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# The Jersey..... SIERRAN

Vol. 49, No. 3      Approximately 21,000 Members in New Jersey      July-September 2020

## Pipeline Victory

By Gary Frederick, Chair of our Raritan Valley Group

On May 15, the NJDEP effectively killed the NESE pipeline by ruling that Transco had failed to demonstrate a need for the project.

NESE is (was!) the Northeast Supply Enhancement Project: a natural gas pipeline from fracking sources in Pennsylvania, across central New Jersey and under Raritan and Lower New York Bays to a terminal off Queens to supply natural gas to New York City.

Earlier that day, New York also denied the water certification Transco needed to dig under Raritan Bay, saying that the gas from the proposed pipeline was no longer needed, by National Grid's own admission. National Grid, which would have bought the gas from Transco, said other alternatives including existing infrastructure could now manage New York City's needs.

So after four years of protests, letters, alliances with other environmental groups, political mobilization and sheer will, this pipeline is dead. Except for any

possible appeals, we have won.

I'm proud that the Raritan Valley Group and the NJ Sierra Club (particularly Chapter Director Jeff Tittel, who railed against this project from its very beginnings) were prominent and relentless fighters against NESE. We worked with many other groups, including the Central Jersey Safe Energy Coalition in central Jersey, to mobilize the resistance and we have now won!

This is the biggest environmental victory I have experienced with the Sierra Club, and I think one of our biggest victories here in New Jersey. We all share in this, but a big thank you goes to the grassroots organizers and many thousands of residents, including Sierra Club members, who raised their voices and said enough is enough. As Margaret Mead is famously quoted saying: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful concerned citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

## Conservation Chair's Report

# Economic Stimulus Following Covid-19

By Greg Gorman (ggorman07419@embarqmail.com)

"As a nation we face three converging crises: the Covid-19 pandemic and its resulting economic recession; the climate emergency; and extreme inequality." These are the opening words to a "Green Stimulus Plan,"<sup>(1)</sup> calling for spending at least \$2 trillion on millions of green jobs and strategic investments. Another proposal, "Five Principles for Just Covid-19 Relief and Stimulus," calls for "public investments to rebuild our infrastructure, replace lead pipes, expand wind and solar power, build clean and affordable public transit, weatherize our buildings, build and repair public housing, manufacture more clean energy goods, restore our wetlands and forests, expand public services that support climate resilience, and support regenerative agriculture led by family farmers."<sup>(2)</sup> The International Energy Agency advocates putting clean energy at the heart of Covid-19 stimulus plans, and taking the opportunity to lower or eliminate fossil fuel subsidies.<sup>(3)</sup> Governor Murphy's Covid-19 recovery commission is charged with suggesting priorities for investments to allow the State's economy to both rebound and be positioned for long-term success.<sup>(4)</sup> By implementing the recommendations suggested above, New Jersey could accelerate reaching its Energy Master Plan goals, improve health, create jobs and provide environmental justice.

Studies have shown that fossil fuel air pollution correlates with Covid-19 infection rates.<sup>(5)</sup> Air pollution and obesity are risk factors for susceptibility to Covid-19 infection.<sup>(6)</sup> NASA photographs for March, 2020, show that air pollution was significantly reduced as airline passengers and automobile users stayed home. Electric passenger vehicles would produce a similar effect. Still, the photos show elevated and dangerous air pollution levels. These are NOx emissions from natural gas electric generation facili-

ties, incinerators and trucks, and methane leaking from compressor stations and pipes. We should place a moratorium on fossil fuel projects and focus on developing energy parks combining active recreation with community solar and storage. Instead of expanding highways, we should develop mass transit and walkable communities.

New Jersey needs to identify and reduce the climate stressors that increase coastal and riverine flood risk, change growing seasons, and affect our biota on land and sea. The State as it develops its economic recovery plan needs to build in resiliency. We should build microgrids and improve transportation networks in a state that is already fully developed. Community planning, building codes and home rehabilitation projects need to be upgraded to maximize energy efficiency and storm water control. All lead pipes should be replaced.

NJ should focus its investment strategy on transitioning to clean energy, and modernizing our networks. Societal benefits will include reduction in health costs and traffic congestion, generating millions of dollars in savings. The economic recovery from the pandemic should be a springboard to Preserve, Protect, and Enjoy Our Planet.

Citations:

(1) [https://medium.com/@green\\_stimulus\\_now/a-green-stimulus-to-rebuild-our-economy-1e7030a1d9ee](https://medium.com/@green_stimulus_now/a-green-stimulus-to-rebuild-our-economy-1e7030a1d9ee)

(2) [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdMaV6F\\_o\\_ew3P6p1O-50JcbFo\\_AsMoR2N\\_z6qmfXEHfPSbRw/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdMaV6F_o_ew3P6p1O-50JcbFo_AsMoR2N_z6qmfXEHfPSbRw/viewform)

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## Report from Trenton

# Viral Aftermath: Gov. Murphy's Road Back Plan Must Be Green

From a press release issued on April 27, and edited by Tony Hagen

Gov. Phil Murphy's Road Back Plan, unveiled on April 27, details how New Jersey will reopen amid the still-present coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19). It calls for efforts to sustain new case reductions, expand testing, trace contacts of infected individuals, improve isolation measures, invigorate the economy, and ensure resiliency. Murphy should also push for a green agenda. We have seen the clean air benefits of people driving less. These support the case for incorporating mass transit, renewable energy, electric vehicles, energy efficiency, green jobs, and solar power into New Jersey's comeback plan. Now is the perfect time to steer toward reductions in pollution, cleaner water, and climate change intervention. In the zeal to reopen our economy, we must not fast-track permits or weaken standards.

Murphy issued two Executive Orders in response to the pandemic: EO 122 was intended to stop nonessential construction, but it doesn't. Projects such as the NJ Turnpike and Garden State Parkway expansions, the Southern Reliability Link

pipeline, the liquid natural gas port in Gibbstown, and major sprawl developments are still moving forward, and without adequate public oversight and input. EO 127 extends the time available for adoption, rejection, or modification of recommended reports and decisions. EO 127's failings are that it does not extend public comment periods, and there is danger that builders and developers will exploit it to obtain permit extensions. Both orders must be clarified and refined.

In response to Covid-19, major cities around the world have seen reductions of deadly particulate matter by up to 60%, a significant improvement that without green initiatives will be lost as we recover from the pandemic. The American Lung Association's 2020 "State of the Air" report found that, pre-Covid-19, New Jersey's major metro areas continued to rank among the worst in the nation for ozone smog. Our economic blueprint must become greener: as we recover from this pandemic, we must seize the opportunity for major changes in how we do business and protect our environment.

## Covid Corner Perspective on the pandemic and the climate crisis

# "Honey, Haven't We Seen This Show Before?"

By David "Ace" Case, Chair of our Hudson County Group (acecase88@gmail.com)

The world has not seen a global pandemic on the scale of the Covid-19 outbreak since the 1918 Spanish Flu. Certainly nothing like it has been seen here in the U.S. in our lifetimes. So why, as the crisis has unfolded, have I regularly had the notion that we've seen this all before? "Like deja vu all over again," as the immortal Yogi Berra once said.

After a few weeks of following the news, it finally struck me: We HAVE seen this before. We know this story. It's the Climate Crisis: just a condensed version! It's like a Jane Austen novel condensed

into a telenovela. Or War and Peace - the Marvel Comics version.

The coronavirus story is really much the same as the climate story. With one or two disturbing differences: the coronavirus story has unfolded over days and weeks, whereas the climate crisis has unfolded over years and decades. The coronavirus threatens to engulf us for months, even years, whereas climate threatens to engulf us for generations—centuries. With the coronavirus crisis we all hope for some return to "normal," or at

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**More in our Electronic Supplement (pp. 13-16):** Reports from Trenton: Ringwood Superfund, NJ Transit Funding, Dirty Power for NJ Transit, NJ Turnpike Traffic, RGGI Funds, Environmental Impact of Covid-19, Limiting Fluorine Pollution, Planning for Climate Change. Flashbacks to the First Earth Day. Also some maps of segments of the NJ State Long Trail - for your hiking pleasure! (The supplement is part of the Newsletter posted on the Chapter Website, and is sent to all of our electronic-subscribing members.)

*Political Chair's Report*

## Reelect Senator Cory Booker; Other Political News

By John Kashwick (*Political.Chair@NewJersey.SierraClub.org*)

The Sierra Club is pleased to announce our endorsement of Cory Booker in his re-election bid for the U.S. Senate. Booker has been a steadfast supporter of environmental and social justice issues since becoming our Senator. He was the prime sponsor of a bill that requires federal agencies to address the disproportionate impact of environmental and human health hazards on communities of color, indigenous communities, and low-income communities resulting from agencies' programs and policies. In addition, he is a strong proponent of federal lands, co-sponsoring legislation to fund the backlog of infrastructure in our national parks and retaining a strong Antiquities Act that enables Presidents to declare national monuments that protect natural and cultural resources. From 2015 to 2018 Booker maintained a perfect 100% score from the League of Conservation Voters, and only declined in 2019 because of missing votes during his presidential campaign. The Sierra Club is proud to give its support to Cory Booker for re-election.

In other news, 2020 is going to be an election like no other. Not only do we have the opportunity to defeat the most environmentally-hostile President in our history, but we need to protect the environmental majority in the House and hopefully gain the Senate. In 2018, New Jersey contributed four newly-Democratic House seats to the wave that swept across the country. In 2020, we need to protect our majority. Reps. Andy Kim and Tom Malinowski are in tight races and need

our help to get them re-elected. If you are interested in helping with either of these campaigns or with any of our other endorsed candidates, please email me: [political.chair@newjersey.sierraclub.org](mailto:political.chair@newjersey.sierraclub.org).

2020 is also different because of Covid-19. As of this writing, many campaigns are at a standstill. Typical methods of reaching voters such as canvassing or holding meet and greet events are no longer occurring. We don't know what campaigns will look like come this Fall, but one thing we know for certain: it will not be business as usual. The Sierra Club is looking for new ways to help out campaigns and also adhere to social distancing. We are exploring ways of helping via text and phone call, through social media, and doing Zoom town halls with some of our endorsed candidates. We welcome your input in not just helping out with the campaigns for our endorsed candidates, but also how we can do things differently in a year unlike any other.

Finally, a reminder that the New Jersey primary has been postponed until Tuesday, July 7. This primary includes not only the Presidential race, but also many local and county races. Vote by mail is easy in New Jersey. To apply go to: <https://www.state.nj.us/state/elections/county-election-officials.shtml>. The Sierra Club endorses in races in all levels of government. If you are a local or county candidate interested in applying for endorsement, please email me at [political.chair@newjersey.sierraclub.org](mailto:political.chair@newjersey.sierraclub.org).

*Transportation Committee Chair's Report*

## Transportation Committee Releases Two Reports on NJ Transit Operations

By Bill Beren (*Beren1@Verizon.net*)

On February 12th the Sierra Club's Transportation Committee delivered two reports to NJ Transit's Board of Directors: proposing a system of Frequent Service Bus Routes in Northern NJ, and critiquing the inaccurate and hard-to-find information on the agency's website and public information systems.

The reports were prepared by two students at Rutgers-Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy: Matt Bewley and Jordan Rosenbloom, under the direction of Steve Lax, the Club's Transportation Consultant, and me, as Chair of our Transportation Committee. Matt and Jordan were hired under a grant from the National Sierra Club's "Clean Transportation for All" program.

The first report looks at how providing and promoting frequent bus service, defined as 15-minute headways or less, has successfully increased bus ridership in other metropolitan areas across the country. Frequent scheduling would enable "Show Up and Go" service, eliminating the need for riders to consult schedules, and ensuring that there will always be return service when using NJ Transit Buses.

The Frequent Service Study identified 14 corridors in Hudson, Bergen, Passaic and Essex Counties that currently qualify as having frequent service. The report recommended that NJ Transit publicize these corridors as Frequent Service Routes by producing maps, schedules and coordinated schedules to advertise

this service to new riders. The report also identified an additional 16 corridors that would also qualify under the Frequent Service standards with minor schedule tweaks. The report concludes that with aggressive promotion, bus priority lanes, and traffic signal priority, ridership on these routes can increase by 2% or more, consistent with gains seen by peer transit agencies in Portland OR, Minneapolis - St. Paul MN, and Richmond VA.

Our second report takes a deep dive look at the myriad, and often confusing, desktop and mobile trip planning and scheduling apps on NJ Transit's websites, and offers many examples of inaccurate, misleading, or incomplete information provided by the alerts and advisories prepared by NJ Transit staff.

The analysis found seven major problems. Chief among them is the failure to include non-NJ Transit bus services run by private carriers, contract carriers, counties, and colleges - in rider tools such as trip planning and service alerts. Other problems are that similar apps on the NJ Transit website and mobile apps do not provide the same information, system maps showing bus, rail, and ferry by region are not available, service alerts and advisories are often inaccurate or unhelpful, and more (the full report is on the Chapter website).

The reports are available on the NJ Sierra Club website [www.sierraclub.org/New-jersey](http://www.sierraclub.org/New-jersey)

*Toxicology Advisor's Report*

## Zombie Apocalypse, Covid-19, and the next Pandemic

By Mark Fukayama (*markexams@aol.com*)

'Zombie Preparedness', a Center for Disease Control (CDC) website,<sup>1</sup> advises us to prepare for the zombie apocalypse and for other unknown infectious diseases. Of course, being prepared is critical, but a zombie apocalypse is in jest...right?

Although a zombie apocalypse has not happened (yet), we have lived through other emerging infectious disease pandemics including the Hong Kong flu ('68), HIV ('81), SARS ('03), Swine flu ('09), MERS ('12), Ebola ('13), Zika ('15), and now Covid-19.

What is causing these diseases? Will it happen again? What has been done to prepare? As reported by the New York Times,<sup>2</sup> after the Ebola and Zika crises, these concerns were addressed in a 2016 National Security Council (NSC) lessons-learned study<sup>3</sup> that provided guidance and recognized that "Population growth, urbanization, deforestation, the expansion of agriculture, the bunching of species together in island ecosystems, global commerce flows, and an unsurpassed level of intercontinental air travel are creating the very conditions for the next dangerous pathogen to emerge. A strong scientific consensus exists that we will see more zoonotic [animal to human] pandemics and infectious disease outbreaks going forward..." The Bush Administration also recognized these concerns after the SARS pandemic, and issued a similar guidance plan in 2006.<sup>4</sup>

Climate change is another critical threat multiplier of emerging infectious diseases.<sup>5</sup> Climate change, caused by the combustion of fossil fuels resulting in global warming and environmental changes, acts as a catalyst for species and pathogens to explore new habitats, increasing the opportunity for pathogens to encounter and to infect new species including humans.

The past administrations' lessons-learned reports were acknowledged by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) in their 2019 'Crimson Contagion' simulation study,<sup>6</sup> aimed at testing the governments' readiness of an infectious disease outbreak. From this exercise, a long list of weaknesses was generated such as a lack of coordination amongst agencies with no clear guidance or defined responsibilities, insufficient funding sources, lack of medical supplies

and an unclear supply chain.

After the Zika pandemic in 2015, the Global Health Security and Biodefense unit, responsible for pandemic preparedness, was established and resided under the NSC. But this team was disbanded by the current administration in 2018, with members and responsibilities merged with other units.

In 2019, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) Commission, which included members of Congress, health experts, and former U.S. and military officials, warned that they were "sounding the alarm that the U.S. government is caught in a cycle of crisis and complacency" in preparing the country for a pandemic, and urged the White House to restore health security leadership at the NSC.<sup>7</sup>

Can we predict where and when will be the next infectious disease pandemic? After the Swine flu pandemic in 2009, the USAID Emerging Pandemic Threats Program initiated a program called PREDICT, where scientist search for potential viral agents in China and 30 other hot spots of emergent diseases, examining bats and other carrier animals to identify potentially infectious pathogens;<sup>8,9</sup> fundamental research that would help support the development of antiviral treatments and vaccines. But under the current administration funding was cut for this early warning program in September 2019 (ongoing projects had to wrap up by March 2020); however, in April, the administration backtracked and extended the program for 6 months.<sup>10</sup>

Clearly the threat of a global pandemic requires a coordinated global research, surveillance, monitoring, mitigation, and treatment effort and the World Health Organization (WHO) has programs to address many of these areas. But in April, the current administration began withholding funds for the WHO, demanding the WHO not be referenced in United Nations coronavirus initiatives, and deleting any WHO-sourced references about Covid-19 in strategic documents.<sup>11</sup>

Years of lessons-learned studies taught us to anticipate and to prepare for a pandemic. But lessons are worthwhile only to the open-minded. Sadly, the metaphorical zombie apocalypse may not be in jest.

(Footnotes continue on page 13)

*Issue Coordinator's Report*

## Understanding Gender, Equity & Environmental Issues: Part I

By Pritti Thakker, *Gender, Equity (Population) Issues Coordinator* ([thakkerp@icloud.com](mailto:thakkerp@icloud.com))

In order to effect positive change, we must first understand the underlying issues. While Gender, Equity, & Environmental issues are complex and cover a broad spectrum, at Sierra club we were focused on population awareness and women's reproductive rights for over 40 years. Now however, we are looking at this from a more timely and relevant perspective: access, inclusion, & justice.

Inequality & climate change are the twin crises of our time. Almost all of our climate campaigns are connected to inequality, be it access to and protection of natural resources, right to clean air & water or right to choose. In writing this series, I would like to share this information with all of you, as well as educate

myself so we can connect the dots between our efforts and mobilize for change!

Equity leads to Equality: UNFPA's (UN Population Fund) 2005 definition says Gender equity is the process of being fair to women and men. To ensure fairness, strategies and measures must often be available to compensate for women's historical and social disadvantages that prevent women and men from otherwise operating on a level playing field. The overall objective of gender equality is a society in which women and men enjoy the same opportunities, rights and obligations in all spheres of life.

Equity must be inclusive: While gender

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## Editorial Affordable Housing as an Environmental Issue



By Dick Colby (dick.colby@stockton.edu)

The Sierra Club was founded in California by conservationists intent on preserving Western wilderness, and offering outings to members wishing to enjoy the beauty and other majesties of California's High Sierras. The territory quickly expanded to include other Western states, and eventually to wilderness such as New Jersey's Delaware Water Gap, Pinelands, Highlands, Great Swamp, shore areas, and Monmouth County's Atlantic Highlands. Along the way, we added protection of the planet against despoliation by air, water and soil pollutants. Then came energy, with the realization of the probable environmental consequences of Global Warming, especially motivated by the campaigning of Al Gore. In the last 20 years, finally, we added Environmental Justice as a core issue, a logical extension of our concern for the harms of pollution. But there is debate over the boundaries of Environmental Justice: to what extent does it encompass the right of poor people to affordable housing?

Yes, low income people are stuck with the dregs of housing opportunity, a consequence of our free-market economy in which money buys the best places to live. And low income people are disproportionately African-American and Hispanic, but also immigrants and just low income. (Low income people are also more crowded in their communities, compared to suburban Americans (the majority!), which explains much of their higher vulnerability to epidemic diseases.)

I think there are some aspects of the Affordable Housing Problem that are more environmental than others. We should certainly push for drinkable tap water in all communities, with measurable limits for specific pollutants: bacteria, nitrates, arsenic, lead, mercury, organics, radionuclides. The Clean Water Act provides for standards to do that, and for testing, and the courts are pretty good at enforcement. Air pollutants are harder to proscribe, since they are rarely point-sourced, and are subject to vagaries of wind other weather variables. Soil and groundwater are harder still: pollutants migrate over long time-frames, are expensive to remediate, and the remediation is often delayed by complex lawsuits over liability. It sometimes succeeds.

Affordability itself – as an environmental issue – is more problematic. The obvious

recourses in most countries are public housing and rent control. In connection with a course I used to teach titled "Old Towns and New Towns," I've observed public housing in the centers and suburbs of Paris, London, Stockholm, Amsterdam, Mumbai, Tokyo, Hong Kong, and many other places. Rarely a pleasant sight, since the public purse is tight, resulting in crowding, graffiti, noise, and real dangers in the streets. You can see and feel it in Atlantic City, Newark, Camden and many other places in New Jersey.

Affordable housing is especially difficult for politicians beholden primarily (in New Jersey) to suburban constituencies wanting none of it. Instead of legislation, what we have are lawsuits that have resulted in the Mt Laurel decisions mandating "fair-share" obligations on each municipality. Since NJ Sierra Club membership is also predominantly suburban, many of our members object to the use of suburban open space for affordable housing. And from a planning perspective it is reasonable to urge that new affordable and ALL housing be "densified": nudged into transit villages that enable public transit, reduce automobile pollution, and preserve our limited remaining open space.

Politics is the Art of the Possible. It's interesting that the current coronavirus epidemic, with its mass unemployment, may be changing the political climate, i.e. the "Possible," in the direction of what might be called Democratic Socialism: acceptance of a universal right to health care, a universal basic income, and the universal right to affordable housing. I think it appropriate for affordable housing to be legislated rather than adjudicated (to coin a new word). (That's what legislators are for!)

Of course any respectable legislator would expect us to be able to estimate how much it would cost, and to propose which other budget items should be cut in exchange (since higher taxes and increased debt are not politically "Possible").

But is it an environmental issue? Here's the Chapter's official pronouncement, approved at our May ExCom meeting as a proposal for consideration by the Club's national volunteer forum. Club members are of course more than welcome to express opinions to Club officers, and to send me an LTE:

urban and rural areas also have jobs with lower-paid workers. If large numbers of workers have to commute out to their jobs from cities, that places added burden on transit systems and adds to air pollution.

However, as the need for affordable housing has to be done within the context of protecting the environment, the Club's policy on affordable housing must make explicitly clear that the Club opposes creating affordable housing in environmentally sensitive areas, increasing pollution by forcing people to drive long distances to their jobs, and/or building on toxic sites.

**Arguments for Creating a Policy on Affordable Housing:**

1. Investing in safe, affordable housing increases social equity and helps promote healthy sustainable communities, but a major shortage of affordable housing currently exists in many parts of this nation.

2. Affordable housing issue that has several environmental aspects, including the land it is built on, its proximity to mass transit, the

## Chair's Message An Unclear Future – and a Present Need



By Richard Isaac, Chapter Chair (risaac@aol.com)

As I write this in late April, 2020, there are plenty of unknowns moving forward.

It's unclear at this time whether there will be a successful treatment for Covid-19 anytime soon, or how long it will be before a reliable, safe, and effective vaccine is successfully tested, manufactured, distributed, and given to stop this new disease. Currently, there are also numerous questions about possible treatments and antibodies, and how long the latter will provide protection.

It's also unclear what the state of this nation's — and this world's — economy will be in. Even more importantly, it's also unclear where this planet's environmental health is headed, and whether humanity can substantially decrease its use of fossil fuel to avoid a climatic catastrophe.

However, in the midst of all this uncertainty, I can say with certainty that the Sierra Club will keep moving forward, and that our New Jersey Chapter will keep moving forward as well!

I can also say with certainty that we currently have an opening for Chapter Membership Chair — a volunteer opportunity for an individual who would like to help assist Sierra Club members at-large with simple membership questions and share Membership Reports with our Chapter's volunteer leadership.

And, while individuals considering taking on this position probably realize that it may not allow them to directly address the major issues I've mentioned above, they should know that our Chapter very much needs to have a Membership Chair, and that we would very much appreciate folks to apply!

And, they should also know that I will be glad to act as a resource to provide guidance for anyone willing to serve in this position!

Below is a job description for the position — please look it over and, if you're interested in learning more about this opportunity, please contact me at (H)

973-7167-0297 and/or richard.isaac@sierraclub.org.

### New Jersey Chapter Membership Chair Job Description

#### Purpose:

The Chapter Membership Chair acts as a bridge between the Chapter's volunteer leadership and our members at-large, sharing membership reports with the Chapter Executive Committee and assisting members with simple membership questions.

#### Responsibilities:

Receive and maintain monthly Membership Reports from Club office in Oakland, CA.

Provide a membership report at each meeting and/or directly to the Chapter Chair.

Know and have samples of all Sierra Club membership promotional materials.

Respond to inquiries by members or prospective members about Sierra Club programs and/or activities.

Become familiar with Sierra Club's membership database and/or other required software, and utilize it to maintain accurate membership data.

Before leaving office, train a replacement.

#### Key Contacts:

Chapter Chair, richard.isaac@sierraclub.org, (973) 716-0297

Chapter IT Chair and Secretary, secretary@newjersey.sierraclub.org,

Membership Services Department, membership.services@sierraclub.org; (415) 977-5653.

Membership Development Coordinator, fripp@sierraclub.org; (415) 977-5635.

Address Changes, address.changes@sierraclub.org; (415) 977-5649.

**Location:** Work from home, one meeting per month (currently by video conference)

**Time:** 2-5 hrs./month

## The Council of Club Leaders requests the [National] Sierra Club Board of Directors create a national conservation policy on affordable housing.

Approved by the New Jersey Chapter ExCom on May 9, 2020

### Background Information:

The Sierra Club is not only committed to protecting the natural environment, it is also dedicated to protecting the human environment. The two are inextricably linked. While the Club has historically been and continues to be committed to the responsible use of the earth's ecosystems and resources, its guiding organizational principles include equity, inclusion, and justice for all of humanity. Providing access to safe, affordable housing for everyone needing it is clearly supportive of these principles.

Currently, while the Sierra Club does have National conservation policy that briefly mentions support of affordable housing, it is buried in the Club's Urban Infill policy where many will not find it, and there is such an acute shortage of safe, affordable housing in so many environmental justice communities that the issue merits its own policy.

Also, in addition to a need for affordable housing in urban communities, there is, to some degree, also a need for affordable housing in non-urban locations as well, since sub-

## Resolutions: Approved by the Chapter Executive Committee (ExCom) in March, April and May, 2020

**March:** Renée Pollard was approved to fill a vacancy on the ExCom, expiring at the end of the current year.

We adopted a policy regarding the proliferation of mega-warehouses, urging that they be sited in environmentally suitable locations. Also a position in support Knowlton Township's request that a full Environmental Impact Statement be required for a proposed rockfall mitigation project on Interstate 80 near the Delaware Water Gap.

**April:** Appointments: Allen Swanson onto the Environmental & Social Justice Committee, Mark Fukayama onto the Nominating Committee (for candidates for ExCom), and Matt Bewley onto the Transportation Committee.

A letter asking for legislative action to limit single-use plastic bags, addressed to State Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin (D,19), and drafted by Sylvia Kay, was approved.

**May:** An appeal for the National Sierra Club to adopt a policy on affordable housing as a conservation issue was approved unanimously. Our resolution is on this page.

We approved participation in legal action against North Bergen and Hudson County regarding Green Acres violations in Braddock Park, retaining Renee Steinhagen Esq. on a pro bono basis.

Our resolutions, along with supporting material, are now available online: [www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/chapter-resolutions](http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/chapter-resolutions).

cleanliness of the soil on which it is built, and the general air quality of its surrounding area.

3. Sierra Club activists could benefit by having guidance of a national policy on affordable housing to help find common ground with our allies on this issue.

**Arguments against Creating a Policy on**

### Affordable Housing:

There are numerous environmental issues that have environmental justice and social justice aspects, but the Sierra Club does not have the resources to have a position on all of them. Some might consider the existing national policy on urban infill as acceptable.

### Candidates Sought for Chapter Executive Committee (ExCom)

The next (October–December) issue of this Newsletter will include our annual ballot for electing three members to the Chapter governing body (ExCom), as well as the ExComs of each of our regional Groups, and some of our Sections. ExCom members whose three-year terms are ending are Ken Johanson, Renée Pollard and Joe Testa. To nominate yourself, or someone else, please contact the Chair of our Nominating Committee, Dennis Anderson (Dennisaza@aol.com), by August 10.

## Conservation Reports

# “Bags to Benches” is No Solution

By Allen Swanson, Co-Conservation Chair of our Loantaka Group (afswanson@hotmail.com)

Some of those opposed to banning single-use plastic bags argue that they can be recycled into plastic benches. This is true: 40,000 bags are required for each bench, and those groups who work hard to collect them should be commended.

But let's examine the numbers. How many plastic benches have you seen? How many benches might a town expect to need? Six, eight, or even 12 benches would have virtually no significant impact on the problem of plastic bag waste.

The average American household uses approximately 1500 single use-plastic bags in a year, or 500 for each person. A town of 10,000 residents would thus use 5 million bags. That's 125 benches! Every year!

Does my town, New Providence (Union Co), need 125 benches this year? Will it need 125 additional benches next year? My town's population is about average for New Jersey's 566 municipalities. I leave you to calculate how many benches, per year, would need to be absorbed statewide!

Yes, we should continue to convert bags into benches, but we should also agree that this is not a serious solution to the problem of the overuse of single-use plastic bags. The “bags to benches” argument should not prevent towns from passing ordinances to ban plastic bags. The reality is that bags must be eliminated in order to prevent their negative impact on our environment.

# My Bluebirds Project

By and photographed by Joanne Pannone, Chair of our Central Jersey Group

Eastern Bluebirds are declining in numbers so I decided to try to help them. Found only in North America, Bluebirds are among our most popular birds with their bright colors and soft musical songs. Their habit of nesting in cavities put them in jeopardy when the introduced starlings and house sparrows competed with them for nest sites, but fortunately, they will accept artificial cavities. Many thousands of houses have been put up across the continent to help the Bluebird survive. With the help of Sierra Club member Laura Stone and the Rutgers Environmental Steward program, I decided to take on the challenge to help these birds.

I learned that nest building is not genetically hardwired in birds but based on experience and their environment. Birds are adaptable species, they learn to work together and Bluebirds never fight with each other, only to fend off predators. Their total range extends from Canada, south to Nicaragua. When they're not nesting, these birds roam the countryside in small flocks. Good nest sites consist of semi-open habitats. They like to be near fields where they can find insects and berries. Since I live in the woods, I got permission from another friend, and I installed three bird houses behind her house facing open space farmland with a public path, and, on September 28, 2019 the project began. I installed three Bluebird houses, five feet high, with predator guards, and near small landscaping trees.

We had to wait until April 4, 2020 for migrating bluebirds to spot the houses. We watched as those Bluebirds came down fluttering to the ground to catch insects, often hovering to pick up items rather than landing. They also catch some insects in mid-air and take some time hovering over foliage. They have bright colors and soft musical songs. It was thought that the male birds were the singers but we now know that the females have a completely different song. Blue head, wings and tail are offset against a rusty red-breast feathering which becomes wider on the abdomen. The hens are duller with more grayish blue under parts. Babies are brown and speckled with areas of whitish and some blue plumage. As a courtship display males may sing and



flutter in front of the female with his wings and tail partly spread. They will perch close together. Pairs may preen each other's feathers and the male may feed the female. They placed the nest, built mostly by the female, in the box. It was loosely constructed cup of weeds, twigs and dry grass lined with finer grass and sometimes animal fur or feathers. There are usually 4 to 5 eggs in a nest. When baby birds leave the nest they are full grown. Unfortunately, we never got that far because the house sparrows came. The bluebirds did their best to fight and defend their nest but when I checked I found the wrong egg - a brown speckled egg had been laid in the nest and the Bluebirds were gone. Sometimes they have two broods per year, sometimes three. And older babies help care for the new ones. I cleaned out the nest boxes and hopefully, more Bluebirds will come to use them.

I'm writing this on World Migratory Bird Day, May 9th, which was canceled due to the virus. I woke up this morning with ice on my birdbath. Tomorrow is Mother's Day! The president is rolling back 50 years of environmental regulations. These birds will suffer from habitat loss and climate change and so will we. We will all feel these impacts - with these fascinating, remarkable species who seem to be persistent and resilient. Hopefully, Sierra members will raise awareness, as they have since 1892, to conserve important habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife, and make a difference in our world.

Praying for peace in a greener world and voting by mail!

## Issue Coordinator's Report

# Water in the Pine Barrens

By Lee Snyder, Pinelands Issues Coordinator

The most important natural resource in, and below, the 1.1 million acre Pinelands National Reserve in New Jersey is the estimated 17 trillion gallons of fresh water. Primary to this water source is the Kirkwood-Cohansey Aquifer, one of the largest aquifers in the United States. An aquifer is an underground fresh water reservoir which, in the case of the Pinelands, is contained in and filtered through the sandy soils. The aquifer is only one part of the water resource, which also includes streams, rivers, ponds, lakes and wetlands.

Protection of the Pinelands surface and underground water quality and quantity is critical to the integrity of the water supply. Several studies by USGS, the NJ Pinelands Commission and others show that the aquifers are being over-pumped. Lower water levels harm the various Pine Barrens ecosystems, as well as the integrity of the water supply for present and

future needs. Low water levels occur due to natural (drought) and manmade (over pumping) causes. This can cause streams, ponds and wetlands to dry up. Quality of the water is also degraded by fertilizers, chemicals and non-point sources such as improper development and lax oversight. Proposed gas pipelines through the area will only increase the degradation. NJ DEP is tasked with regulating distribution of Pinelands water from the aquifers. The State has not heeded the several years of studies to reduce water withdrawals and other stresses on this critical resource.

The Pine Barrens, past, present and future, require a high water level of pure fresh water to survive. Many people, animals and plants rely on it. It will take a continuing effort on the part of New Jersey officials, concerned residents and environmental organizations to protect this amazing fresh water resource.

## COVID CORNER

(Continued from page 1)

least some “new normal.” The “new normal” of the climate crisis threatens to be civilizational collapse. As catastrophic as the coronavirus crisis feels, the economic and human losses will be far greater if we fail to flatten the curve of carbon emissions and rising global temperatures.

How is it the same story? No doubt serious academics are already working on this history, and will do a more thorough job. But here are a couple of parallels:

“It's a hoax.” President Donald Trump has referred to a “climate hoax” since at least 2012. Republican orthodoxy, right wing media, and fossil-fueled astroturf groups have called climate change a hoax for decades. In January–February 2020, as the coronavirus raced around the globe and scientists tried to sound the alarm, Trump and right wing infotainers were calling the virus a “Democrat hoax.”

Denigration of science: Republican attacks on climate science and scientists could fill a year's worth of NJ Sierrans. In 2006, the George W. Bush administration was already attempting to muzzle pioneering climate scientist James Hansen. Trump Administration efforts to force out scientists and cut science budgets started in his very first days in office. Both the Interior Department and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration have disbanded climate science advisory committees. We watch in real time as President Trump interrupts and silences the scientists who have the unenviable job of joining his Daily Corona Crisis update show. “Lysol-tini, anyone?” “A Clorox and soda?” We have seen him reassign Dr. Rick Bright, leader of the federal agency working toward a vaccine, because “he resisted efforts to fund potentially dangerous drugs promoted by those with political connections.” President Trump is the first president who has not even bothered to name a Science Advisor since the position was created in 1941.

“Government is not the solution. Government is the problem!” The Gipper! Remember Reagan's famous line? “The scariest words in the English language are, ‘I'm from the government and I'm here to help.’” The Centers for Disease Control and National Institutes of Health have been under right-wing attack and budget pressure for decades. They are the crown jewels of America's civil service, and the very definition of “good government.” Is it now any wonder that our response to the pandemic has been the worst in the world? On the climate front, the Environmental Protection Agency and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration have been similarly gut-

ted, though they, too, are the very bodies we most need to provide guidance as we try to tackle the climate crisis.

I can expand the list of parallels between the coronavirus and the climate crises: the social and racial inequities exposed, the abnegation of America's global leadership, the attempts to paint both crises as foreign threats, the Right's use of both to promote xenophobia and racism. Climate and Corvid-19 are both derided as deep-state plots.

So, it's the same story. Can it have a happy ending? Let's be optimistic for a minute. Both crises present opportunities for change.

To address the coronavirus crisis, people across the political spectrum are seriously looking at formerly radical ideas like paid sick leave for all workers, universal health care, and a federal guarantee of basic income. In January those ideas would have been met with cries of “Stalinism”! Now, suddenly, we're all in it together. Everyone's health is only as secure as that of the clerk at the check-out counter or the minimum wage worker on the slaughterhouse production line. Will this new attitude stick? Time will tell. Perhaps more people will get used to the new ideas.

New unlikely leaders have arisen out of the current crisis: scientists, physicians, and civil servants such as Dr. Anthony Fauci and Ohio Health Department's Dr. Amy Acton have earned public support and trust. They provide a comforting dose of honesty and reality in contrast to the venality and falsehoods of Donald Trump and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell. Let's hope that the public will extend this trust and approval to scientists and civil-servants calling on us to respond to the climate crisis.

Polls show that a large bipartisan majority supports the shutdowns and sacrifices needed to head off the pandemic. We live in an age when human technology radically changes our impact on the world's natural systems. A jumbo jet carries a virus around the world in hours. Two or three generations ago it would have taken weeks or months. Perhaps more of us will realize that we now face unprecedented global threats. Hopefully, more of us will come to realize that we need to make some big changes and even some sacrifices for the common good. Maybe we'll see that it's the only way we're going to survive and prosper.

Note: Columbia University's “Silencing Science Tracker” is a sobering site to visit at [climate.law.columbia.edu/Silencing-Science-Tracker](http://climate.law.columbia.edu/Silencing-Science-Tracker).

Member's Reports

# Protecting Northern NJ Forests From Logging

By Judy Minot

New Jersey's forests play an important role in the fight against climate change. Forests have tremendous capacity to sequester atmospheric carbon because trees remove and store carbon from the atmosphere. Current science shows that **large tracts of unfragmented, or "contiguous," forests take up carbon more rapidly, and store far more carbon than fragmented forest or young trees.** NJ forests also protect the drinking water supply for over two-thirds of the state's population and protect New Jersey's outstanding species diversity. The public forestlands of northern New Jersey are some of the healthiest, most ecologically-balanced and species-diverse along the entire East Coast.

Yet **mature forests in northern New Jersey are under threat** from activities that will cut trees and drastically reduce the forests' ability to sequester carbon and protect our air and water. The State of NJ is currently pursuing a forestry management program that involves **logging in pristine forests.** These management activities are often labeled in ways that make them sound beneficial, as "forestry stewardship" or "thinning." But conservation biologists say that, far from being good for the forest ecology, they are harmful for the protection of biodiversity. They also greatly reduce the forests' ability to sequester carbon. In addition, they often create or worsen the exact problems they claim to solve: increasing runoff, harming water supplies and recreational waterways, promoting an increase in deer population and invasive species, and disturbing native habitat.

A plan currently under consideration at the Mahlon Dickerson Reservation (MDR) in Morris County is typical of such programs. The plan involves logging, removal and sale of over 20,000 trees. This plan is opposed by many environmental groups including the NJ Sierra Club, the NJ Highlands Coalition (a coalition of over 100 member groups) and NJ Forest Watch. These groups oppose the MDR plan for the following reasons:

- The plan's reasoning contradicts its own data. The claim that the existing forest is "unhealthy," has a low level of diversity, and that the trees are "problematically" all of the same age, **disagrees with the plan's data** and findings of the Morris County Parks Commission's 2015 report.
- The scale and intensity of the proposed plan is remarkable, involving the **clearing of 60-65% of the trees from an area the size of 408 football fields.**
- The term used for the cutting of trees is "heavy thinning." This sounds very neutral. **A more accurate term is "logging."** Heavy equipment would be brought in, causing deep ruts in the soil. [see photo] Most of the trees would be removed, and then controlled burns would remove all saplings, shrubs and undergrowth. These burns will likely cause further tree losses.
- **Opening intact forests leads inevitably to increase and spread of invasive plant species,** create one of the very problems the plan claims to solve. Invasive species are a significant threat to Morris county forests. Japanese barberry, Japanese stiltgrass and multiflora rose are already widespread in half of the areas proposed for management.
- A less dense forest **stimulates deer populations.** Even at current deer

densities, any saplings that might be expected to "replace" removed trees would need to be protected from deer to prevent browsing.

- The plan would carry **steep and lasting ecological and environmental costs. Cutting trees will result in the loss, not increase, of forest diversity.** The logging activities will disturb the soil, increase runoff, threaten area water quality and wetlands, and threaten forest-dependent wildlife.
- Typically, as in this case, **the companies doing the logging are compensated by being allowed to sell the trees they "harvest."** This is very problematic, as these companies have an incentive to prioritize the most marketable trees, including the oldest, healthiest and rarest species. In addition, to justify the expense of the logger's involvement, the designated "management area" may be larger than what is actually needed to achieve the goals of the plan.

The proposed logging plan at MDR is **one of many similar plans in New Jersey.** The Sparta Mountain Wildlife Management Area Plan is currently underway with heavy logging every year. A similar plan is proposed for the Weldon Brook Wildlife Management Area, and other similar plans are proposed in natural areas across Northern New Jersey. In 2019, logging at Sparta Mountain took place while threatened owls and hawks were actively nesting. In 2019 and 2020, logging activities churned up habitat and egg laying for important amphibian species.

According to Sara Webb, Forest Ecologist and Professor Emeritus at Drew University, **"The way you manage a forest depends on the goal.** If your goal is to preserve it for its diverse ecosystem and for its ability to sequester carbon, then it's good to have an uninterrupted tree canopy, with multiple layers of vegetation, trees of many ages, and even diseased and dead trees. It may look 'messy' or crowded to us. But that mess and dead wood is good for the ecosystem: it provides nutrients for new growth and cavities for nesting birds and other species. If, on the other hand, your goal is to produce valuable timber for resale, your optimum forest contains large, straight, fast-growing trees that are protected from competing vegetation. That's not necessarily what's best for the forest as a whole."

**This issue can be confusing for environmentalists.** Supporters of such forestry management plans include not just the NJ Department of Environmental Protection and Department of Fish and Wildlife, but the NJ Audubon Society. NJ Audubon has been paid to develop and oversee several similar plans, and actively promotes this form of forest stewardship. Spokespeople from NJ Audubon tend to characterize opponents of the plans as troublemakers, confused or ignorant. John Cecil of NJ Audubon told the *Sparta Independent*, "It's troubling to me that those groups don't seem to have processed the information that's being provided to them." It is unfortunate, indeed,



Rings counted in this red oak, logged at Sparta Mountain, showed it to be an irreplaceable 150-year-old tree.



Management plans calls for "heavy thinning" - suggesting a light touch. The reality is quite different.

when groups that want to promote a healthy planet disagree on such a core issue.

**These dense forests, with trees that are over 100 years old, are uncommon and invaluable in NJ.** Logging them forests will greatly **harm their climate resilience, and lower their ability to sequester carbon to combat the effects of global warming.** Recent climate studies predict a **dire future for today's forests if global warming continues at its current pace.**<sup>1</sup> Intact forests not only sequester carbon, they also support climate resilience by **providing migration corridors for species that must shift their geographic ranges or face extinction.** North-central and northern New Jersey's forest reserves are of global importance to a very large diversity of species for this reason. Basing a forestry management plan on the expectation of a climate status quo, and expecting that trees planted today will grow to

maturity, is nothing short of nonsensical. Do you want to take action? The comment period for the Mahlon Dickerson management plan is currently closed, however there are delays in the next steps due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Please express your concern by writing or emailing the Executive Director of the Morris County Park Commission, David Helmer, Morris County Park Commission, 300 Mendham Rd., Morristown, NJ 07960. [dhelmer@morrisparks.net](mailto:dhelmer@morrisparks.net). The county is holding public meetings via videoconference, which you can access via their website. The NJ Highlands Coalition is a good source of further information, and has created several factual presentations on the threats to NJ's mature forests.

Citations

1. <http://www.spartaindependent.com/news/local-news/stop-the-chop-opposition-to-sparta-mountain-plan-continues-EVSI20170208170209957>
2. <https://insideclimatenews.org/news/24042020/forest-trees-climate-change-deforestation>

## ECONOMIC STIMULUS

(Continued from page 1)

- (3) <https://www.ica.org/commentaries/put-clean-energy-at-the-heart-of-stimulus-plans-to-counter-the-coronavirus-crisis>
- (4) <https://nj.gov/infobank/co/056murphy/pdf/EO-131.pdf>
- (5) <https://www.medrxiv.org/content/1>

- 0.1101/2020.04.05.20054502v2
- (6) <https://www.sciencealert.com/more-than-70-of-americans-hospitalised-with-covid-19-had-at-least-1-underlying-health-condition-the-cdc-says>

## UNDERSTANDING

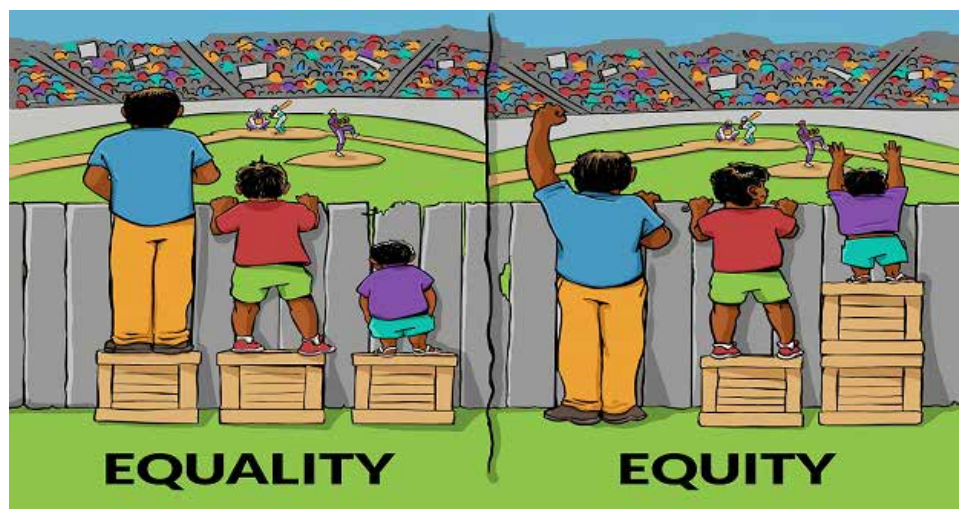
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equity deals with systemic barriers against women in historical and social context, inclusive equity creates an equitable environment for all peoples - LGBTQ, Indigenous groups, economically disadvantaged irrespective of race or religion. However, effects of climate disruption aren't gender neutral, and neither are the solutions. We are advocating for gender equity so everyone can speak their truth, play a role, and become leaders in solving the world's climate crisis.

Equity & Climate Change: Climate change is a universal human rights imperative, a global security threat, and a per-

vasive economic strain. Frequently, those who are least responsible for this crisis, are the most threatened by its adverse impact. Climate equity focuses on dividing the burden of climate change while sharing the benefits of climate action.

For women, transgender and gender nonconforming people, gender-based violence undermines the health and agency of its victims. With access to education, voluntary family planning, and freedom from violence, these communities are not only better prepared to deal with climate disruption but play an important role in clean energy innovation.



Source: Interaction Institute for Social Change | Artist: Angus Maguire

**YOU HAVE MORE TO GIVE THAN YOU KNOW**  
 Maybe you can't make a gift to protect the environment during your lifetime, but you can become a financial hero by remembering the Sierra Club in your will. You can even direct your gift to a special Club program or to the New Jersey Chapter.  
**For information about making a bequest to the New Jersey Chapter call Paul Sanderson at 908-233-2414**

## Reports from Trenton

# EPA Funds Testing for Lead in Schools

From a press release issued on March 11

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has awarded \$1,537,000 so that lead can be tested in school drinking water in New Jersey. This is part of the EPA's Federal Action Plan to Reduce Childhood Lead Exposures and Associated Health Impacts – that was announced in December, 2018.

New Jersey suffers from crumbling school infrastructure, and from impoverished school districts that lack the money for testing. Lead is one of the most hazardous substances known to man; it especially impacts small children in our urban areas. Even small amounts produce permanent brain damage and learning disabilities. Newark, Paterson, Camden, Morristown, and 30 towns in Bergen County have incidences of lead.

This money will also fund informing communities, parents, and the public of the results, and will provide important lead information.

Lead is usually a consequence of old lead plumbing in school buildings that go back to the Victorian Age. Sometimes it's from lead solder in copper pipes. Either way, the pipes need to be replaced.

Thousands of children are diagnosed with lead poisoning in our state each year.

Overall it will cost \$2.3 billion to get rid of lead pipes, and \$8 billion to completely fix our water systems. We also urge that lead standards be lowered from 15 ppb to at least 5 ppb. California's standard is 1 ppb!

# NJ / Nation Lose Clean Energy Jobs During Public Health Crisis

From a press release issued by our Trenton staff

An analysis released on April 16 found that the US clean energy sector lost 106,472 jobs in March, a 3.1% decline. The analysis came from Environmental Entrepreneurs (E2), the American Council on Renewable Energy, E4TheFuture and BW Research Partnership. New Jersey lost 2,345 jobs, a 4.1% decline.

This report shows how the coronavirus is impacting clean energy jobs in New Jersey and across the country. This is a time when we need to be ramping up renewable energy and energy efficiency to reduce air pollution. New Jersey and other states have stopped energy efficiency and solar projects even though they are allowing pipelines and other fossil fuel projects to continue. Congress should include the clean energy sector in the next federal stimulus package, especially now that air pollution has been linked to coronavirus risk.

The analysis projected that the clean energy sector will lose more than half a million jobs, or 15% of its total workforce, in the months ahead.

A recent Harvard study found that long-term exposure to air pollution is linked to coronavirus risk. The study examined 3,080 counties in the United States and found that higher levels of the tiny, dangerous particles in the air, known as PM 2.5, were associated with higher death rates from the disease. But instead of reducing air pollution, Governor Murphy is allowing projects like NJNG's Southern Reliability Link pipeline and the NJ Turnpike and GS Parkway Expansions to continue.

# Air Quality in NJ Ranks among the Worst in Nation

From a press release issued on April 21, and edited by Irene Gnarra

The American Lung Association has released its 2020 State of the Air Report, and the statistics are not good for New Jersey, which continues to rank among the states with the most polluted air in the nation. Though a slight improvement from last year, North Jersey is, nevertheless, ranked the twelfth worst metropolitan area in the U.S. for ozone levels. Nine counties in New Jersey were cited for high ground-level ozone pollution (smog), while twelve have reduced their number of high-particle pollution days.

In more rural and suburban areas in New Jersey, we have seen some improvements. For example, in Warren County, air quality has improved because dirty diesel plants and two coal plants in Pennsylvania have ceased operations. However, that progress could be undone by EPA's recent rollbacks, and other improvements could be reversed by the fossil fuel projects going forward in New Jersey.

As Chapter Director Jeff Tittle has noted, in the parts of the state with some of the worst air quality in the nation, we see the development of fossil fuel projects, including multiple fracked gas pipelines and power plants that will make air quality worse. In the long list: the PennEast pipeline, the Southern Reliability Link, the Williams-Transco Northeast Supply Enhancement Pipeline Project, a Liquefied Natural Gas terminal in Gibbstown, and NJ Transit's power plant in the Meadowlands. It is distressing that the NJ Turnpike Authority and the South Jersey Transportation Authority are moving forward with their plans to widen highways that will increase Vehicle Miles Traveled and greenhouse gas emissions exponentially.

A prime source of ground-level ozone pollution is vehicle emissions. Ozone directly affects our lungs, causing asthma attacks and killing people with respiratory diseases. This is especially notable during the current pandemic, for a recent Harvard study links the risk of contracting the coronavirus with air pollution. Unless the state starts to act more aggressively to reduce ozone pollution, we will see an even greater impact on public health. Because of our health emergency, as well as for the need to drastically lower our emissions to deal with climate change, we must have a moratorium on all fossil fuel projects in NJ.

# New Jersey Sues Trump's EPA on Ozone

From a press release issued on Feb 19, edited by Sylvia Kay

In February 2020, New Jersey's Attorney General filed a lawsuit on behalf of five states and the City of New York to force EPA to address ozone pollution coming from other states. This effort has been an ongoing battle on a local and national level. Under the Trump Administration, the prior 2016 stricter reduction regulations for a state's upwind emissions were relaxed. As a result, in 2019 New Jersey joined a multi-state effort to hold EPA accountable for stricter state upwind ozone emissions. Air pollution in parts of New Jersey is ranked among the poorest in the country. Almost every county in New Jersey has received an 'F' for its ground level ozone from the American Lung Association.

Ozone pollution is a national problem that contributes to chronic respiratory diseases and is often disproportionately found in communities of color. In February of this year, the Sierra Club and four other environmental groups sued the EPA for failing to finalize plans to regulate interstate ozone pollution in 20 states including New Jersey. This suit accuses the EPA of violating the Clean Air Act by missing a deadline to publish plans to curb upwind ozone pollution originating in states from New Jersey to Texas. New Jersey and the Sierra Club are also part of a lawsuit regarding EPA's Cross State Pollution rule. This rule would protect New Jersey from out of state ozone industrial sources.

If the current New Jersey administration is seriously promoting clean air, it will terminate fossil fuel related projects: the Penn East and other pipelines, and the NJ Transit Power Plant. These projects increase emissions in New Jersey by 32% and will sabotage the efforts to reach 100% renewable energy and zero carbon emissions by 2050.



## Group News

FROM  
AROUND  
THE  
STATE

### HOW TO IDENTIFY YOUR GROUP (BY COUNTY)

**Skylands Group:** Sussex & northern Warren  
**Hunterdon Warren Group:** Hunterdon & southern Warren  
**North Jersey Group:** Bergen & Passaic  
**Gateway Group:** Essex  
**Hudson County Group:** Hudson  
**Loantaka Group:** Morris & Union  
**Central Jersey Group:** Mercer  
**Raritan Valley Group:** Somerset & Middlesex  
**Jersey Shore Group:** Monmouth  
**Ocean County Group:** Ocean  
**West Jersey Group:** Burlington, Camden & Gloucester  
**South Jersey Group:** Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland & Salem

*These designations are approximate: members are welcome to participate in whichever Group(s) they find convenient*

(Groups are arranged in rough geographical sequence: North to South)

### Skylands Group

(Sussex and northern Warren Counties)

**Web-site:** <http://SkylandsGroup.org> or click from the NJ Chapter's web-site.

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/SkylandsNJSC>

**E-mail:** [ggorman07419@embarqmail.com](mailto:ggorman07419@embarqmail.com); **Phone:** 973-886-7950

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE** and other **OFFICERS:** (ExCom Members are elected to serve 2-year terms; term-expire date in parentheses):

<b>Chair:</b> (12/31/20)	Greg Gorman	<a href="mailto:ggorman07419@embarqmail.com">ggorman07419@embarqmail.com</a>
<b>Vice Chair:</b> (12/31/19)	Susan Williams	<a href="mailto:SkylandsGroup@gmail.com">SkylandsGroup@gmail.com</a>
<b>Secretary:</b> (12/31/20)	Norene Haberski	<a href="mailto:norenehaberski2@gmail.com">norenehaberski2@gmail.com</a>
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	(12/31/19) Scott Dieman	
	(12/31/19) Chris Dunbar	<a href="mailto:chrisdunbar458@gmail.com">chrisdunbar458@gmail.com</a>
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	(12/31/19) Anthony Riccardi	<a href="mailto:anthony.j.riccardi@gmail.com">anthony.j.riccardi@gmail.com</a>
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<b>Outings Chair:</b>	Dave Alcock	<a href="mailto:dwhoob@hotmail.com">dwhoob@hotmail.com</a>
<b>Outreach Chair:</b>	Joanne Mogan	<a href="mailto:jojommorgan@yahoo.com">jojommorgan@yahoo.com</a>
<b>Environmental Justice:</b>	Susan Williams	<a href="mailto:SkylandsGroup@gmail.com">SkylandsGroup@gmail.com</a>
<b>Political Co-Chairs:</b>	Nicole Guerrieri	<a href="mailto:SierraClubNicole@gmail.com">SierraClubNicole@gmail.com</a>
<b>and:</b>	Susan Williams	<a href="mailto:SkylandsGroup@gmail.com">SkylandsGroup@gmail.com</a>
<b>Co-Publicity Chairs:</b>	Jeri Doherty	<a href="mailto:bjd8974@gmail.com">bjd8974@gmail.com</a>
<b>and:</b>	Joanne Mogan	<a href="mailto:jojommorgan@yahoo.com">jojommorgan@yahoo.com</a>
<b>Webmaster:</b>	Nicole Guerrieri	<a href="mailto:SierraClubNicole@gmail.com">SierraClubNicole@gmail.com</a>
<b>Open position available: Membership Chair</b> – please contact Greg!		

**GENERAL MEETINGS:** Meetings are virtual for the time being. Please check our web-site for updates. Normal meetings are the SECOND TUESDAY of each month and open

**Each Group is invited to designate a Group Environmental Justice Officer**

to the public. We meet from 7-9pm at the Unitarian Fellowship, 1 West Nelson St, Newton.

The Skylands Group of the NJ Sierra Club serves the environmentally sensitive region of Sussex and Northern Warren Counties in Northwestern NJ.

We offer a variety of opportunities for the public to learn about and connect with their natural environment, including informative films and speakers at our monthly general meetings; exploration of the great outdoors on hikes, edible plant tours and picnics; public outreach via town tabling; and visits to schools to teach students about the environment. Our hope is to foster a love of and deep respect for our great outdoors.

As advocates, The Skylands Group works with other grassroots organizations to protect open spaces and water quality; promote clean energy; oppose privatization of our water and land public trust resources; and other local, national and global environmental issues as they arise.

We table annually at Luscroft Farm's Medicine Wheel Festival in May, host a summer picnic in July, conduct a Drive Electric Event in September at the GreenLife Market in Andover Township, and celebrate winter holidays in December. All our events are free of charge and open to the public.

**CURRENT CAMPAIGNS:** The Skylands Group advocates the protection of the Sparta Mountain Wildlife Management Area from logging done under the guise of creating 'healthy forests.'

The Skylands Group supports Green New Deal, Sunrise Movement, Sierra Club's Ready for 100 Campaign, and projects to move toward a Clean Energy Economy.

The Skylands Group supports the residents opposing ill-conceived dump sites such as those found in Wantage and Vernon.

The Skylands Group also opposes the Munsonhurst Planned Residential Development, which will adversely affect the ecology of a Natural Heritage Priority Site in Franklin Twp (Sussex Co).

## Hunterdon Warren Group (Hunterdon and southern Warren Counties)

**WEBSITE:** <http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/hunterdonwarren>  
**MEETUP:** <http://www.meetup.com/NJSierraClub/>  
**FACEBOOK:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/sierraclub.hunterdonwarren>

### OFFICERS:

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<b>Political Co-Chairs:</b>	Karen Becker *	karbecker@gmail.com
	Amy Weeder *	aweeder@comcast.net
<b>Children's Programs:</b>	Kimberly Borin *	storiesofourown@mac.com
<b>Environmental &amp; Social Justice:</b>		
<b>Highlands Issues Coord:</b>	Angela De Sapio *	angela.desapio@gmail.com
<b>Outings:</b>	Cinny MacGonagle *	cmacgonagle@yahoo.com
<b>Treasurer, Secretary:</b>	Jonathan Wall *	jonwall@jonwall.com
<b>Webmaster/Listmaster:</b>	John Kashwick	jkashwick@gmail.com
<b>Fundraising Chair:</b>	John Kashwick	jkashwick@gmail.com
	Open Position!—please contact Jonathan if interested	

(\* Group Executive Committee Member)

### GENERAL MEETINGS:

Meetings are virtual for the time being. Please check <http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/hunterdonwarren> for updates.

**June 3 (Wed):** Virtual General Meeting: Yellowstone in Winter. 7:30pm. Join us for a photo slideshow on Zoom of Yellowstone in Winter. Jonathan Wall and John Kashwick visited Yellowstone National Park in February of this year. See the photos of the trip and hear a discussion on bison management in the greater Yellowstone ecosystem and impacts of climate change on the park. Please check our web site for registration details.

**July 8 (Wed):** Virtual Executive Committee/Planning Meeting. 7:30 pm, All members are welcome and encouraged to attend to learn more about the Club. Hear about and discuss issues, plan future events, and become more active. (Please contact jonwall@jonwall.com or sign-up on our web site.)

**July 12 (Sun):** Virtual Meet and Greet with Congressman Tom Malinowski. 1pm, Join us for a discussion on Zoom with the Congressman from the 7th Congressional district. Please check out web site for registration details and to confirm date and time.

**Sept. 2 (Wed):** TENTATIVE. Speaking Truth to Power: Weathering U.S. Political Climate Impacts on Global Warming. As the politics of climate denial festers across our nation, climate-related disasters continue all over the world. Hal Benz, a volunteer presenter for the non-profit Climate Reality Project offers an update on the current status of the climate crisis, and what can still be done to turn things around. Meeting may be virtual or in person depending on social distancing guidelines. Please confirm via our web site.

### CURRENT ISSUES:

**Oppose Mega-Warehouses:** There are several massive warehouse projects that are proposed for Hunterdon and Warren Counties. We are working with other groups to oppose these projects that threaten to spread industrial sprawl to our farms and natural areas. For more information, please contact Cinny MacGonagle at [cmacgonagle@yahoo.com](mailto:cmacgonagle@yahoo.com)

**Dark Skies:** Voorhees State Park in Hunterdon County is home to the NJAA Observatory which relies on dark skies. The Hunterdon Warren Group is initiating a campaign to have our county and local municipalities adopt stricter ordinances to reduce excessive light pollution which not only conflicts our view of the night sky but also wastes energy and harms wildlife and human health.

## North Jersey Group (Bergen and Passaic Counties)



**WEBSITE:** <http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/north-jersey>  
**MEETUP:** <http://www.meetup.com/NJSierraClub/>  
**FACEBOOK:** <https://www.facebook.com/northjersseysierraclub>

The North Jersey Group has a duly elected nine-member Executive Committee, as follows

<b>Co-Chairs:</b>	Diane Scarangella	diascat@hotmail.com
and	Buddy Jenssen	buddy.jenssen@gmail.com
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Buddy Jenssen	buddy.jenssen@gmail.com
<b>Secretary:</b>	Laura Troy	ltroy1019@gmail.com
<b>Political Chair:</b>	Sandi Liberti	libertisandi@gmail.com
<b>Outings Chair:</b>	Mary Walsh	blehlwalsh@hotmail.com
<b>Conservation Chair:</b>	Judy Greene	jugreen547@gmail.com
<b>Climate Change Chair:</b>	Jeff Rapaport	jefrap@optonline.net
<b>Marketing/ Publications Chair:</b>	Jan Barry	janbarry61@hotmail.com
<b>ExCom Member:</b>	Bob Weiss	bobweiss1967@gmail.com

We are actively involved in preserving open spaces and parklands, fighting climate change, and collaborating with Empower NJ and Don't Gas the Meadowlands partners to advocate for renewable energy and a moratorium on fossil fuel usage.

We seek volunteers for our Political, Conservation, Publications, Climate Change, and Trail Maintenance Committees. Please contact the appropriate chair listed above – to join a committee or for specific information about it. Or see the addendum below.

### UPCOMING EVENTS:

Unless otherwise noted, meetings and outings are free and open to general public. Please check our Meetup page, Facebook page, or web site for newly posted meeting and events. An event list will be provided for the summer and fall months. You can also email us at [northjersseysierraclub@gmail.com](mailto:northjersseysierraclub@gmail.com).

The North Jersey Group seeks members for six volunteer committees. Please contact the Chair of the Committee below if you are interested in joining dedicated people taking meaningful action in Bergen and Passaic Counties and throughout the state.

### COMMITTEE OPENINGS

**Conservation Committee:** We assist people in the community with grassroots efforts to prevent destruction of natural habitat in Bergen and Passaic Counties and surrounding areas. Help us by finding and reviewing public records, circulating petitions, going door-to-door with lawn signs, speaking in public meetings, attending and organizing press conferences. The choice of activity is up to you. No activity or time commitment is too small. Make your voice heard. If interested contact Mary at [blehlwalsh@hotmail.com](mailto:blehlwalsh@hotmail.com) or Judy at [jugreen547@gmail.com](mailto:jugreen547@gmail.com) (Committee Co-Chairs), or Diane at [diascat@hotmail.com](mailto:diascat@hotmail.com) (Group Co-Chair).

**Climate Change Committee:** The objectives of the Climate Change Committee are to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, discourage new fossil fuel facilities (like the Meadowlands and NJ Transit gas-powered plants) and encourage the use of renewable energy. Slowing down climate change may give scientists time to find permanent solutions to this crisis. Our committee works in conjunction with other environmental groups to support a transition to renewable energy. Your help could bring us a little closer to a cleaner, safer, and healthier world for our children and grandchildren – be a part of it! For more information or to sign up, contact Jeff (Committee Chair) at [jefrap@optonline.net](mailto:jefrap@optonline.net).

**Political Action Committee:** We recommend candidates for political office in Bergen, Passaic and Hudson Counties (where there is overlap). Learn where our elected officials and candidates for office stand on environmental issues by examining their voting records and interviewing them. You can phone bank, or otherwise, work from your home, or visit candidates and their representatives in their offices. Canvass door-to-door for endorsed candidates. The way you contribute is up to you. But know there is work to do. If interested, contact Sandi (Committee Chair) at [libertisandi@gmail.com](mailto:libertisandi@gmail.com).

**Event Planning and Membership Committee:** We seek a Committee Chair and additional members! Interested in conducting an event on a particular topic? Like speaking with other people about environmental issues and concerns? This committee is for you! We seek someone who is dedicated to the environment, believes in the Sierra Club, is enthused about the actions our North Jersey Group is taking and wants to help us move forward through program planning and the recruitment of new members. If interested contact Diane (Acting Chair & Group Co-Chair) at [diascat@hotmail.com](mailto:diascat@hotmail.com). PLEASE!

**Publications/Marketing Committee:** Are you creative? Do you love graphic design; writing press releases and short stories; contacting newspapers and radio; using instagram, facebook, twitter, snapchat? We need you! If interested, contact Jan (Committee Chair) at [janbarry61@hotmail.com](mailto:janbarry61@hotmail.com).

**Outings Committee:** Organize and lead hikes, snowshoeing, kayaking and other of your favorite outdoor activities on trails and locations of your choice. Trips can vary in length, level of difficulty and location. If interested, contact Mary at [blehlwalsh@hotmail.com](mailto:blehlwalsh@hotmail.com) (Committee Chair) or Buddy (Group Co-Chair) at [buddy.jenssen@gmail.com](mailto:buddy.jenssen@gmail.com).

**Trail Maintenance:** If you are interested in combining outdoor activity with actions that restore hiking trails and preserve the natural environment, please contact Marty at [martincohen@verizon.net](mailto:martincohen@verizon.net)

## Gateway Group (Serving Hillside, Elizabeth, and Essex County (except for Livingston, Millburn and Roseland))

The Gateway Group was organized in January 2011. Please contact any of the leaders below if you are interested in joining our campaigns to protect the environment. There are several Gateway Group positions open.

(Continued on page 8)

## GROUP NEWS

(Continued from page 7)

**Our website:** <http://sierraclub.org/new-jersey/Gateway/>. (also accessible from the NJ Chapter website)

Please also join the Gateway Group on **Facebook** at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Gateway-Group-NJ-Sierra-Club/128998363842782>.

### OFFICERS:

<b>Co-Chairs:</b>	Bill Beren	862-283-8754	Beren1@verizon.net
	and David Yennior	973-844-1384	dyennior@gmail.com
<b>Vice-Chair,</b>			
<b>Conserv'n Chr:</b>	Caroline Kane	646-961-9003	ckane678@verizon.net
<b>Secretary &amp; Treasurer:</b>	Anne Hirs	973-844-1121	annehirs@msn.com
<b>Program Co-Chairs:</b>	Suzanne Trimel	973-509-8335	suzanne.trimel@gmail.com
	and Steven Yafet	908-354-2537	syafet@gmail.com
<b>Publicity Chair:</b>	<i>Open Position!</i>		
<b>Political Chair:</b>	Bill Beren		Beren1@verizon.net
<b>Fundraising Chair:</b>	<i>Open Position!</i>		
<b>Membership Chair:</b>	Steven Yafet	908-354-2537	syafet@gmail.com
<b>Water, Newark Issues:</b>	Bill Chappel	973-623-6490	chappel.bill@gmail.com
<b>Recycling,</b>			
<b>Passaic River Issues:</b>	David Yennior (see above)		
<b>Elizabeth Issues:</b>	Kason Little	908-305-7719	kasonjamal@icloud.com
<b>Outings Chair:</b>	Dionne Howe	206-430-0288	dionnelhowe@gmail.com
<b>Group Executive Committee:</b>	David Yennior, Bill Beren, Bill Chappel, Suzanne Trimel, Steven Yafet, and Caroline Kane.		

A Gateway members' virtual meeting will be scheduled for July. Members will be notified by email of the date and time, with instructions for accessing the meeting.

Please contact Bill Beren or David Yennior, Gateway's Co-Chairs, if you have ideas or suggestions for a meeting-topic or program, or conservation project. We are very grateful for the many contributions of Suzanne Trimel, Anna Whitley, John Beadle, Barbara Conover, ZaSah Khademi, Bill Chappel, Steven Yafet, Anne Hirs, Paula Borenstein, and Brenda Toyloy.

We invite YOU to join in our activism and ask your support as we strive to address the many issues facing our urban as well as suburban communities. Note several vacant positions listed above.

**CONSERVATION NEWS:** The Gateway Group has been supporting the Coalition to Save South Mountain Reservation in their fight to defeat an Essex County plan to build a 500 seat, \$8.8M amphitheater on South Mountain Reservation property adjacent to the Turtle Back Zoo. Termed a "Conservation Pavilion", the project is being sold as necessary to provide "interactive" conservation programs, but the County also plans for it to be rented out to outside groups. The NJ Sierra Club has opposed the pavilion on the grounds that it is not educational for children, will traumatize 30 wild animals 5X a day, is a waste of tax revenue, and is harmful to the environment.

Recently the Essex County Environmental Commission recommended in a strongly worded resolution that the "Conservation Pavilion" project be "dropped altogether" given the new realities of Covid-19 and budgetary shortfalls. Short of a complete cancellation, the Commission recommended a full and independent environmental study on the project's environmental impact on water, air, light, groundwater pollution, surface pollution, carbon absorption and open space area before proceeding. The ECEC Resolution was sent to County Executive Joseph DiVincenzo and the Board of Chosen Freeholders.

As of the beginning of May, no construction contract has been awarded to clearcut the land and build the amphitheater. Over 130 trees on the designated site within the South Mountain Reservation remain marked for destruction with green paint and the State's Department of Community Affairs has not released its promised \$4 million funding to the County. No new County funding has been approved.

Also, the Group is working with the Passaic River Coalition to investigate reports of raw sewage being dumped into the headwaters of the Peckman River in West Orange, which flows into the Passaic in Little Falls.

**LIST OF UPCOMING EVENTS:** A Gateway members' virtual meeting will be scheduled for July. Members will be notified by email of the date and time, with instructions for accessing the meeting.

## Hudson County Group

**Website:** <http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/hudson-county>.  
**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/HudsonCountySierraClub>  
**E-mail:** [HUDSONSIERRACLUB@gmail.com](mailto:HUDSONSIERRACLUB@gmail.com)  
**Instagram:** @sierraclub\_hcg  
**Twitter:** HCSierraClub

### OFFICERS: (\*=ExCom)

<b>Chair:</b>	David 'Ace' Case*	acecase88@gmail.com
<b>Vice-Chair:</b>	Pramod Raju*	modisone@gmail.com
<b>Secretary:</b>	Patricia Hilliard*	hilliard_patricia@hotmail.com
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Patricia Hilliard*	hilliard_patricia@hotmail.com
<b>Conservation Chair:</b>	Patricia Hilliard*	hilliard_patricia@hotmail.com
<b>Political Chair:</b>	Pramod Raju*	modisone@gmail.com
<b>Ready for 100:</b>	Allyson Samuels	allyson.samuell@sierraclub.org
<b>Delegate to Chapter:</b>	<i>Open position!</i>	
<b>Membership:</b>	Andrea Rodriguez*	aarodriguez287@gmail.com
<b>Publicity:</b>	Pramod Raju*	modisone@gmail.com
<b>Outings / Events:</b>	Steve Krinsky*	stevekrinsky@comcast.net
<b>At-Large:</b>	Nancy Booth*	boothnancy2011@hotmail.com
<b>Instagram:</b>	<i>Open position!</i>	
<b>Web-Master:</b>	<i>Open position!</i>	

**Meeting Schedule:** Hudson group will be meeting remotely for the duration of the shutdown. Members are still welcome and encouraged to join the meetings. Contact any of the officers for details about how to join the meeting.

**Outings:** Sadly, we are forced to cancel our upcoming walks and hikes. Please stay tuned online! We can't wait to get back outside with everybody.

**Current Campaigns:** Please join in. We can use help with any of these:

**Braddock Park** - North Bergen Residents - your support is needed! Be part of a citizen's group protecting Braddock Park. Sierra Club has taken the first steps towards initiating a legal challenge to illegal diversion of parkland in Braddock Park. We hope to support NJ Applesseed in this effort. Twenty years ago the town of North Bergen replaced a ballfields and the adjacent parking lot with 17 "temporary" school trailers. The action violated NJ State law under the Green Acres Program. The lawsuit would require Green Acres to enforce its own regulations. North Bergen and Hudson County would be required to finally remove the trailers and create safe, permanent classrooms for the pre-school. They would also have to restore the ballfields space and to create additional parkland in compensation.

**No Gas Plant in the Meadowlands:** NJ Transit is using the distraction of the Covid 19 crisis to move ahead with plans to build a gas-fired power plant on a toxic site on a floodplain in Kearny. We want them to power the trains with solar power combined with battery backup storage. This is being done successfully all around the world. But NJ Transit says they are "too busy" to even here proposals from solar providers. Help us create a social media tidal wave of opposition! Follow us on twitter and facebook to see what action you can take - all while social distancing.

**#MoratoriumMondays!** Call Gov. Murphy to tell him you want a moratorium on all new fossil fuel projects in the state of NJ. Here Hudson County there are proposals for two huge new gas-fired power plants which would pour toxic chemicals into the air we breathe for generations. Help make the change to renewable energy. Stop the Meadowlands Power Plants - no more Fossil Fuel Projects! [www.empowernewjersey.com](http://www.empowernewjersey.com)

**Climate Change:** You thought Hurricane Sandy was fun? New studies show that Hudson County will be harder hit by sea-level rise and catastrophic flooding than any other NJ county. Sierra has joined with other leading environmental groups to form the Hudson Climate Coalition. Together, we will demand change from politicians at each level of government. We plan to meet with state and federal legislators to demand support for the Green New Deal and related policies. The ReadyFor100 campaign is working to build awareness and grass roots support as we transition to 100% renewable energy locally by the year 2050, or sooner. Get involved and be part of the solution.

**Hackensack River Greenway:** Sierra Club is working to connect existing parks with new rights of way along the Hackensack River to create a "Hackensack River Walkway" from one end of the county to the other. We are working to see that the Hackensack becomes Hudson County's "Green Coast."

**Green New Deal:** Creating the green infrastructure of the future. Building our local economy, creating good paying union jobs, and empowering urban communities who have been the victims of environmental injustices for too long.

**Community Solar for Hoboken:** We've sent the Board of Public Utilities a letter of support for Hoboken's application to be one of New Jersey's five pilot projects, based on Hoboken's population of low- and moderate-income residents.

**Environmental Justice:** Low-income communities and black and brown communities suffer the most from environmental destruction: elevated levels of cancer, respiratory disease, lead poisoning, and a host of other problems. Hudson County has had more than its share of environmental poisoning for generations.

## Loantaka Group

(Morris and Union Counties (except for Elizabeth and Hillside), plus Livingston, Milburn and Roseland, approximately)

**WEBSITE:** <http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/loantaka/>  
 Loantaka now has a FaceBook page. Please check it out and like it:  
<https://www.facebook.com/LoantakaGroupNJSC>

### OFFICERS:

<b>Group Chair:</b>	Paul Sanderson	908-233-2414	loantakachair@newjersey.sierraclub.org
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Paul Sanderson	908-233-2414	paulmsanderson@aol.com
<b>Secretary:</b>	Open Position!		
<b>Conservation Chairs:</b>			
<b>Morris County:</b>	Len Fariello		len@wildlifepreserves.org
<b>Union County:</b>	Allen Swanson		afswanson@hotmail.com,
<b>Political Chr:</b>	Clea Carchia	908-892-7229	info@cleacarchia.com
<b>Programs:</b>	Bob Zega	973-349-8001	rjzega@yahoo.com
<b>Fundraising Chr:</b>	Eric Hausker	732-669-0719	ericbiomass@gmail.com
<b>Outings Chair:</b>	Kevin O'Brien	908-403-0900	kbkob@aol.com
<b>Publicity Chair:</b>	Wynn Johanson	908-464-0442	johansons@comcast.net
<b>Membership:</b>	Open Position!		
<b>Webmaster:</b>	Wynn Johanson	908-464-0442	johansons@comcast.net
<b>Upper Passaic River Coor:</b>	Kathy O'Leary	908-647-2870	kolearypcnj@gmail.com
<b>Member-at-Large:</b>	Priti Thakker	973-752-1100	thakkerp@icloud.com

If you might be interested in getting involved, come to one of our Executive Committee Meetings on the first Tuesday of the month and get to know us. Or come to one of our General Meetings on the second Wednesday of the month. There are no obligations and there will be no pressure.

To find out our activities, go to: <http://sierraclub.org/new-jersey/loantaka/>  
 To join our e-mailing list, go to: <http://lists.sierraclub.org/archives/nj-loantaka-news.html>

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS:** are held on the FIRST TUESDAY of the month: 7pm at the Library of the Chathams, 214 Main St, Chatham. All members are welcome. There are currently some open positions on it! If you would like to find out more, please contact Paul Sanderson.

**GENERAL MEETINGS:** Meetings are virtual for the time being. Please check our website for updates. Once we can meet meetings are held on the SECOND WEDNESDAY of



the month – 7:30 pm at the Library of the Chathams, 214 Main St, Chatham. Come learn something new and make some new friends. We'd welcome the chance to meet you and to introduce ourselves. Please see the schedule, below, and join us! DIRECTIONS are posted on our website: <http://sierraclub.org/new-jersey/loantaka/>.

**MEETING SCHEDULE:**

**Jul 8:** No Meeting

**Aug 12:** No Meeting

**Sep 9:** If meetings have resumed – please check the Loantaka website.

John Kashwick and Jonathan Wall will give a presentation on one of our National Parks. John is NJSC Vice Chair and Political Chair. Jonathon is Chair of the Hunterdon Warren Group. We will let you know what park as we get closer to the date.

**ACTIVITIES:** The Loantaka Group is working with concerned citizens and local environmental organizations to protect open space and wildlife habitat in Morris and Union Counties, and to safeguard the water resources on which we all depend. In addition, the Group is actively involved in State-wide initiatives involving air quality, transportation, and environmental legislation. Volunteers are always welcome. Call Paul at 908-233-2414.

Consult our website (<http://sierraclub.org/new-jersey/loantaka/>) for more information.

**Central Jersey Group**

*(Mercer County and neighboring towns in adjoining counties)*

**Web-site:** <http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/central-jersey>. Or click from the NJ Chapter's web-site. Please see the Outings List in this newsletter – or on Pineypaddlers.com.

**OFFICERS:**

<b>Group Chair:</b>	Joanne Pannone	jpatmeadowbrook@gmail.com
<b>Group Vice Chair:</b>	Xiaoping Du	xiaping_du@yahoo.com
<b>Secretary:</b>	Leona Fluck	leona@pineypaddlers.com
<b>Outings Coord:</b>	George and Leona Fluck	leona@pineypaddlers.com
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Arlene Ceterski	va2c2015@gmail.com
<b>Programs:</b>	Joanne Pannone	jpatmeadowbrook@gmail.com
<b>Conservation Chair:</b>	Kip Cherry	KipAtTheSierraClub@gmail.com
<b>Recycling:</b>	Sylvia Kay	sylviakay222@gmail.com
<b>Trails:</b>	Dave Mattek	MattekDC@aol.com
<b>Webmaster:</b>	<i>Open Position!</i>	
<b>Education:</b>	<i>Open Position!</i>	

One recent activity was a zoom video presentation, "Pinelands National Preserve-Wilderness Remains," held on May 13th. The Central Jersey Group will post any future activities on the New Jersey Sierra Club website, Central Group FaceBook page, and Pineypaddlers.com. Stay home, be patient, stay safe! And don't stop lobbying for our environment!

We lobby at the State House for laws to fight polluters and climate change. We need a moratorium on pipelines and fossil fuel projects. Support Empower NewJersey!

Get Sierra news by joining Sierra Club and receive our email.

**Raritan Valley Group**

*(Middlesex and Somerset Counties and surrounding areas)*

**WEBSITE:** <http://sierraclub.org/new-jersey/Raritan-Valley/>  
**FACEBOOK:** <https://www.facebook.com/RaritanGroupNJSC/>  
 For current outings, please see the Outings List in this newsletter – or on Pineypaddlers.com.

**OFFICERS:**

<b>Group Chair and Conservation Chair:</b>	Gary Frederick	<a href="mailto:garyfrederick@newjersey.sierraclub.org">garyfrederick@newjersey.sierraclub.org</a>	609-203-3382
<b>Membership:</b>	John Miraglia	<a href="mailto:johnworks3@aol.com">johnworks3@aol.com</a>	
<b>Political Chair:</b>	Teresa Callahan	<a href="mailto:terry.callahan15@gmail.com">terry.callahan15@gmail.com</a>	
<b>Publicity Chair:</b>	<i>Open position!</i>		
<b>Treasurer:</b>	S. Pasricha	<a href="mailto:spjersey@gmail.com">spjersey@gmail.com</a>	
<b>Webmaster:</b>	Paul Ehrlich	<a href="mailto:p.w.ehrlich-nj@outlook.com">p.w.ehrlich-nj@outlook.com</a>	
<b>Outings/Events Co-Chairs:</b>	S. Parischa		
	Brianna Cerione		
	Bernadette Maher		
<b>College Liaison:</b>	<i>Open position!</i>		
<b>Bee Affairs:</b>	Brenda Bradley		
<b>Group Executive Committee Members:</b>	Gary Frederick, S. Pasricha, Teresa Callahan, Kevin Corcoran, Paul Ehrlich		

Our **monthly meetings** are typically held on the FOURTH WEDNESDAY of each month, from 7pm to 8:30, in New Brunswick. Meetings are virtual for the time being. Please check our website for updates. Meetings are free and open to the public. We discuss the environmental news important to New Jersey and the Raritan Valley, plus discuss upcoming events, speakers, volunteer efforts, etc. To confirm whether a meeting is scheduled and the location, please contact Gary Frederick at [garyfrederick@newjersey.sierraclub.org](mailto:garyfrederick@newjersey.sierraclub.org).

The issues of interest to our communities include but are not limited to:

1. **Opposition to gas and oil pipelines** that threaten our communities' air and water.
2. Conservation and protection of the **Raritan River basin** area.
3. Passage of and responsible enforcement of environmentally friendly **zoning and development ordinances**.
4. **Protection of conserved land** from commercial or other development. We are for preservation of open space and preventing diversion of land from the state's Green Acres program to commercial development.

We encourage you to attend your town's planning/zoning board and land use board meetings. If you are aware of development proposals in your town that may have a negative environmental impact, please let us know by attending our meetings and by contacting Gary Frederick at [garyfrederick@newjersey.sierraclub.org](mailto:garyfrederick@newjersey.sierraclub.org). We are also interested in any environmental news or events affecting Middlesex and Somerset counties and invite you to submit those items, as well

**Jersey Shore Group**

*(Monmouth County, approximately)*

**WEBSITE:** <http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/Jersey-Shore/>  
**FACEBOOK:** <https://www.facebook.com/JerseyShoreNJSC/>

**OFFICERS:**

<b>Group Chair:</b>	Dennis Anderson	732-970-4327	<a href="mailto:dennisaza@aol.com">dennisaza@aol.com</a>
	6 Maple Ave, Matawan NJ 07747		
<b>Secretary:</b>	John Luard	732-708-9221	<a href="mailto:John.Luard@gmail.com">John.Luard@gmail.com</a>
<b>Conser. Co-Chairs:</b>	Faith Teitelbaum	732-513-5445	<a href="mailto:faithtei@aol.com">faithtei@aol.com</a>
and:	Bob Sandberg	732-241-7757	<a href="mailto:Sandberg00@gmail.com">Sandberg00@gmail.com</a>
and:	Stan Greberis	732-431-0082	<a href="mailto:grapefruit@msn.com">grapefruit@msn.com</a>
<b>Social Media Chair:</b>	Yazmin Sourias		<a href="mailto:yazming915@gmail.com">yazming915@gmail.com</a>
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Jim Baye		<a href="mailto:jimbaye@optonline.net">jimbaye@optonline.net</a>
<b>Political Co-Chairs:</b>	Robin & Harold Zullo		<a href="mailto:drzullo@optonline.net">drzullo@optonline.net</a>
<b>Outings Chair:</b>	John Luard	732-708-9221	<a href="mailto:John.Luard@gmail.com">John.Luard@gmail.com</a>
<b>Outings Leaders:</b>	<i>Open Position!</i>		
<b>Membership Chair:</b>	Wael Kanj		<a href="mailto:waelkanj@gmail.com">waelkanj@gmail.com</a>
<b>Program Chair:</b>	George Moffatt	732-544-1726	<a href="mailto:gmoffattgt@aol.com">gmoffattgt@aol.com</a>
<b>Climate Chair:</b>	Steve Miller	732-671-5917	<a href="mailto:SteveMiller@Comcast.net">SteveMiller@Comcast.net</a>
<b>Fund-raising Co-Chairs:</b>	Mark Fukayama	908-902-1555	<a href="mailto:markexams@aol.com">markexams@aol.com</a>
and:	Faith Teitelbaum	732-513-5445	<a href="mailto:faithtei@aol.com">faithtei@aol.com</a>
<b>Communications Chair:</b>	Wael Kanj		<a href="mailto:waelkanj@gmail.com">waelkanj@gmail.com</a>
<b>High School Coor:</b>	<i>Open Position!</i>		
<b>Letter-writing Committee:</b>	Mark Fukayama, Steve Miller and Stan Greberis		

**JERSEY SHORE GROUP HAPPENINGS:**

**Progress at Whale Pond Greenway** – The Jersey Shore Sierra Club is a partner of the Whale Pond Brook Watershed Association, whose goal is to restore the banks and water quality of Whale Pond Brook and create a greenway from the ocean at Long Branch to the uplands in Tinton Falls.

We are working with the Long Branch Green Team in Long Branch. In Ocean Township we are aiming to create a trail in the Whale Pond Preserve, part of 350 acres of open space in the rectangle formed by Rte 35, Industrial Way West, Rte 18, and W. Park Av. The WPBWA, as a non-profit, has engaged a forester to tell us how to best manage the land. To help: contact Faith Teitelbaum at [Faithtei@aol.com](mailto:Faithtei@aol.com).

**MEMBER MEETINGS:** We really, really miss you, but we must cancel our get-together programs during this stressful time for the safety of everyone. This includes our popular "Science Mondays" presentations at Brookdale Community College because we all have to avoid group activities or crowds. We probably will have to cancel our September speaker as well.

However, we intend to stay in touch with you. We are planning to use a two-way voice and video system for us to communicate with each other. With this system, we will bring to you – in the comfort and safety of your living room – knowledgeable guest speakers and interesting videos on important environmental issues. In addition, we will keep you advised of local environmental problems.

In addition, we will be sending you electronic notices about environmental issues, petitions, and alerts. In fact, let's try one now. To learn about what the White House is doing to systematically tear apart our environmental protections, please go to <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/climate/trump-environment-rollback.html>.

All in all, we aren't putting our conservation programs in mothballs. We can't, because some corporations and politicians are taking advantage of the coronavirus epidemic to secretly unravel many our hard-earned environmental laws. And we can't let them get away with it.

Stay well. An environmentalist is a terrible thing to waste.

Speakers' Contacts: George Moffatt 732-544-1726 or [gmoffattgt@aol.com](mailto:gmoffattgt@aol.com)  
 Mary Reilly 908-731-2466 or [Mary@reillygreen.com](mailto:Mary@reillygreen.com)

**Ocean County Group**

**WEBSITE:** [MEETUP.COM/SIERRA-CLUB-OCEAN-GROUP](http://MEETUP.COM/SIERRA-CLUB-OCEAN-GROUP)

**OFFICERS:**

<b>Acting Chair &amp; Conservation Chair:</b>	Margit Meissner-Jackson	<a href="mailto:sylviaJ1910@yahoo.com">sylviaJ1910@yahoo.com</a>
<b>Vice-Chair &amp; Treasurer:</b>	Laura Stone	<a href="mailto:LauraS36@yahoo.com">LauraS36@yahoo.com</a>
<b>Outings &amp; Envl Ed'n:</b>	Terrance Brown	<a href="mailto:terrybrown@comcast.net">terrybrown@comcast.net</a>
<b>Recording Secretary:</b>	Nancy Brown	<a href="mailto:nancybrown624@comcast.net">nancybrown624@comcast.net</a>
<b>Political Chair:</b>	Margaret Mary Piccolo	<a href="mailto:gogreenp1@yahoo.com">gogreenp1@yahoo.com</a>
<b>Membership Chairs:</b>	Ray & Cathy Kozakerich	<a href="mailto:raykozak@comcast.net">raykozak@comcast.net</a>
<b>Group ExCom Members:</b>	William Rodgers	
And:	Peter Leighton	<a href="mailto:JPLighton1@verizon.net">JPLighton1@verizon.net</a>
And:	Joyce Isaza	<a href="mailto:realymstr@aol.com">realymstr@aol.com</a>

**Hospitality, Fundraising, Publicity, Webmaster:** *All Open Positions!*

**GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS:** Meetings are virtual for the time being. Please check our website for updates. Meetings normally held bi-monthly at the Skywalk Cafe in Toms River, except July and August.

**ACTIVITIES & ISSUES:** Our group is focused on a number of critical issues. Locally and state-wide we are fighting a myriad of over-development issues. Along with our allies we are working hard to save Barnegat Bay and The Pinelands, two natural gems in Ocean County.

*(continued on page 10)*

## GROUP NEWS

(Continued from page 9)

### West Jersey Group

(Camden, Gloucester and Burlington Counties, approximately)

WEBSITE: <http://sierraclub.org/new-jersey/West-Jersey/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/WestJerseyGroupNJSC> Log on and Like Us

Follow us on Twitter @WJsierraclub and Instagram @wjsierraclub

#### OFFICERS:

**Group Chair:** Gina Carola 856-848-8831 ginaceee@verizon.net  
**Vice-Chair:** Frank Zinni efzin4@aol.com  
**Secretary:** Ellen Zinni efzin4@aol.com  
**Treasurer:** Trish Clements patri3210@gmail.com  
**Publicity Chair:** Anne Caridi annecaridi@yahoo.com  
**Political Chair:** Linda Rubiano Linda\_Maritz@yahoo.com  
**Pinelands Rep:** Lee Snyder pinelands1@hotmail.com  
**Greenways Coord's:** Frank and Ellen Zinni efzin4@aol.com  
**Conservation Chair:** Stacey Ayala thunderwolfgalaxy@yahoo.com  
**Delegate at Large:** Aida Ayala thunderwolfgalaxy@yahoo.com  
**Membership Chair:** Mike Brown 856-547-9221 eyebrown@verizon.net  
**Fundraising Chair:** *Open position!* Call Gina to volunteer. . 856-848-8831  
**Smart Growth Chair:** *Open position!* Call Gina to volunteer. . 856-848-8831  
**Programs Chair:** *Open position!* Call Gina to volunteer. . 856-848-8831  
**Outings Chair:** *Open position!* Call Gina to volunteer. . 856-848-8831  
**Media & Communications:** Tony Hagen hagenajohn@verizon.net  
**Social Media Coordinator:** *Open position!* Call Gina to volunteer. . 856-848-8831

**GENERAL MEETINGS:** Meetings are virtual for the time being. Please check our website for updates. Normally our meetings are held at 7:30 pm on the SECOND WEDNESDAY of each month, September thru May, at the Quaker Meeting Hall on Friends Ave in Haddonfield. Inclement weather may cancel. Please call 856-848-8831 if unsure.

**Directions:** From I-295, take exit 34B onto Rte 70 West. Follow the signs for Rte 41 South, which is Kings Hwy (you will have to exit to the right into a jug handle and then turn left onto Rte 41 (Kings Hwy). Cross over Rte 70 and you will be briefly on Rte 154 (Brace Rd). Make the next right and then the next left onto Kings Hwy. After about 1 mile, you will cross Grove Rd (Indian King Tavern is on the right corner). After crossing Grove Rd, go two more blocks and turn right on to Friends Ave. Go one block to the Meeting House. Park in the lot next to the Meeting House and enter the auditorium through the doors on the right side of the building. Do not go into the Meeting House.

**Sept 9:** Topic to be announced

The West Jersey Group does not meet in June, July or August. Please check for updates on our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/WestJerseyGroupNJSC>

Contact Gina at 856-848-8831, ginaceee@verizon.net to get involved in any of our many initiatives on climate change.

### South Jersey Group

(Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland and Salem Counties, approximately)

#### OFFICERS:

**Group, Outings Chair:** Tom Boghosian 267-930-8583 boghosian1@verizon.net  
**Vice-Chair:** *Open Position!*  
**Conservation Chair:** *Open Position!*  
**Pol. Chair, Calendars:** Dick Colby 609-965-4453 dick.colby@stockton.edu  
**Membership Chair:** *Open Position!*  
**Secretary/Treasurer:** Julie Akers 609-432-3280 julieakers56@gmail.com

The officers listed above are wearing out (with respect to the Club), and would more than welcome new blood, with ideas and energy for local projects. Please contact Dick Colby for a discussion. Otherwise, our consuming conservation issue, adopted just after the Group was founded in the 1970s, continues to be protection of the Great Egg Harbor Wild & Scenic River, and continues to consume the energies of those few officers who remain active both within the Sierra Club and in the Watershed Association (GEHWA) that spun off from the South Jersey Group. Very few of our local members seem interested in the meetings we once scheduled (monthly, from the early 1980s until 2005). For now, we'll continue to be listed in this Newsletter, and offer a point of contact for Club members in South Jersey who want help with local issues. We strongly recommend GEHWA's website for keeping up with local issues, and for links to many other local, regional, state and national environmental organizations: [www.gehwa.org](http://www.gehwa.org). If you have topics (and places) for meetings, please let the officers know about them. We welcome general comments from Club members in South Jersey. To be placed on a carefully guarded distribution list for local issues and meetings, please e-mail dick.colby@stockton.edu. Dick is also an Atlantic County Parks Commissioner; contact him if you might be interested in attending monthly meetings of the Commission, which are open to the public.

Tom Boghosian is an avid kayaker (- certified as a Maine Guide!), both ocean-going and in fresh waters, possibly willing to lead trips. Julie Akers is also active with Atlantic County Friends of the Parks, and the Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association

**Current Issues:** (1) We've been blue-blazing the southern portion of what will be a continuous footpath between the southern and northern tips of New Jersey. Many others (and other groups) are contributing. Contact Dick for copies of some of our preliminary maps. Dick has also produced a brochure describing 14 historic walks in Egg Harbor City. Every municipality ought to have its own such brochure: this is a hint for you to try your hand at it! (2) There is "movement" on the prospect for a Community Solar experiment in South Jersey, fueled by new legislation that prods the BPU, and a new president of Atlantic Electric Co. (3) If you know an Atlantic County Freeholder, please consider lobbying her/him to take on Clark's Landing as an historic county park. (4) With the passage of a plastic-bag-restricting ordinance in Longport, there's lobbying work to be

done in each of our other municipalities! (4 etc.) Many other South Jersey issues are described in previous issues of this Newsletter, available on the Chapter website.

#### Some Allied Organizations, some of which may be meeting by Zoom:

**May 26 and July 28:** (alternating fourth Tuesdays), 6:30pm: Great Egg Harbor Watershed Assn. Activities centered on protecting the Wild & Scenic Recreational River. All are welcome. Warren Fox Nature Center (WFNC\*), Atlantic County Park in Estell Manor, Milepost 15 on NJ Rte 50, 3½ miles south of Mays Landing. Contact Julie Akers, 609-432-3280.

**June 3, July 1, Aug 5:** (first Wednesdays), 6:30pm: Atlantic County Friends of the Parks: Monthly meetings of a group which works to improve and promote the Atlantic County Park System. All are welcome. WFNC\*. Contact Julie Akers, 609-432-3280. Website: <https://www.facebook.com/Atlantic-County-Friends-of-the-Parks>.

**June 10, Aug 12:** (alternate second Wednesdays), 7pm: Bi-monthly meeting of Citizens United to Protect the Maurice River and its Tributaries (another "Partnership River" under federal protection): Meeting place: George Luciano Center, Cumberland County College. Cumberland County development issues are commonly discussed, including art, historical and recreational attributes of the area. Contact Karla Rossini (CU) at 609-774-5853 or karla.rossini@cumauriceriver.org. Website: [www.cumauriceriver.org](http://www.cumauriceriver.org).

**June 17, Aug 19:** (alternate third Wednesdays), 6:30pm: Great Egg Harbor Scenic and Recreational River Council: Representatives of the 12 municipalities discuss and implement river management strategies. Open to the public. WFNC\*. Contact Julie Akers, 609-432-3280.

**June 24, July 22, Aug 26, Sept 23:** (fourth Wednesdays), 7pm: Atlantic Audubon Society is a lively member-organization with strong environmental programs and an excellent monthly on-line newsletter. Membership is free. Meetings are in the Galloway Twp Library, 306 E Jimmie Leeds Rd. [www.AtlanticAudubon.org](http://www.AtlanticAudubon.org).

### Singles Section

(A chapter-wide, special interest section offering hikes/cleanups, social gatherings, meetings, etc.)

Website: <http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/sierra-singles>

We're a friendly, active group of individuals who enjoy hiking, biking, canoeing/kayaking, as well as a variety of social and cultural activities throughout the year. This section was created to offer a variety of singles-oriented activities to NJ Sierra Club members.

#### OFFICERS:

**Interim Co-Chairs:** Ron Pate and Jimi Oleksiak  
**Outings Chair:** Joyce Haddad  
**Conservation Chair:** *Position open*  
**Treasurer:** *Position open*  
**Social Chair:** *Position open*  
**Vice Social Chair:** Jeff Sovelove  
**Programs:** *Position open*  
**Publicity:** *Position open*  
**Membership:** *Position open*  
**Nominations:** *Position open*

**Executive committee members:** Rozanna Fanelli, Joyce Haddad, Ron Pate, and Jeff Sovelove.

**PURPOSE:** Our purpose is to acquaint single adults with the natural history and beauty of the surrounding area, to promote environmental conservation, and to provide recreational and social activities for members. All activities shall be consistent with Sierra Club purposes. We are not a local group; we're a statewide additional "layer" of club involvement. Everyone is welcome to join us.

**COMMUNICATIONS:** The best way to be notified of upcoming events is to join our free listserv. Anyone may subscribe by going to: <http://lists.sierraclub.org/archives/NJ-SINGLES-NEWS.html> and clicking on "Join or leave the list." You may subscribe and unsubscribe at will; directions on how to unsubscribe are at the bottom of each announcement. We recommend joining the listserv to receive announcements for all of our events a few weeks before each event. Events are also list on the online calendar on the Chapter's web site: [sierraclub.org/new-jersey](http://sierraclub.org/new-jersey). You can also "like" us on Facebook: "Singles Group New Jersey Sierra Club." Activities will also be posted on Meetup.

Meetings are virtual for the time being. Please check our website for updates.

#### SOCIAL GATHERINGS:

**Social dinners:** Join us for dinner the second Tuesday of each month at 6:30 pm, at a variety of restaurants in different locations. Jimi Oleksiak, the leader, will announce the details one week in advance through a listserv message. An RSVP will be required as described in the announcement.

**HIKES AND OTHER OUTINGS:** The Singles Section sponsors many outings, ranging from beginners' level of hikes to advanced difficulty. Some of these are listed in the Outings section of this newsletter; others will be announced on our listserv, the Chapter's online calendar, Facebook and Meetup. Hikes are for anybody who is capable of hiking the distance described. It is up to the person who wants to hike to determine their own ability and limits. All hikers are required to sign a liability waiver.

### LGBTQ+ Section

Our mission of this Section is to support Sierra Club goals, and to promote environmental activism and social equity. We are an inclusive group and all are welcome to join our events.

WEB SITE: <http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/LGBT/>

MEETUP: <http://www.meetup.com/njsierraclub>

FACEBOOK: <https://www.facebook.com/njsierralgbt>

#### OFFICERS:

**Chair:** William Parish \* whparishiv@gmail.com  
**Vice-Chair:** Andrew Bevacqua \* andrewpbvacqua@gmail.com

**Secretary:** John Kashwick \* jkashwick@gmail.com  
**Treasurer:** Jonathan Wall docjdwall@gmail.com  
**Outings Chair:** Robert Zitzman \* robertmzi@yahoo.com  
**Fundraising:** Matthew Lang \* matthewjlang58@gmail.com  
**Webmaster/Listmaster:** John Kashwick \* jkashwick@gmail.com

(\* Section Executive Committee Member)

**MEETINGS AND EVENTS:**

**July 14 (Tue):** Executive Committee via Zoom. 8pm. This is our quarterly meeting to discuss issues and plan events for next quarter. Check our web site for information on how to register for the meeting and further details.

**VIRTUAL BOOK CLUB:**

The LGBTQ+ Section is sponsoring a bi-monthly Book Club on Zoom discussing books on wildlife and environmental topics. Book selections are not LGBTQ-specific and all members and supporters are encouraged to join regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity—so please spread the word! The one-hour discussions will be facilitated by Robert Zitzman (robertmzi@yahoo.com). For more information about each book, where to buy, or to register, please visit <http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/>

**July 20 (Mon) 8pm via Zoom.** The Citizen’s Guide to Climate Success: Overcoming Myths That Hinder Progress by Mark Jaccard (published Feb. 6, 2020). Sometimes solving climate change seems impossibly complex, and it is hard to know what changes we all can and should make to help. This book offers hope.

**Sept 21 (Mon) 8pm via Zoom.** Wilding: The Return of Nature to a British Farm by Isabella Tree (published May 3, 2018). An inspiring story about what happens when 3,500 acres of land, farmed for centuries, is left to return to the wild, and about the wilder, richer future a natural landscape can bring.

Please see the website, and/or contact William Parish at [whparshiv@gmail.com](mailto:whparshiv@gmail.com) for additional information.

**Senior Section/Fifty-Plus Section**

*(A chapter-wide special interest section which offers a weekly to monthly calendar of activities and events, including hikes, clean ups, social gatherings, dinner get-togethers and other functions intended for those members over fifty)*

In addition, a monthly Buy & Sell newsletter is sent out to members free of charge, in which they can list items they are searching for or want to buy.

The mission of this section is to support Sierra Club goals, and to promote activism through letter writing, phone calls, and other active support for environmental issues.

We work through a “list-serve,” by which members learn about current environmental issues, and how they can be supported. Please find more news at Website: <http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/senior-section>.

Arline Zatz is the editor and Chair of the Senior Section/Fifty-Plus Section. She can be reached at [azatz@funtravels.com](mailto:azatz@funtravels.com), and invites members to check her web site at [www.funtravels.com](http://www.funtravels.com) for trips, tips, and travel information regarding New Jersey and other states.

Paul Ehrlich is the Vice-Chair ([phehrlich-NJ@outlook.com](mailto:phehrlich-NJ@outlook.com)). He vice-edits the Essays Section of the Senior Section web site. These essays are written by members of the NJ Sierra Club, and focus on environmental issues, including reports of environment-related news that may not be easily accessed by many members, opinions on how to deal with environmental problems, and support/criticism of environmental actions taken by organizations and individuals.

DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING YOU’VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT THAT YOU’D LIKE TO TELL A LARGE AUDIENCE? Send an essay to Arline and Paul for editing and approval and it will be posted on our web site

**Sierra Student Coalition**

*(a semi-autonomous organization of college and high-school students)*

National Website: <http://www.ssc.org/>

**ICO: Inspiring Connections Outdoors**

*Previously: Introducing Children to the Outdoors; before that: Inner-City Outings (another Chapter-wide special interest activity with the motto: No Child Left Inside!)*

**OFFICERS:**

**Chair:** Position Currently Vacant

ICO is a public service program that provides outdoor trips to children, and is active in 50 of the Club’s roughly 59 Chapters, including the New Jersey Chapter since at least 1998. In recent years, we produced about five trips per year for students in the Clemente Middle School in Paterson.

*On the Trail*  
**On Your Own**



The Sierra Club is currently not sponsoring organized outings due to the coronavirus pandemic. When we can offer outings it will be announced, and they will be posted, on our website. Meanwhile, outdoor exercise is all-the-more important during the lockdown period – so long as we are healthy and remain at safe distances from each other.

Our leaders were asked to recommend favorite walks in each New Jersey county, under five miles from secure car-parking areas, that members can enjoy privately. Some of them are segments of the new State Long Trail (SLT), which extends 384 miles from High Point (Sussex Co) to Cape May Point (Cape May Co), near completion by David Mattek, Chapter Trails Coordinator, and his many helpers. So here are suggestions in each county. We have also tried to include color maps in the electronic supplement to this Newsletter, which is in the version of the Newsletter available from the Chapter website ([www.SierraClub.org/New-Jersey/](http://www.SierraClub.org/New-Jersey/)).

Whether you choose any of our suggested outings, or others you find online or are recommended by other friends, please be sure you are properly prepared for your outing. Don’t forget enough water, lunch or snacks, sunscreen, insect repellent. Check the park website to make sure the park/parking lot has not been closed. Bring detailed directions and/or a map (either printed on downloaded to your phone) of the hike you are planning so you do not get lost. Please maintain a minimum of six feet from anyone you walk with – even if you are wearing a mask the entire time. If you see other people on the trail that you will need to pass, look for a place where you can safely step several feet off the trail so you can pass each other maintaining the six-foot distance. When you get home (if not also before,) check every square inch of your body for ticks!

**Here are the hikes, alphabetically by County:**

**Atlantic County:** A 4-mile segment of the SLT in the Tuckahoe WMA, Egg Harbor Twp, consisting of a sturdy dyke separating extensive freshwater from saltwater wetlands, and therefore offering spectacular views and a diverse variety of wildlife. No shade. Parking in from NJ Rte 50 at both ends.

Also (from Leona Fluck): **Estell Manor Park** is located 3.5 miles south of Mays Landing on NJ Rte 50. It is bordered by the Great Egg Harbor River / South River to the east and by Rte 50 to the west. In all, it is about 1700 acres large. This is the Atlantic County Park System’s most popular park, with a headquarters/ Nature Center that is currently closed to the public, and a 2.7-mile boardwalk trail especially suited for wheelchairs. After the Native Americans, this was land owned by the Estell family, then the site of a glass-works in the 1800’s, then a naval munitions plant during World War I. After 70 years, the forest has reclaimed this area, so it is now home to a diversity of plants and animals. Leashed dogs (and horse-riding) are welcome. <https://www.atlantic-county.org/parks/estell-manor-park.asp>

**Bergen County** (courtesy of Ellen Blumenkrantz): **Ramapo Valley County Reservation:** <https://www.co.bergen.nj.us/parks-recreation-areas/ramapo-valley-county-reservation>. This is a dog-friendly park with lakes, streams, and some scenic views. Combining the Vista loop trail (yellow blazes) with the Ridge Trail (blue blazes) will be about 4-5 miles, depending on which sections you do.

**Burlington County** (courtesy of Leona Fluck): Franklin Parker Preserve was acquired in 2003 by the New Jersey Conservation Foundation, a momentous occasion in conservation. This 9400-acre preserve is a keystone piece of land, linking the expanses of Brendan Byrne, Wharton, and Penn State Forests and creating a more contiguous Pinelands National Reserve. The Yellow Trail is a favorite. Leashed dogs are welcome. <https://www.njconservation.org/preserve/franklin-parker-preserve/>

**Camden County:** There is a new trans-County rail-trail bikeway that will extend from the Ben Franklin Bridge in Camden to the Atlantic County line in Winslow. Many portions are functional, especially at the Camden end: <https://www.camdencounty.com/wp-content/uploads/files/Public%20Meeting%201%20Map.pdf>

**Cape May County:** A near-terminal segment of the SLT in the Higbee Beach WMA, West Cape May, constructed specifically by NJ Fish & Wildlife for the SLT. It connects (at a parking lot) to the public beach which runs along the Delaware Bayshore for about 2 miles, south of the Cape May Canal.

**Cumberland County** (courtesy of Leona Fluck): **The Maurice River Bluffs** Preserve provides stopover habitat for migrating songbirds, also osprey and bald eagles. Bring binoculars to see the bald eagle nests across the river. The Nature Conservancy prides itself on protecting great places such as this, a majestic preserve overlooking the river. The trails are well-marked. Leashed dogs are welcome. <https://www.nature.org/en-us/get-involved/how-to-help/places-we-protect/delaware-bayshores-maurice-river-bluffs-preserve/>

**Essex County** (thanks to Leona Fluck): **Branch Brook Park**, the nation’s first county park, is located in the North Ward of Newark, between the neighborhoods of Forest Hill and Roseville. A portion of the park is also located within the Township of Belleville. The park is noted for the largest collection of cherry blossom trees in the United States. The Newark Light Rail runs on the park’s west side providing multiple access points to the park from Downtown Newark and further away. Branch Brook Park is listed on both the New Jersey (1980) and National (1981) Registers of Historic Places. It is nearly 4 miles long and averages 1/4 mile in width. At 360 acres, it is the largest developed park in the County, with a combination of open meadowland and small patches of woodland on gently rolling terrain. It once included a bit of the Morris Canal. <https://www.essexcountyparks.org/parks/branch-brook-park/about>

**Gloucester County** (more thanks to Leona Fluck!): **Scotland Run Park** is the largest of Gloucester County’s parks, with more than 1,000 acres. Eighty-acre Wilson Lake offers passive recreation opportunities including fishing, boating and nature observation. There is a handicapped-accessible fishing pier in the boat launch area. Walking trails start behind the Nature Center and also lake-side of the park. <http://www.co.gloucester.nj.us/depts/p/parks/parkgolf/scotland/default.asp>

**Hudson County:** The obvious choice is **Liberty State Park**, with its view of Upper New York Bay, but there is also the close-to-completion Hudson River Waterfront Walk along much of the eastern edge of Hudson County. Probably less congested on a weekday.

**Hunterdon County:** (from Judy Minot): **Hoffman Park** is a 354-acre park in Union Township, operated by the County Department of Parks and Recreation. It was once a farm operated by Albert and Joyce Hoffman, who began acquiring tracts of land in the 1930s. It’s known among birders as a good place to look for grassland birds including bobolink and grasshopper sparrow. The park is a mixture of grassland, hardwood forest and scrub/shrub habitat. From the Baptist Church Road entrance it’s a quick walk down the hill to the largest of the Park’s 32 ponds, Manny’s Pond, where swallows congregate in the summer. A loop from the Baptist Church Road entrance to the Mechlin Corner Road entrance and back is a nice, easy, flat 2.3 miles. The park has many trails, through both woodland and open land. Some of the trails are paved, suitable for biking. NB: Hunting is allowed in some parts of the park on certain dates. Check with Hunterdon County Division of Parks and Recreation: 908-782-1158.

**Mercer County** (from Leona Fluck): **The Mercer County Park System** encompasses over 2,500 acres covering areas of the Townships of West Windsor, Hamilton and Lawrence. Of special interest is the John Rogers House Constructed Ruin in Mercer County Park. Built in 1761, the Rogers House is believed to be the oldest remaining structure in West Windsor Township. It was listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places in 1976: as a good example of 18th century pattern brick architecture. Leashed dogs are welcome. <http://www.mercercountyparks.org/#/parks/mercer-county-park/>

Also: The SLT follows the towpath of the **Delaware & Raritan Canal** through much of Mercer County, both northwest of Trenton aside the Delaware River, and northeast of Trenton near Princeton and Kingston. Many parking opportunities are shown on the maps in the web-version of this Newsletter.

One more! (from Joanne Pannone): **The Watershed Institute’s** 950-acre nature reserve has ten miles of trails and an environmental center with bathrooms. Formerly Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Arboretum, it is the first watershed protection organization, located in Hopewell Township. Open daily, no charge. 31 Titus Mill Rd, Pennington 08534.

**Middlesex County** (from S. Pasricha): **Davidson Mill Pond Park** is a tranquil spot in the heart of 482 acres of scenic former agricultural land. Fun-but-tough switchback trails take you under thick forest canopy and around babbling brooks all the way to the Davidson Mill Pond boat launch. Memorable features include a butterfly house, garden displays, and a captivating waterfall. The park is located off Riva Ave in South Brunswick. There are two parking lots after entering the park. See <http://www.middlesexcountynj.gov/Government/Departments/IM/Documents/Maps/Davidsons%20Mill%20%20FINAL%2007.24.2019.pdf>

**Monmouth County: Grand Tour Trail.** Hartshorne County Park: John Luard, Outings Leader for the Shore Group, suggests this 4-mile figure-8 hike, mostly in forest. The parking lot (1402 Portland Rd, Highlands 07732) is at the edge of Battery Lewis, a WW2 installation that is high over the Atlantic Ocean with great views and an interesting history. Obtain and use a map for this hike; there a several rogue trails that could confuse. We suggest you read the park brochure at [https://co.monmouth.nj.us/documents/130/hartshorne\\_brochure\\_dec\\_2019\\_ada.pdf](https://co.monmouth.nj.us/documents/130/hartshorne_brochure_dec_2019_ada.pdf). From the parking lot proceed west on Portland Rd (closed to vehicles) for about ¼ mile, make a diagonal right and go downhill on an unlabeled trail for another quarter to the junction with Grand Tour. Here you can go left or right, following the map and the black diamond symbols for 3.1 miles in a figure-8 pattern, until you get back to the junction leading to Portland. (Our county parks do not mark trails with names or colors, they are marked with difficulty badges. But you should encounter no other black diamond trails on this route.) Hartshorne Park is a real gem for hikers, especially on weekdays: significant elevation changes, beautiful ocean and river views, and historical significance.

Also (from Leona Fluck): **Perrineville Lake Park** has wooded trails, beautiful woodlands, natural fields and a picturesque lake in the heart of quiet Millstone. Leashed dogs are welcome. <https://www.monmouthcountyparks.com/page.aspx?id=2550>

**Morris County** (from Ellen Blumenkrantz): **Black River Trail** is a very scenic section of the Patriots Path that follows the Black River. Link to trail map: <https://chestertrails.files.wordpress.com/2011/10/06blackrivertrails.pdf> You can park at the Cooper Gristmill at 66 Rte 24, Chester Township. <https://www.morrisparks.net/index.php/parks/cooper-gristmill/>. While the Mill historical building will probably be closed, the parking lot and trail are currently open. Take the steps down from the Mill to turn left onto the Black River Trail (blue blazes) towards the Kay Environmental Center. It’s an easy 2.3 miles

*(continued on page 12)*

**Why not rank the environmental issues of most importance to you: sea-level rise, air pollution, loss of open space (wilderness), clean water supply, recycling, toxic sites, plastic, automobile dependence, etc. Now: how to act?**



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## ON YOUR OWN

(Continued from page 11)

each way, for a total walk of 4.6 miles. Other trails/extensions are possible.

**Ocean County** (courtesy of Leona Fluck): **Double Trouble State Park/Village** was a cranberry farm and packing plant, the former company town called Double Trouble is a window into past and current industries in the Pinelands. Trails go along the old bogs and beautiful Cedar Creek as well. Double Trouble State Park offers an outstanding example of the Pine Barrens ecosystem and a window into the Pine Barrens history. The park provides the protection and interpretation of over 8000 acres of significant natural, cultural, and recreational resources representative of the Pinelands National Reserve. Leashed dogs are welcome. The Park Facebook has great historic information. <https://www.facebook.com/DoubleTroubleStatePark/>

**Passaic County** (with thanks to Jonathan Wall): **Ringwood Manor House** - <http://www.ringwoodmanor.org/directions-to-ringwood-manor.html>. While currently closed, the Manor grounds offer a great spot for picnicking and good trails to take a jaunt off into the springing charm of Ringwood State Park. Also: Norvin Green is a must for those intrepid enough to bring a ham sandwich along to munch on top of the hills with great views of our great state. 150 Snake Den Rd, Ringwood 07456.

Another (courtesy of Ellen Blumenkrantz): **The Apschawa Preserve** is a forest owned by the New Jersey Conservation Foundation. There's an easy-moderate 4-mile hike that circles the scenic Butler reservoir, or extend your hike with the forest trail (green blaze). For directions and trail map: <https://www.njconservation.org/preserve/apschawa-preserve/>

**Salem County** (again thanks to Leona Fluck): **Parvin State Park** is situated at the edge of the New Jersey Pine Barrens. The Parvin Natural Area combines many of the characteristics and species of southern New Jersey and the Pine Barrens. Several trails run through the hardwood and Atlantic white cedar swamps, pitch pine lowlands and upland pine and oak forests. Parvin is home to the state-threatened barred owl and the endangered swamp pink. Enjoy a short, easy 3.3 mile loop around Parvin Lake through South Jersey's pinelands and an Atlantic white cedar swamp. The trail surface is easy, flat, and has no rocks. Leashed dogs are welcome. <https://www.state.nj.us/dep/parksandforests/parks/parvin.html>

**Somerset County**: (from S. Pasricha): **Duke Island Park** includes trails which are part of the Raritan River Greenway. Located in Bridgewater Township, the Park is a 340.5-acre site. Truly an "island" park, it is traversed by the historic Raritan Power Canal. The Visitors Center is located near the main parking area. See <http://www.somersetcountyparks.org/genInfo/maps/DukeIslandParkMap.pdf>.

**Sussex County**: The northernmost portion of the SLT descends from High Point to the Appalachian Trail, and follows it eastward into Wantage Twp.

**Warren County** (again, thanks to Jonathan Wall): **Merrill Creek Reservoir** is a 650-acre artificial lake in Harmony Township that is surrounded by 290 acres of protected woodland and fields. There is a six-mile easy loop hike around the reservoir that starts from the parking lot. Travel counter-clockwise around the reservoir on a wide gravel path. After crossing two berms with wide-open views, turn right into a more heavily wooded area. The trail continues along the flooded tributary and then you cross a bridge in into the natural area. At that point there are several trails to return to the parking lot. For a shorter hike, travel counter-clockwise from the parking lot and cover the trails in the natural area.

## Upcoming ExCom Meetings

All members are welcome to attend these monthly statewide policy deliberations, held on SECOND SATURDAYS, either by Zoom utility on a computer, smartphone, or ordinary telephone, or at the Reformed Church of Highland Park (19-21 S Second Av), depending on the kinetics of the viral pandemic. Our website will provide reliable information: <https://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey#NJCalendar>. For details of the Zoom connection, contact Joe Testa: [secretary@newjersey.sierraclub.org](mailto:secretary@newjersey.sierraclub.org).

**Dates: June 12, July 11, Aug 8, Sept 12**



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*The Jersey Sierran* appears in January, April, July and October. The deadline for copy is on the 10th of the month, two months before appearance. Members are cordially invited to propose articles, essays, letters, poetry and artwork. (Group/Section News columns are prepared by Group/Section Chairs; Outings are vetted by the Chapter Outings Chair, Ellen Blumenkrantz.)

*Opinions, unless otherwise attributed, are of the writer only. Advertised products and services carry no Club endorsement.*

Thank you to all who contributed to this issue! This newsletter is produced mostly by volunteers.

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## ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE

(Continued from page 2)

Footnotes:

- 1 <https://www.cdc.gov/cpr/zombie/index.htm>
- 2 <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/19/us/politics/trump-coronavirus-outbreak.html>
- 3 <https://int.nyt.com/data/documenthelper/6823-national-security-council-ebola/05bd797500ea55be0724/optimized/full.pdf#page=1>
- 4 <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources/pdf/pandemic-influenza-implementation.pdf>
- 5 <https://royalsocietypublishing.org/doi/pdf/10.1098/rstb.2013.0553>
- 6 <https://int.nyt.com/data/documenthelper/6824-2019-10-key-findings-and-after/05bd797500ea55be0724/>

- 7 <https://healthsecurity.csis.org/final-report/>
- 8 <https://www.cnn.com/2020/04/26/health/virus-hunters-bat-cave-coronavirus-hnk-intl/index.html>
- 9 <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1864/predict-global-flyer-508.pdf>
- 10 <https://www.cnn.com/2020/04/10/politics/trump-usaid-prevent-program-coronavirus/index.html>
- 11 <https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-liveupdates/2020/04/26/845151290/speaker-pelosi-president-trumps-effort-to-sideline-the-who-is-dangerous>

## EPA Extends Comment Period on Ringwood Superfund Plan

From a Press Release issued on April 1, edited by Sylvia Kay

Public comment on the proposed cleanup plan for groundwater contamination at the Ringwood Mines/Landfill Superfund Site in New Jersey has been extended a third time until June 3, 2020 by the EPA. The EPA's remediation plan involves installation of wells intended to introduce an oxygen-releasing compound into the aquifer to enhance the breakdown of contaminants. The EPA plans to add granular activated carbon and resin into the mine water at the Peters Mine Pit Airshaft. New Jersey Sierra is opposed to this plan and supports remediation based on pumping out the toxin from contaminated waters. It is important to voice opposition to the EPA Plan, so that NJ Attorney General Grewal's office will intervene.

EPA reached a \$21 million settlement with Ford Motor Co. and Ringwood on a cleanup plan for the Superfund site. Almost 166,000 tons of paint sludge and toxic chemicals from the company's plant are still prevalent. EPA put this site on the Superfund program's National Priorities List in September 1983. Currently, contamination is leaking into Ringwood State Park and entering Mill Brook and Sally Pond. Toxic chemicals, including dioxane, are being released into streams which link to the Wanaque Reservoir - a source of drinking water for millions of people. Surface water quality standards and DEP protocol are threatened.

Residents near the Superfund site have suffered from cancers, kidney ailments and other health conditions. The Ringwood Mines/Landfill site is an historic iron mining district situated on 500 acres in the borough of Ringwood, Passaic County. There are 600 people in Upper Ringwood who are living on top of this Site. Vapor intrusion and chemicals from the Superfund site impact their health. An efficient and prompt remediation of this Site will promote social justice for New Jersey citizens - a concept expressed in Governor Murphy's Executive Order 23.

Send written comments to: Joseph A. Gowers, Remedial Project Manager, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 290 Broadway, New York, NY 10007 or email: [gowers.joe@epa.gov](mailto:gowers.joe@epa.gov).

- <https://semspub.epa.gov/work/02/607041.pdf>
- <https://cumulis.epa.gov/supercpad/SiteProfiles/index.cfm?fuseaction=second.Cleanup&id=0200663#bkgground>
- <https://nj.gov/infobank/eo/056murphy/pdf/EO-23.pdf>

## NJ Transit Gets Federal Funds - Keeps Trains & Buses Going

Rewritten by Sylvia Kay from a Press Release issued on April 28

There has been a drastic loss in public transportation fare revenue nationwide due to the coronavirus. As part of the CARE Act, the federal government has allocated nearly \$25 billion relief to transit agencies on a national level to fund daily operations, maintain jobs and bolster revenues. New Jersey Transit's slice will be \$1.625 billion - more than an original request of \$1.25 billion made on March 19. The federal funding is based on a complex formula, but by far the greatest portion (23 out of the 25 billion) is going to large and dense urban areas. This helps explain why the very dense urban area of New York City is getting \$3.7 billion for the MTA in contrast to the spreading urban/suburban area of Chicago which is receiving \$1.43 billion for its transit system.

NJ.Com reports that NJ Transit lost \$29 million in fare revenue by April due to the pandemic. New Jersey's rail and bus systems have been vital to diverse groups of commuters across the state. With the infusion of the CARE federal funds, it is reported that NJ Transit will meet its expenses through mid-June. Bernstien, NJ Transit controller and deputy chief financial officer, stated the Agency intends to try for further federal funds from a CARE Act Grant and from FEMA.

- <https://usa.streetsblog.org/2020/04/08/federal-corona-relief-bill-seems-generous-to-transit-its-not/> (by Kia Wilson)
- <https://www.nj.com/coronavirus/2020/04/nj-transit-revenues-hit-rock-bottom-from-15m-in-daily-ticket-sales-to-41k.html> (by Larry Higgs)

## Reports from Trenton

# NJ Transit Rubberstamps Meadowlands Dirty Power Plant During Health Emergency

From a press release issued on April 20, and edited by Joe Testa

On April 17, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and NJ Transit issued a "Combined Final Environmental Impact Statement/Record of Decision" for the NJ TRANSITGRID Traction Power System project. The grid would be powered by a 104-140 MW natural gas-fired power generating plant in Kearny, costing close to \$526 million. This is a rubber-stamp of approval for a fossil-fueled power plant in the Meadowlands, without looking at health and environmental impacts of adding hundreds of thousands of tons of pollution to South Kearny and the areas around the plant, which already have some of the worst air quality in the nation.

FTA issued a single document that consists of a final environmental impact statement and a record of decision in a manner that bypasses the normal 30-day wait/review period under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). This EIS is deficient and doesn't look at alternatives that we have been suggesting for months, including using renewable energy generation; instead, this plan is more fossil foolishness. Approving this while the state is locked down due to the Covid-19 outbreak is especially ironic considering how air pollution has been linked to coronavirus risk.

A recent Harvard study and other studies have found a link between air pollution exposure and coronavirus risk. According to the Harvard study, coronavirus patients in areas that had high levels of air pollution before the pandemic were more likely to die from the infection than patients in cleaner parts of the country. They analyzed 3,080 counties in the United States and found that higher levels of the tiny, dangerous particles in the air, known as PM 2.5, were associated with higher death rates from the disease.

This plant will mean more air pollution and cause an increase of harmful chemicals such as fine particulates PM2.5, NOx and SOx. The fact that they released the report late on a Friday to avoid public opposition and press coverage shows that they know how bad this project is.

In Europe, there are trains that are being run off of solar power. We could be the first place in the nation to use solar power for trains. Other renewable alternatives include tidal, hydro, or wind power, as well as battery storage and flywheels. New Jersey has plenty of brownfields that can be linked and used for solar panels, as well as rail yards and parking lots at train stations suitable for panels. By dispersing microgrids we could avoid concentration at a single point, protecting us against failure by flooding or other disasters - in contrast to a single natural gas plant. Looking at clean alternatives is critical because this plant will run 24/7, so it will produce air pollution year-round.

The purported purpose of this project is to protect the transit system from another Sandy, but building more fossil fuel projects will make another superstorm like Sandy more likely to occur. Governor Murphy and NJ Transit should be looking out to protect the citizens of New Jersey by rescinding their authorization for this natural gas plant. If the Governor allows this plant to go forward, he will be shown to be full of hot air when it comes to reducing GHGs and impacts to Environmental Justice communities.

## NJ Turnpike Capital Plan = More Pollution, More Traffic

From a press release issued on March 25

The New Jersey Chapter of the Sierra Club has issued a report analyzing the Turnpike Authority's recent \$24 billion Capital Plan. The Plan proposes 15 highway widening and bridge replacement projects totaling \$15.6 billion; the final costs will be much higher due to budget adjustments and cost overruns. These 15 projects will add 454 lane-miles, increasing maximum capacity by 998,800 cars/hr.

The Turnpike Authority is bulldozing ahead despite the public health emergency. The proposal would pave over environmentally sensitive areas and cut through neighborhoods, many of which are Environmental Justice communities. Many homes will be taken. More fundamentally, high-speed roads promote residential sprawl and exhaust pollution, at the cost of open space and walkable communities. All this without public hearings, when the public is preoccupied with an epidemic emergency.

It would be the biggest fossil fuel subsidy in the history of the state, and a contradiction to Governor Murphy's rhetoric for reducing greenhouse gases. Our report shows that Vehicle Miles Traveled will increase dramatically. Cement and asphalt production are themselves contributors to greenhouse gases. Construction would take place in the Meadowlands and coastal parts of South Jersey, flood-prone areas.

Our report also notes that increasing highway capacity does not eliminate traffic congestion; it just moves bottlenecks and overwhelms the roads that our toll roads feed into. Homes and apartment buildings will be taken in Hillside, Irvington, Newark and East Orange, causing mass disruptions in these EJ communities.

The proposal includes toll increases of 36% on the Turnpike and 27% on the Garden State Parkway, raising more than \$500 million through 2029. There are 53 projects in all.

No environmental analysis or impact study has been performed, even though hundreds of acres of wetlands, forests, streams, and rivers will be destroyed. Projects in South Jersey and Monmouth County will promote overdevelopment: more shopping centers and warehouses.

We think the priority should be for improving and expanding NJ Transit. Our report is available on the Chapter website.

## Reports from Trenton

# NJ Unveils RGGI Strategic Funding Plan - Important Step Forward

From a press release issued on April 17

New Jersey has released its final Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) Strategic Funding Plan. RGGI is an association of ten Mid-Atlantic and New England states that share a reduction and auction process to encourage market efficiencies, investments in renewable energy, and improvements in power-plant technology, all to reduce smokestack emissions from electricity generating stations. The new plan describes how the State will spend \$82 million in proceeds from the quarterly RGGI CO<sub>2</sub> auctions, and emphasizes projects that will support disproportionately burdened communities.

This is a step in the right direction. It will reduce pollution and create green jobs. We think it proper to remediate our overburdened and Environmental Justice communities, which have some of the worst air quality in the nation, and suffer high levels of asthma. (See related story, Clean Energy Jobs, on p.6.)

Of the \$82 million, about \$60 million will be directed to clean transportation projects. The NJ Department of Environmental Protection will get 20% of the funds, the Board of Public Utilities will get 20%, and the NJ Economic Development Administration will get 60%.

The DEP will use 10% of its portion for grants and incentives by which local governments can electrify their transportation sectors; another 10% will go toward carbon sequestration. The BPU's portion will go toward charging stations and building infrastructure for clean transportation across the state.

Other potential uses specified by the New Jersey RGGI law, about which we have serious concerns, include combined heat and power, carbon capture and sequestration, two-cycle natural gas plants, and other fossil fuel projects. So we are glad to see this money go to clean transportation, targeting EJ communities.

# Gov. Murphy's EO 127 Will Hurt the Environment

From a press release issued on April 14, and edited by Joe Testa

Governor Murphy's Executive Order 127, issued in April as the Covid-19 crisis was unfolding, extended deadlines for filing or making decisions on pending reports until 90 days after the end of the declared Public Health Emergency. We are seriously concerned that this action sides with polluters and bad practices by allowing DEP to extend their decision-making comment periods for permit decisions without similarly expanding public comment periods for those decisions.

Projects are still being pushed through despite the pandemic without enough public oversight or input.

The Turnpike and Parkway capital plan is one of the biggest projects in state history, adding at least 454 lane miles and almost 1 million cars per hour on our roads and causing major air pollution and sprawl. The unnecessary SRL pipeline can continue construction in Monmouth and Burlington Counties, risking public safety by blocking traffic which is especially difficult for emergency vehicles. High-density housing development at the Haberman Hampton Tract can still move forward with its proposal for a sewer service area along a high quality C-1 stream. This project will pave over environmentally sensitive areas and pollute our drinking water.

We have concerns that Governor Murphy's EO will extend controversial permits for builders and developers, just like the Permit Extension Act has done before. Any time there is an emergency, this permit extension becomes an excuse to take care of developers and builders. It could allow projects where permits or approvals have expired within the past two years to be brought back to life, even if those projects would cause environmental harm or damage to public health. These projects will not only promote sprawl and overdevelopment and also will hurt water quality.

Throughout New Jersey, there are dozens of projects currently in front of local planning boards that would have detrimental impacts on water quality, greenhouse gas emissions and more, if approved. For example, there is a massive Jandl Land Co. warehouse that has been proposed on environmentally sensitive farmland in White Township (Warren Co), and a similar project in Franklin Township in Hunterdon County. The Sewell Tract in Cape May is a housing development on environmentally sensitive wetlands that is currently in front of the planning board and also in front of DEP. We are very concerned that these projects could be approved without public participation.

During this health emergency, it is critical for the public to have a say in permits that directly affect their lives. We should automatically extend comment periods for those proposals that that can have a direct impact on our water and our overall environment. We have to make sure that during this pandemic, that we are protecting public health as part of it.

# DEP Adopts Strictest PFAS Standards in Nation - Win for Public Health

From a press release issued on April 7, and edited by Joe Testa

The Department of Environmental Protection has submitted a proposed rule for maximum contaminant limits on PFOA and PFOS to the Office of Administrative Law. PFOA (perfluorooctanoic acid) and PFOS (perfluorooctanesulfonic acid) belong to the PFAS family of "forever" fluorine-containing chemicals. The rule would require drinking water from private wells and public utilities to contain no more than 14 parts per trillion of PFOA and 13 ppt of PFOS. This is far more stringent than the 70 ppt guideline set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

PFAS's are used in products ranging from Teflon pans to stain-resistant clothing to firefighting foams. In New Jersey the Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base Willow Grove, and Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, and many other sites, used fire-fighting foams and have significant PFAS contamination.

This is a big step towards protecting public health for the roughly 1.6 million people who have been exposed to these chemicals in New Jersey. Also of benefit is that, under New Jersey law, groundwater and drinking water standards are the same.

The standards will be easily implemented by water purveyors, because the treatment process is simple and inexpensive. New Jersey is one of the most affected states in the country, with over 500 water systems contaminated with PFAS. Now it is important that the standards be implemented quickly.

PFAS's bioaccumulate in a person's body and cause cancer and a weakened immune system. Repeated exposure can lead to developmental defects in children and pregnant women, liver and kidney problems, as well as tumors. Although it is good that DEP has set these standards, we believe that the standard should be lowered to a more protective 5 ppt.

Last year, the DEP identified five companies responsible for extensive contamination in New Jersey: Solvay, DuPont, Dow DuPont, Chemours and 3M. The DEP issued a directive under the authorities granted by New Jersey's Spill Compensation and Control Act, Water Pollution Control Act and Air Pollution Control Act, requiring them to clean up the toxic PFAS chemicals.

In Salem and Gloucester County, PFOS found near the Solvay site were seven times over the standard. People in Pompton Lakes and Carney's Point have been living in a toxic nightmare for decades. PFOS is in our fish, even from the most pristine areas.

New Jersey has set its own standards for harmful chemicals in our water because we can't trust the current federal government to make strong enough standards. We thank the Murphy Administration and DEP for moving forward, but urge stricter standards for more than a dozen other chemicals found in our waterways.

# Executive Disorder in the Governor's Office

From an op-ed by Chapter Director Jeff Tittel, published Feb 20 in the Newark Star-Ledger, and edited by Tony Hagan

New Jersey is anticipating a future of scorching temperatures and rising ocean levels, but make no mistake: Climate change is already here. Unfortunately, Gov. Phil Murphy's Executive Order 100, signed in January, 2020, is a rallying cry without real targets for climate change mitigation.

Murphy could sign an emergency order to regulate greenhouse gasses, utilizing the powers of the Department of Environmental Protection, but he doesn't. Although the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change calls for a 45% reduction in greenhouse gases by 2030, Murphy's executive order doesn't include any targets for this. Electrification of the housing sector needs to begin now. The DEP must revise its flood zone maps—now. We need a carbon standard. So much needs to be done. Murphy says the executive order looks at land use and other permitting processes, but it doesn't. It fails to mention the 14 or more laws that need to be changed to allow this.

Former Gov. Chris Christie's "waiver rules," which allowed for sidestepping environmental regulations if they are "unduly burdensome," need to be rolled back. The same goes for his flood hazard rules, which loosened development restrictions on building in sensitive areas. These and other Christie-era rules exacerbate flooding and pollution threats.

New Jersey sticks out as the only state in our region without a climate adaptation and mitigation plan. Executive Order 100 is a distraction: a cover for the lack of needed changes in the state's revised Energy Master Plan. Testimony called for real climate action and a moratorium on fossil fuel infrastructure development, but the plan kowtows to dirty energy, defining biogas, nuclear energy, incinerators, and biomass as clean sources of energy. We need wind, solar, and geothermal instead.

The Master Plan calls for 80% net reduction of greenhouse gases by 2050, but it is watered down by gimmicks such as carbon sequestration. What's worse, the Plan doesn't mention current proposals for eight pipelines, five power plants, and a liquid natural gas port that would increase NJ's emissions.

Meanwhile, the road to climate change is paved with failed initiatives. Tom Kean's 1985 order for greenhouse gas and climate impact reductions was never implemented. We're in a climate emergency. We need a moratorium on new fossil fuel projects and we need to reach 100% renewable and zero-carbon by 2050.

## Earth Day Flashback:

*We asked our older members for memories of the first Earth Day, in 1970*

### Hey, Unless You Try, You'll Never Know

*From George Moffatt, Programs Support Facilitator (gmoffattgt@aol.com)*

I didn't realize at the time of "Earth Day" that I was working in the Belly of the Beast – as convention and public relations manager for a professional association of mining, metallurgical and petroleum engineers.

One day at lunch I fell into a conversation with an engineer working on the Alaska pipeline. He was complaining about a University of Alaska professor who opposed the pipeline's design because it would block the caribou's yearly migrations for food. "We need that oil," he argued, and I replied "You're right! We certainly do, but what about the caribou?" As he went on, I asked, "You're a Ph.D in engineering, right?" Yes. "And this professor has a Ph.D. in biology, right?" Reluctant yeah.

"So why don't you both, as experts in your respective fields, sit down and figure out how both the oil and caribou can move about freely." He shrugged and said nothing. Several months later, I received a note from him: "I meet regularly with Professor X, and he has some really valuable ideas. Thanks for the suggestion."

Another time, at a dinner that included the Dean of the Colorado School of

Mines, an engineer mentioned a plan to mine manganese from the floor of the Caribbean. It involved huge plow-like machines that would sift through the sand to scoop up manganese modules. I thought it to be a terrible idea and said so.

The dean was not pleased, but I pushed on, arguing that plowing up the sea floor would destroy the sea's benthic marine life, as well as upend the sea's entire food chain. "This also would play havoc with the jobs and economy of the entire area," I said, listing the hotel and restaurant industries, major employers in the area; the many native merchants; the cruise and airline industries; sustainable and sport fishing; and boating, sailing and recreational diving. "You'd be destroying an economic emerald," I said. When the dean countered with – yeah, you guessed it – "But we need the manganese," I replied, "No, we don't. Only that company needs it."

Well, I kept my job, the pipeline was designed to let the caribou roam freely, and no one is mining manganese in the Caribbean. I'd take a bow but I doubt I had any influence on either event. But then, hey, unless you try, you'll never know.

### When our Chapter Director Was Young

*From Jeff Tittel, Chapter Director (Jeff.Tittel@SierraClub.org)*

As we recognize the 50th anniversary of Earth Day this year it is important to look back at what happened back then and what is happening today.

Fifty years ago, rivers caught fire. Today the planet is on fire, with rampant wildfires every summer in California, the Amazon, and Australia. Back then, people wore masks because of dirty air. Now, people are wearing masks because of the coronavirus. The First Earth Day heralded a new era of political activism and new environmental leaders. This year being an election year, that is even more important. The coronavirus may be changing our everyday lives, but Earth Day will not be postponed.

Every Earth Day is different, but this year is nothing like we've seen before. The coronavirus outbreak is reshaping the way we recognize Earth Day. We won't be cleaning up beaches and streams or holding rallies. Instead, we'll honor Earth Day through online protests and webinars while building toward a big mobilization movement in the fall. Even in separation, we can be as one. This year, the stakes are even greater than 50 years ago because we are in a climate emergency.

For the first Earth Day, I was in junior high and I organized the cleanup of the Elizabeth River in Hillside. Afterward, we joined tens of thousands of people at a rally in Philadelphia. Students across the globe are still standing up for our environment today. Greta Thunberg is holding political leaders environmentally accountable. Students in the U.S. are getting active and fighting for the environment with the Sunrise Movement and by calling for a Green New Deal.

The first Earth Day brought about the National Environmental Policy Act or NEPA and the Environmental Protection Agency. The U.S. went on to pass important legislation like the Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, and the Endangered Species Act. It also led to political activism. There were 12 congressmen with terrible environmental records called the 'Dirty Dozen,' and

seven of them were defeated. Today, Trump is waging a war on the environment by rolling back 95 rules and regulations, getting rid of EPA enforcement, and opening up our public lands for mining and drilling. Now it is even more important for us to be politically active.

This will be the most important Earth Day since the first one in 1970. It is even more important in New Jersey because we are one of the fastest-warming states in the country while also being one of the most vulnerable states to climate change. DEP has projected sea-level rise in New Jersey of up to 8.8 feet by 2100 and we are second in the nation for developing in flood-prone areas. Gov. Phil Murphy must put a moratorium on new fossil fuel projects and move us forward toward 100% renewable and zero-carbon by 2050. We have the tools and technology to get there, now we need the political will.

This year also marks the 50th anniversary of New Jersey's DEP. They have worked hard to implement important environmental laws like the Spill Act and many more. However, the DEP budget and staff levels have dropped over 50% each in the last 20 years without any new hiring. The DEP needs more funding so it can update our rules and regulations to deal with climate urgency and to get lead out of our water. Flood Hazard Rules, Waiver Rules, and CAFRA all need to be updated. We also need to start regulating greenhouse gases, make a Climate Adaptation and Mitigation Plan, and create a Coastal Commission to deal with sea-level rise. It is critical that the DEP does their job for the next 50 years, and another 50 after that.

We are facing the coronavirus pandemic in part because we are polluting and destroying the Earth's natural resources. Fortunately, we have seen a reduction of pollution in NJ and across the globe during the pandemic. It shows that even during a tragedy, we can turn the corner on climate change. We have one environment, we are one people and one planet. It is critical to recognize Earth Day every day and keep fighting to save our planet.

## Remembering Paul Ehrlich

*From Eric Hausker, Fundraising Chair of our Loantaka Group (Ericbiomass@gmail.com)*

I was sixteen years old and attended a high school teach-in on the date of the first Earth Day, 1970, and remember the good vibes that were in the air, hopes that we as members of the Human Race would begin to take action.

One of the environmental pundits of the time who is still with us fifty years later is Dr. Paul Ehrlich, who had written "The Population Bomb" two years before. He made many sensationally pessimistic claims about our impending doom, i.e., that most of us would all starve by 1985. This reduced his gravitas quite a bit. But he did say something back then that has stuck with me all these years: "Nature bats last" In other words, physical and biological factors will eventually restrict the scope of human activity despite our most ingenious scientific and technologi-

cal attempts to transcend them.

Fifty years later, we watch as one of those factors, Contagious Disease, causes the cancellation of our yearly Earth Day forum for presenting our case to the world's media about what we should be doing to ensure the survival of human civilization. We do not complain because we know that combatting this pandemic takes precedence over everything else.

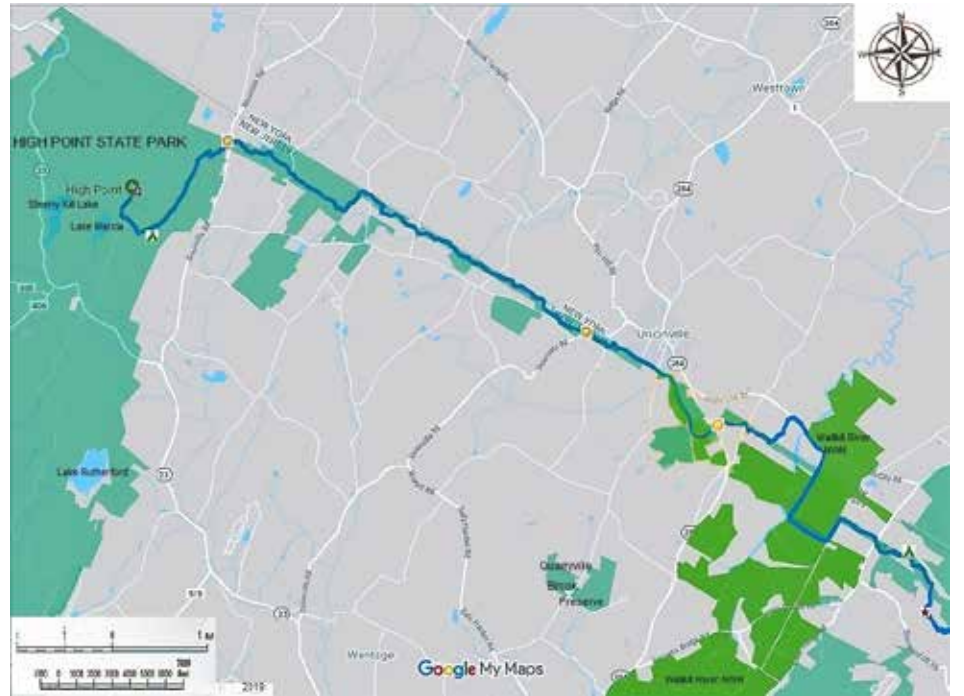
But to continue Ehrlich's baseball analogy, it's the ninth inning. We are way ahead of Nature in the score and it looks like our way of life, our high consumption economy, our profligate use of energy, and our continued obsession with economic and demographic growth will prevail. But now Nature picks up the bat and comes to the plate.

# Maps of segments of the NJ State Long Trail, to accompany some of the hikes described in On the Trail - On Your Own (pp.11-12)



**NJ State Long Trail: Overview**

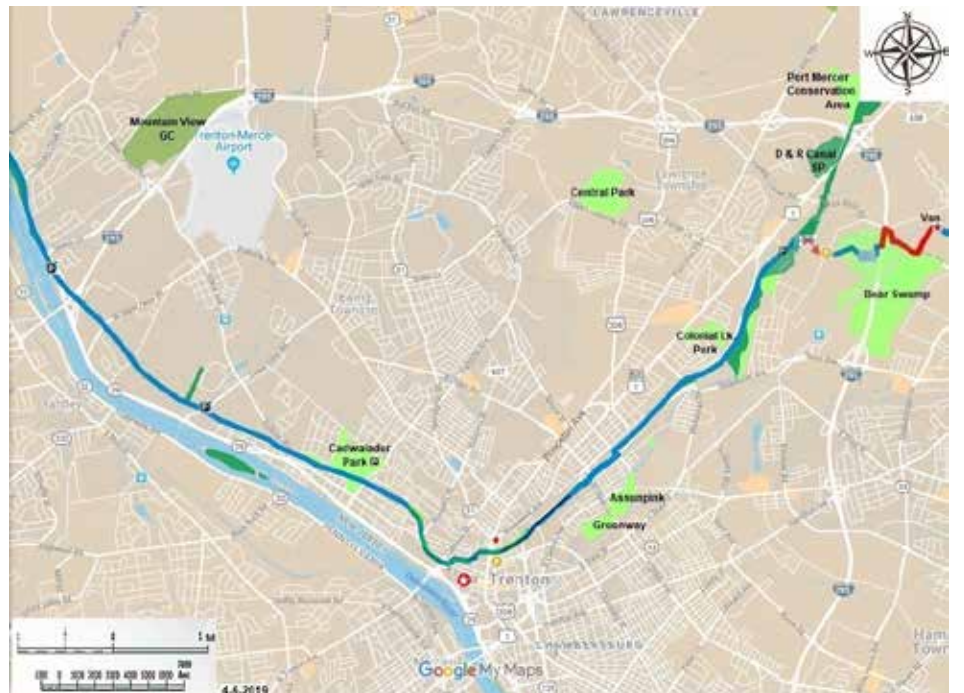
*Credit for these maps goes to Frank Pearce, of the Outings Club of South Jersey.*



**NJ State Long Trail #1: High Point**



**NJ State Long Trail #14: Washington's Crossing**



**NJ State Long Trail #15: D&R Canal/Trenton**



**NJ State Long Trail #27: Tuckahoe/Peaslee**



**NJ State Long Trail #32: Higbee Beach/Cape May Point**