ensure such pesticides stop harming our pollinators, which I was glad to hear.
- The two-plant species I saw were the Honey Locust tree (*Gleditsia triacanthos*) and Goldenrod (*Solidago canadensis*). I saw both of these as I was walking down the street from the UIC campus.
- While it was difficult to find birds given most of the birds were hiding to avoid the rain, I did spot a House Sparrow in a tree on the walk back from the UIC campus.
- The only wildlife animal I found was a squirrel on a Honey Locust tree on my walk to the UIC forum, as like the birds I believe most squirrels were hiding given the weather.
- The terrain was extremely wet- at some points water was at least an inch tall on the roads- it never really stopped raining at all today, which made the day a challenge, but at the same time made the adventure a fun challenge aside from being cold and wet.
- The sky was dark and cloudy all day long, at some points there was even lightning.
- Something that took my breath away was the candidate forum entirely; to be filled in a room was so many environmental activists who were engaged and eager to learn about our governor candidates and what the candidates had to say was inspiring. The whole forum was handled really excellently, and many crucial topics were brought up- lead in drinking waters, excess nutrients into our water systems, renewable energy, coal plants, and even handling environmental issues in segregated communities. Most all of the candidates at one point or another had really great points, and the one point that inspired me the most was made by both Daniel Biss and Chris Kennedy- and it was the point that given all the rollbacks with our federal government and our president’s unwillingness to acknowledge the scientific facts of issues like climate change, we as a state need to

be the leaders and step up ourselves to make our environment better, which I found really powerful.

- Something that surprised me was that all the candidates but one (Chris Kennedy) directly stated they want to make Illinois on 100% renewable energy. I was so happy to hear that we have candidates that look towards seeking better opportunities for how we get our energy. I was also surprised to hear that a large percentage of the coal that gets burned in Illinois- doesn't even get used in Illinois, it gets shipped to Wyoming! 100% renewable energy is where we should be heading, so I was surprised/relieved to hear that three out of the four candidates were ready to move to 100% renewable energy.

Although I went to the Sierra Club candidate forum with someone, if I were to invite another friend to come I would say...



Hey! I just wanted to invite you to come with me next time Sierra Club hosts an environmental candidate forum, or even something similar to that- I learned a lot of great information that has helped me shape a better-informed decision on who I want to vote for, for the next governor election. There was a great energy in the room, and despite the rain it was a lot of fun- come with me next time!