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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS ON CLIMATE CHANGE

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW IN 2021

NEWS RELEASE

First Community Conversation on Climate Change Discussion Scheduled for January 28, 2021

West Michigan Environmental Action Council and the Michigan Chapter of the Sierra Club are kicking off their *Community Conversations on Climate Change*, a monthly series of virtual discussions on climate change - how it is affecting Muskegon County, and what can be done at the local level to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and prepare for future impacts.

The first topic is "What You Need to Know in 2021," scheduled for Thursday, January 28, from 7 to 8:30 p.m. The virtual discussion will be moderated by Dr. Erik Nordman, professor of natural resources management at GVSU, and feature perspectives on climate change solutions from an array of panelists, including: Aaron Ferguson, manager for the Climate and Tracking Unit at the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services; Sonya Hernandez, Muskegon area community leader; Lori Heinz Coleman, steering committee member of the White Lake Area Climate Action Council; Dr. Elena Lioubimtseva, professor of geography and sustainable planning at GVSU, and Dr. Janet Vail, adjunct faculty for environmental & sustainability studies at GVSU.

The focus of the panel will cover basic climate science, the top issues to pay attention to this year, and the most important actions to take.

According to one of the panel organizers, Renae Hesselink, vice president of sustainability for Nichols Paper, "This panel will help promote key climate change solution

priorities for the year. Our goal is to provide essential information on climate change trends and solutions to spark initiatives and actions by individuals, groups, businesses, and government.

Tanya Cabala, lakeshore outreach organizer for the West Michigan Environmental Action Council, says the virtual discussions are in direct response to interest in community environmental activism in Muskegon County. "I am inspired by the enthusiasm of local activists, who have told us they want learn more about climate change, and to take informed action."

The primary goal is education, according to Sophie Stoepker, of the Michigan Chapter of the Sierra Club. "Information on climate change science and solutions is crucial to getting greenhouse gas emissions down and for planning to handle impacts."

To learn more and register for the panel discussion, go to:
[CommunityConversationsJanuary2021.eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/community-conversations-january-2021)

West Michigan Environmental Action Council (WMEAC) has been West Michigan's preeminent resource for environmental education and advocacy since 1968. It is a non-profit, 501 (c)3 organization uniquely positioned to respond to emerging issues and new threats to West Michigan's natural and human ecologies, strategically focused on building sustainable communities and protecting water resources.

The Michigan Chapter of the Sierra Club began in 1967 and serves as the statewide voice for the national organization. The Chapter follows the national mission to "explore, enjoy, and protect the wild places of the earth." With over 150,000 members in Michigan, the Chapter continues to work with members and volunteers on issues ranging from clean energy and environmental justice to protecting our Great Lakes and encouraging elected officials to have better environmental stewardship statewide. The Michigan Chapter is based in Lansing.