



NEWS RELEASE

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JOHN KLEIN RECEIVES 2009 NATIONAL SIERRA CLUB AWARD

SAN FRANCISCO, Calif. – John Klein of Hudson, Mich., has been selected to receive the Sierra Club’s 2009 Special Achievement Award. This award honors an individual Sierra Club member for a single act of particular importance dedicated to conservation. The award will be presented in San Francisco at the Club’s annual dinner on Sept. 26, 2009.

Klein is being honored for his photographic documentation of illegal Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO) activity in Michigan since March 2001. Klein has taken thousands of aerial photographs that have been instrumental in making a case to the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) about the severe problems caused by CAFOs.

According to Michigan Sierra Club Board Member Edward Steinman, “Not only has John volunteered his time taking and organizing the photographs, he has also become knowledgeable about CAFOs, which has been extremely helpful in taking pictures that are used by the Michigan Chapter water sentinel, Lynn Henning, who analyzes them for the DEQ. Additionally, the photos have provided training for others analyzing aerial photographs. With up to 300 CAFOs in Michigan, weak regulations and an overstretched and underfunded DEQ, the problems caused by CAFOs are very difficult. However, John has continuously invested many hours in this volunteer effort. He has made time to volunteer amid a very busy schedule running his own business, and also has made himself available on short notice when the need for photographs has been time-sensitive.”

Klein has photographed about 120 sites, or between 40 and 60 percent of the CAFOs in Michigan. He also has photographed a few sites in northern Ohio. About 20 CAFOs have been covered multiple times, which Steinman said has demonstrated to the DEQ a disregard of regulations and compliance orders at certain sites. “The photos have been the primary driving force for judgments and fines against CAFO operators and have often been the only evidence of violations and non-compliance after consent judgments have been issued,” Steinman said.

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